

Strategic Planning in Child Welfare:

Integrating Efforts for Systems Improvement



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

To continually improve outcomes for children, youth, and families, states regularly monitor and assess the functioning of their child welfare agencies and engage in several strategic planning and monitoring processes. These multiple and complex planning, monitoring, and reporting processes—each with different timeframes, purposes, and teams—can leave agencies moving in disjointed directions. This publication presents strategies and tips for taking an integrated approach to system improvement.

Definition and Benefits of Integrated Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a continuous and dynamic process for improving organizational performance that is informed by data, evidence, and input from the child welfare agency, system partners, and youth and families. It involves:

- ◆ **Big picture thinking and visioning** of where the agency wants to go
- ◆ **Assessing** the agency's current situation
- ◆ **Developing, implementing, and monitoring** strategic approaches for moving the agency's goals forward

To help states define a vision, set goals, plan for promoting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families, and monitor the results, the Children's Bureau (CB) requires child welfare agencies to engage in two large-scale, ongoing processes:

- ◆ States' 5-year title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and the Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSR)
- ◆ The federal periodic Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and the resulting Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

CB encourages integration of the CFSP and CFSR processes (see [A Guide for Implementing Improvement Through the CFSP and CFSR](#)) and with other federal and state planning (e.g., disaster and prevention planning), monitoring, and reporting processes and continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts. Child welfare agencies are expected to collaborate with youth, families, and other partners across all assessment and planning processes.¹

Aligning and coordinating the development, implementation, reporting, and monitoring of strategic plans—while also integrating CQI into all of these processes—allows states to:

- ◆ Monitor systems and interventions
- ◆ Create more targeted and aligned plans for improvement
- ◆ Adjust their plans with the backing of comprehensive data and evidence
- ◆ Report more efficiently

Read This If:

You want to learn more about integrated strategic planning in child welfare and explore how to implement this approach at your agency.

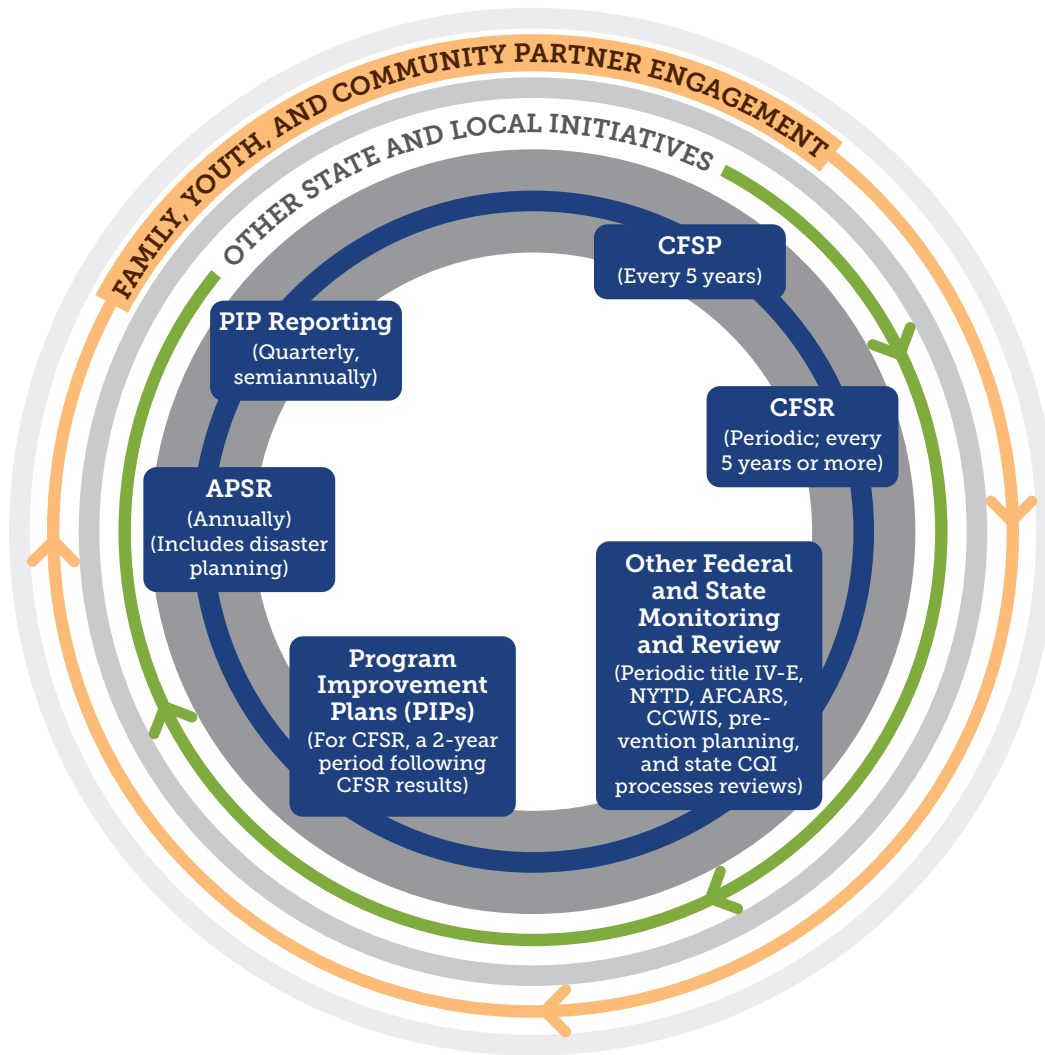
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¹ For more information on coordinating the CFSR with other federal planning and review processes, see [Child and Family Services Reviews: Guiding Principles, Framework, and Tools for the Program Improvement Plan Development Process](#) and [Child and Family Services Reviews: Guiding Principles, Framework and Tools for the Statewide Assessment Process](#).

Exhibit 1 highlights the cyclical nature of these processes. Integrating them as much as possible aligns team goals to each other and to agency goals and emphasizes preparedness for implementation initiatives. The more connections agencies can make between these processes, the easier and more impactful they will become over time.

Exhibit 1: Integrated Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting



State Highlight

One state agency has developed and put in place processes for aligning and coordinating several federal processes. For example, after the development of the Round 3 CFSR PIP, the team working on the CFSP incorporated strategies articulated in the PIP into the CFSP. In doing so, the state ensured that plans for improvement were aligned going forward, ensuring the most efficient use of time and resources on the state's priorities. To further ensure alignment, when developing its CFSR, PIP, and CFSP, the agency met and sought input from the same set of community partners. These included foster and adoptive parents, parent organizations, youth advisory groups, mental health organizations, a fatherhood and parent initiative, and representatives from the governor's office and state health agency.

Overview of Strategic Planning Processes in Child Welfare

Federal child welfare planning, monitoring, and reporting processes (shown in the graphic on page one) are a partnership between CB and states that aims to:

- ◆ Ensure states' eligibility to receive specific federal funding (e.g., Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, as well as Chafee and Educational and Training Voucher funding)
- ◆ Assess the status of child and family safety, permanency, and well-being and systems functions in jurisdictions
- ◆ Improve system functioning and collaboration to ensure the well-being of children and families

While each of these processes has a specific purpose, they should work together in a coordinated fashion to:

- ◆ Provide a picture of how well states' child welfare systems are functioning
- ◆ Help states create and implement comprehensive, targeted, and sustainable long-term plans for improvement
- ◆ Regularly monitor progress milestones

The sections below briefly describe the major strategic planning and review processes in child welfare.

The CFSP and APSR

The CFSP is the agency's long-term strategic plan detailing a jurisdiction's vision and goals to improve its child welfare system. It requires states to take a big-picture approach in thinking about the strategies and plans they need to implement to meet their goals over the next 5 years.

Structure and Requirements

- ◆ The CFSP process begins with an assessment of the system's current progress and performance, including assessing the CFSR Outcomes and Systemic Factors, identifying how state agencies are functioning, and noting which areas need improvement. The agency should include youth, family, and other partners in assessing agency functioning and suggesting needed improvements at this first stage.
- ◆ Following the performance assessment, the CFSP outlines the state's plans for improvement and services, which can also include the state's plans for prevention, disaster preparedness, diligent recruitment, training, and healthcare coordination and oversight. These plans should be continuous with the CFSR's Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) and integrated within the CFSP itself.
- ◆ The APSR is an annual report that presents an update on a state's progress toward the goals and objectives defined in its CFSP and outlines the planned activities for the following fiscal year. The APSR includes a discussion of any necessary changes in agencies' CFSP goals as indicated by a joint assessment with youth, families, and other partners, and an updated description of services to be provided in the following fiscal year (Children's Bureau, n.d.). They can also be used to align the PIP to the CFSP over time.

Coordination and Integration Considerations

- ◆ The planning and monitoring of the CFSP process is intended to coordinate with CFSR. For example, the CFSR Statewide Assessment is developed as an update to the performance assessment in the state's most recent

Federal Processes

Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP): A 5-year, long-term strategic plan detailing a jurisdiction's vision and goals to improve its child welfare system.

Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR): An annual report that presents an update on a state's progress toward the goals and objectives defined in its CFSP and outlines the planned activities for the following fiscal year.

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR): A process that monitors state child welfare systems by assessing seven outcomes in three outcome areas (safety, permanency, and well-being) and seven systemic factors. The CFSR is conducted in rounds; the fourth round began in fiscal year (FY) 2022.

Program Improvement Plans (PIP): Plans that aim to create systemic change based on the results from federal and state monitoring, including the CFSR.

Other Federal and State Monitoring: Processes through which CB and state agencies systematically gather data and assess child welfare services to measure compliance with regulations and the achievement of outcomes to promote improvement in performance.

PIP Reporting: These regular reports (quarterly, semiannual) monitor implementation of interventions and efforts to achieve PIP goals (e.g., CFSR PIP Progress Reports).

Disaster Planning: A federally mandated process of planning for disasters at child welfare agencies that specify how an agency will continue operations to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families. Disaster planning is part of the CFSP and APSR cycles.

CFSP and/or APSR rather than a separate assessment process to report on milestones and progress on the five-year goals outlined in the CFSP.

Additional Information

- ◆ Information on the CFSP for FYs 2020–2024 can be found in CB’s Program Instruction (PI)-19-02 (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/pi-19-02>).

The CFSR and PIP

The **CFSR** is a periodic process that monitors state child welfare systems by assessing seven outcomes in three outcome areas (safety, permanency, and well-being) and seven systemic factors. The CFSR is conducted in rounds; the fourth round is scheduled to start in 2022.

Structure and Requirements

The federal government conducts each round of the CFSR in partnership with state child welfare agency staff. Each CFSR is a two-stage process consisting of:

- ◆ A **Statewide Assessment**. For CFSR Round 4, CB will be reintegrating the statewide data indicators to the CFSR/ PIP process. The metrics from the statewide data indicators will be connected with a systematic inquiry and review framework that also integrates the principles of CQI in both the CFSR and PIP processes (Children’s Bureau, 2020).
- ◆ An **Onsite Review** of child and family service outcomes and program systems, which include:
 - ◆ Case reviews
 - ◆ Interviews with children and families engaged in services
 - ◆ Interviews with community stakeholders, such as courts, community agencies, foster families, caseworkers, and service providers (Children’s Bureau, 2014a)

At the end of the Onsite Review, states determined not to have achieved substantial conformity in all the areas assessed must develop and implement PIPs addressing the areas of nonconformity. A state’s PIP is structured as an actionable plan that will guide the state’s program improvement efforts and encourage better outcomes for children and families.

Coordination and Integration Considerations

- ◆ The PIP should be aligned with the goals and implementation of the CFSP (Child and Family Services Review Information Portal, n.d.). These are ongoing processes, representing continuous cycles of review, assessment, revision, and implementation. In other words, they represent key aspects of a functional and effective strategic planning process.
- ◆ Once the PIP is implemented, PIP Reporting, APSR, and ongoing CQI processes can be used to help monitor progress on the goals outlined in the PIP and CFSP.

Additional Information

- ◆ Additional information on CFSR Round 4 can be found on the CFSR Information Portal at <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources/round-4-resources>

Disaster Planning

Disaster Planning is a federally mandated process of planning for disasters at child welfare agencies that specify how an agency will continue operations to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families. Disaster planning is part of the CFSP and APSR cycles.

Structure and Requirements

- ◆ The state’s disaster plan, which is required by the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109–288), is an integral part of federal planning processes. (Disasters are sudden events that can cause adverse effects such as damage or death and include natural as well as manmade occurrences. See the Center’s [Coping With Disasters and Strengthening Systems Guide](#) for more information.)

Coordination and Integration Considerations

- ◆ Disaster planning should be included in the CFSP and reviewed yearly, as part of the APSR. A child welfare

agency disaster plan needs to (at a minimum) include descriptions of how jurisdictions will do the following ([P.L. 109-288](#)):

- ◆ Identify, locate, and continue the availability of services for children under state care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster
- ◆ Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases
- ◆ Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster
- ◆ Preserve essential program records
- ◆ Coordinate services and share information with other states
- ◆ Section 422(b)(16) of P.L. 109-288 requires that states have in place procedures explaining how the state programs assisted under title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, or title IV-E, would respond to a disaster. These procedures require a state to review their previously submitted disaster plan, to make any needed changes, and to submit the disaster plan with the CFSP, regardless of whether or not changes were made.

Additional Information

- ◆ For more information, agencies can refer to the annual program instructions for the APSR for the most current information on disaster planning (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pi2013.pdf>)
- ◆ For additional information and resources, visit CB's Disaster Preparedness and Response webpage (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/disaster-preparedness/>).

Other Federal and State Monitoring

Other federal and state monitoring includes processes through which CB and state agencies systematically gather data and assess child welfare services to measure compliance with regulations and the achievement of outcomes to promote improvement in performance.

Data from other federal and state monitoring and reporting processes include:

- ◆ Title IV-E reviews and state plans
- ◆ National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)
- ◆ Adoption Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)
- ◆ Comprehensive Child Welfare Information Systems (CCWIS) reporting
- ◆ Agency CQI processes and reviews
- ◆ Data from these sources can be used to evaluate improvements on outcomes and help set goals
- ◆ Strategic planning may also be influenced by additional federal guidance at particular touchpoints, such as the passage of new legislation. For example, following the 2018 passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), many states elected to submit Title IV-E Prevention Program 5-Year Plans. For some, this presented an opportunity to integrate prevention planning into existing planning efforts.

State Highlight

One state took a multilevel approach to prevention by integrating a prevention focus into all agency planning and review. Several foundational pieces include the agency's founding legislation, which specifically references a focus on prevention, the creation of a visioning document by agency leadership that can be used to guide the work, and the implementation of regular meetings that serve as a touchstone for integration & alignment.

The agency then focused on integrating prevention (particularly the provisions of the FFPSA) into agency planning and practice documents such as the CFSR PIP and a family practice model. To align them, staff asked questions such as, how can we include the needs of implementing FFPSA into the PIP? How do the requirements of the FFPSA fit into this practice model? Do staff have the training they need to support FFPSA implementation as part of these other activities? And conversely, how are agency prevention efforts working to support the goals described in the CFSR PIP and the family practice model? As part of the prevention focus, the agency has also recently integrated a race equity plan into their strategic plan to ensure that race equity issues are woven into everything the agency does and the questions it asks.

By integrating prevention at all levels of work, the agency ensured that prevention remains part of the holistic conversation about agency review, planning, and practice rather than standing apart from them.

Federal Guidelines for Engaging Partners

For best results, states should consistently engage partners—including other service agencies, organizations, youth, and families—in ongoing CFSP-related consultation and coordination processes. Partners include Tribes, the state’s Court Improvement Program (CIP), youth, families, the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) lead agency, the Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Grantee, providers, and faith-based and community organizations. Furthermore, federal regulations (45 CFR 1357.16) require that, when conducting the annual review in preparation for submission of the APSR, states must engage the agencies, organizations, and individuals who are part of the ongoing CFSP-related consultation and coordination process (those listed above).

For the Round 3 CFSR, federal guidance required that the Statewide Assessment be completed by “staff of the state child welfare agency, representatives selected by the agency who were consulted in the development of the Child and Family Services Plan, and other individuals deemed appropriate and agreed upon by the state and CB (Children’s Bureau, 2014a).” For Round 4 CFSR, CB will continue to emphasize deliberate engagement of stakeholders in Statewide Assessment, requiring meaningful engagement and participation of parents, children and youth, resource families, legal and judicial community, Tribes, front-line caseworkers, and supervisors early and ongoing through all phases of the CFSR and PIP processes” (Children’s Bureau, 2020). This group should make up and/or inform the Planning and Implementation Team(s) by:

- ◆ Assessing agency strengths and areas needing improvement
- ◆ Reviewing and modifying the goals, objectives, and interventions
- ◆ Monitoring CFSP and CFSR PIP progress

Integration of Strategic Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting

With an integrated approach to system improvement, agency planning, review and monitoring, teams work together to establish goals, objectives, strategies/interventions, and action steps for implementation that align across planning and improvement processes.

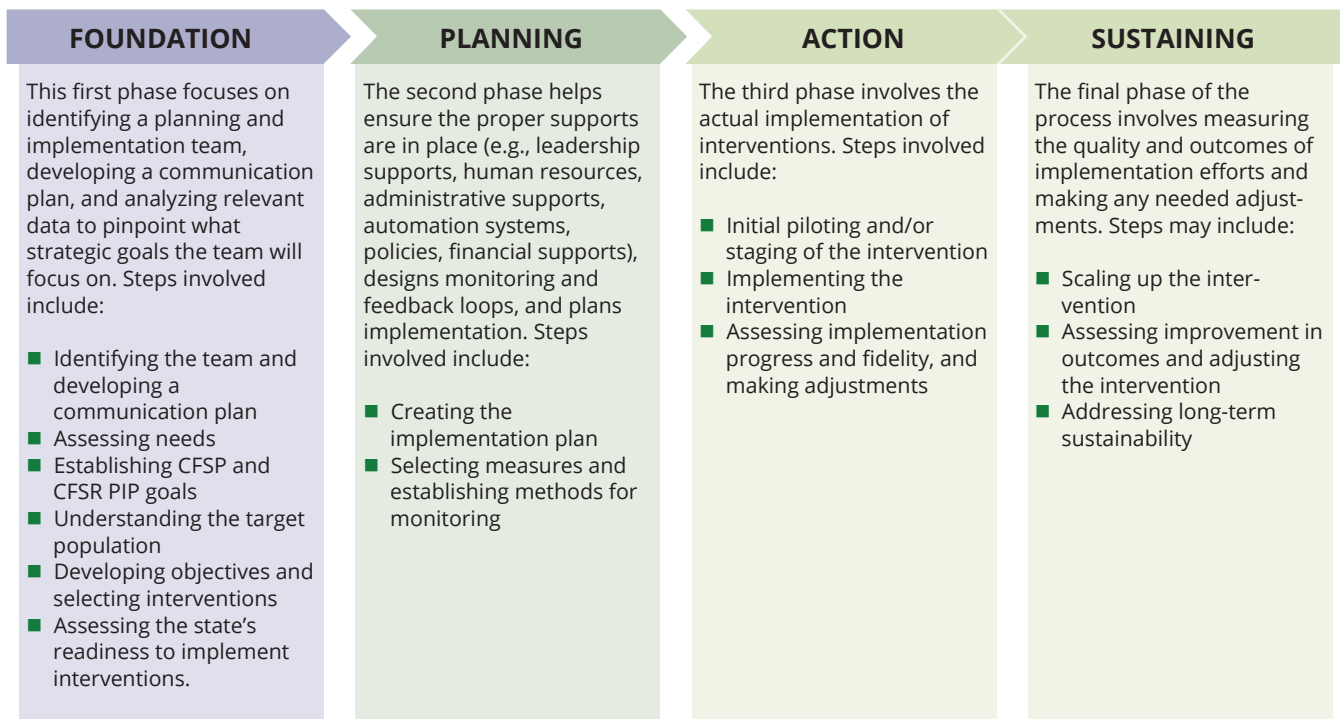
A strategic planning process should (National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement [NRCOI], 2004):

- ◆ Include clear steps or stages through which an agency can confirm its vision and desired direction
- ◆ Use data and evidence to examine the agency’s strengths and challenges and pinpoint areas that need attention
- ◆ Determine the necessary steps for implementing change
- ◆ Allow for adjustments to the plan as necessary to promote flexible growth and address changing needs

To better coordinate and integrate the above processes into cohesive and ongoing system improvement efforts, CB further integrated the CFSP/APSR with the CFSR Statewide Assessment in its guidance to the FY 2015–2019 CFSP. This change requires states to assess their performance on the CFSR’s seven outcomes and seven systemic factors as part of their CFSP/APSR (Children’s Bureau, 2014b), emphasizing that these processes are meant to work together as parts of a comprehensive and coordinated strategic plan. To provide guidance on how state and federal partners can work together to integrate the goals and objectives of these processes, CB developed *A Guide for Implementing Improvement Through the CFSP and CFSR* (<https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources/round-3-resources/cfsr-round-3-program-improvement-planning-tools/guide-implementing>).

Exhibit 1 (on p. 1) highlights the cyclical nature of these processes and how they map to each other. (For a closer look at how the main components of these processes relate to each other and to see a detailed breakdown of this cycle over time, see appendices A and B.) Exhibit 2 presents a framework for implementing improvements that is detailed in Guide. In the graphic, the “Action” and “Sustaining” columns are visually linked to underscore the organic and iterative relationship between them. Agencies should consider where they are in the process of implementing improvements and consult the corresponding section of the guide for more information.

Exhibit 2: Phases for Implementing Improvement Through the CFSP and CFSR



Incorporating CQI Into Strategic Planning

By applying CQI principles and strategies to planning and quality assurance efforts, states can help ensure that their processes are better coordinated to accurately address current needs and find the best and most relevant ways to move toward goals over time.¹

CQI is an evidence-informed process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions (Children's Bureau, 2012). CQI is not only a process, but also a system of structures, policies, and procedures that support the CQI process (Wulczyn et al., 2014). By building strong CQI systems, adopting a continuous improvement philosophy, and applying CQI processes, teams can continually monitor and improve their strategic plans.

As states consider updates to future strategic plans, agencies should reflect on the CQI practices and strategies they have in place and consider whether they have been effective, and how and where they can be improved or updated. It is important for agencies to ensure that the work they do to support strategic planning (including data collection and analysis, and solution development and implementation) is connected to their agency's CQI process and vice versa. That is, the two processes need to inform each other at every stage of the work. Without this crucial information exchange, agencies risk depriving their improvement processes of valuable information, duplicating efforts, and wasting valuable resources.

The Capacity Building Center for States (the Center) offers resources that agencies can use to learn more about CQI and how to infuse CQI principles into their practice including a variety of assessment tools and training resources (<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/self-assessment/>).

State Highlight

As a part of CFSP development, one state agency performed assessments of its readiness by taking a comprehensive inventory of active interventions, projects, and strategies and connected them to specific goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. This helped give the team an overall picture of the agency's ongoing CQI efforts and a better understanding of their impact, duplicated efforts/redundancies, and gaps and an initial idea of what data and steps were needed moving forward. This first step gave the team a foundation upon which they could begin to build a change management plan to help inform the development of their CFSP.

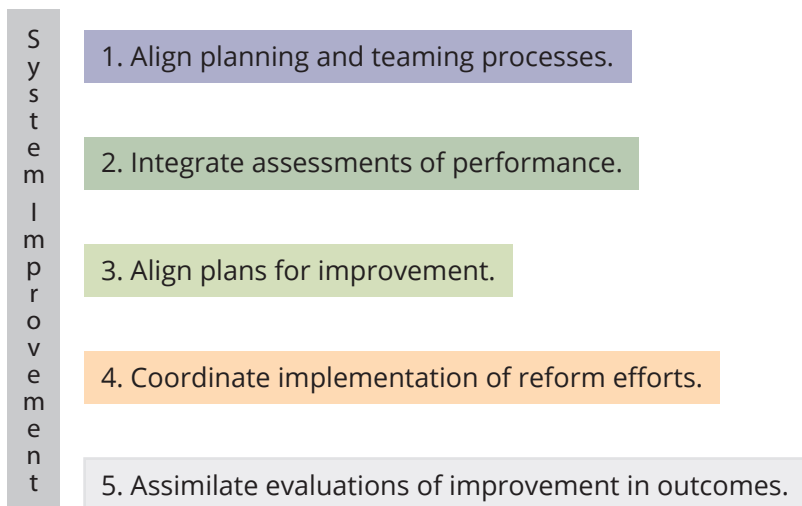
¹ CB's Information Memorandum on CQI systems (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/im1207>) provides guidance on a framework for a state CQI system for child welfare that would also meet existing federal requirements for quality assurance, evaluation, and delivery of quality services.

How to Integrate System Improvement Efforts

Although the CFSR and CFSP processes occur on different timelines, findings from each can be used to inform the other throughout each process. For example, periodic CFSR findings about the state's performance on outcomes and systemic factors can be used to inform the CFSP as well as the PIP and to align the state's goals and plans for improvements. The APSR together with PIP reporting can then be used to periodically assess progress on the goals articulated in both the PIP and the CFSP (Children's Bureau, 2014c).

The five tasks described in exhibit 3 can help agencies align their planning, monitoring, and reporting processes to establish an integrated approach to this integrated process. Jurisdictions will be at different stages and should start wherever is most appropriate based on where they are in relation to their system improvement efforts and the federal processes.

Exhibit 3: Aligning System Improvement Efforts



1. Align Planning and Teaming Processes

An integrated approach to systems improvement requires a unified planning structure that includes planning and implementation teams and subgroups, as needed, with clear governance and responsibilities.

The Planning and Implementation Team

The agency's leadership (e.g., director, assistant or deputy directors, chief financial officer) should lead the overall planning processes and exercise ultimate decision-making authority, but a more diverse group of team participants (including youth, family representatives, and community partners) should steer the system's strategic

planning and reform efforts. At the start of the alignment process, agency leadership should gauge the nature and scope of current planning and teaming work and determine how it might be applicable to CFSP development.

At the start of the process, the agency should establish a Planning and Implementation Team—the core team of individuals responsible for leading a change effort that includes strategic and long-term planning processes—or use an existing teaming structure responsible for such work. Having a core team of individuals responsible for coordinating and aligning all planning and improvement processes can help ensure effective integration. Subteams or workgroups then may be formed as needed throughout the process to focus on specific topics.

State Highlight

One state's response to coordinating COVID-19-related responses and activities is a good example of effective team structure and communication for large-scale planning and response processes.

At the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency, one state set up a COVID-19 Readiness Team composed of senior leadership as well as middle managers and key professional staff. Initially meeting at least 3 times per week, the COVID-19 Readiness Team focused on key issues related to ensuring the safety of staff and clients. Team tasks included developing and adjusting guidelines for home visiting; obtaining and supplying personal protective equipment for staff, providers, and foster parents; developing and implementing strategies to conduct safe child abuse and neglect investigations; and communicating to staff, providers, families, and other key partners regularly.

The Acting Director and Readiness Team members held monthly Zoom forums with smaller groups of staff throughout the agency to disseminate information and obtain feedback. Regular meetings were held with leadership from several unions representing agency staff to promote collaboration.

The agency should consider the key roles that need to be represented on the team and select members who will be key partners in implementing reform efforts and coordinating strategic plans and supports, including:

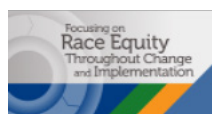
- ◆ Youth and families served by the child welfare agency (per CB requirements)
- ◆ Representatives from various levels and jurisdictions of the child welfare system (e.g., midlevel managers, supervisors, caseworkers, CB Regional Office staff)
- ◆ Representatives from Tribes and legal communities
- ◆ Representatives from related state agencies (e.g., education, mental health, law enforcement)
- ◆ Philanthropic partners and funders
- ◆ Technical assistance providers working with the agency
- ◆ Additional partners (e.g., resource families, and service providers)

To learn more about strategies for engaging youth, families, and other partners in strategic planning and other agency processes, explore the companion brief in this series, [Strategic Planning in Child Welfare: Strategies for Meaningful Youth, Family, and Other Partner Engagement](#).



Find more detailed information and resources on teaming at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/topics/cqi/change-implementation/teaming>.

Agency leadership, in partnership with the team members, should regularly review the team's composition to ensure that the necessary partners are represented throughout the CFSP and CFSR processes. When putting together a team for this work, it is critical to consider racial, ethnic, and geographic (e.g., urban and rural) diversity in team representation and ask the question of whether team members collectively reflect the complexity of the racial, ethnic, and geographic identities and groups that the agency serves. In this process, it is especially important to include those with lived experience and expertise whose feedback is a key data source in strategic planning. When reviewing the team's composition, team leads should acknowledge that team members may represent several different perspectives and identities (e.g., Black young adult with lived child welfare expertise and representative of domestic violence coalition) and balance representation accordingly.



For more information on racial equity in change and implementation, visit <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/resources/change-implementation-focusing-on-race-equity>.

State Highlight

One state's response to the passage of the FFPSA is an example of good teaming leading to agile decision-making and targeted action. The FFPSA, passed in February of 2018, restructured the way states can spend specific federal child welfare funds (Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act). As soon as the legislation came out, the state's management team prioritized exploring what immediate action steps would ensure the state was compliant. The state had submitted the written state assessment and completed its CFSR, and was expecting a report back from the federal review. Teams anticipated that there would be action steps related to the new legislation; they were able to think flexibly to identify overarching FFPSA compliance concerns and related issues to be addressed in the PIP.

The Planning and Implementation Team should also include at least one crossover member each with the agency teams working on disaster planning and prevention planning, respectively. This will help to identify points of overlap in data, processes, and content development. It is also important that agencies engage in a joint planning process with CB Regional Office leadership before beginning the federal processes alignment described here.

Team Charter and Communication Planning

Initially, the Planning and Implementation Team will partner with agency leadership to identify and outline the teaming structure and decision-making processes. The team should develop a **team charter** to define the team's purpose, team member roles and responsibilities, and communication processes.

The Planning and Implementation Team should also develop and implement a **comprehensive communication plan** to facilitate the broader involvement of other partners. The communication plan outlines the strategies for communicating with internal and external partners during each step of the process and addresses (Children's Bureau, 2014c):

- ◆ Ongoing review of data and assessment of agency strengths and concerns
- ◆ Selection of priority areas for the CFSP and CFSR PIP
- ◆ Identification of goals, objectives, target populations, and interventions
- ◆ Identification and installation of implementation supports
- ◆ Implementation of interventions
- ◆ Assessment of process and outcome data

The communication plan should include guidance for internal communication to and from the team, providing relevant information to internal and external partners and gathering and analyzing their feedback, throughout the CFSP/APSR, CFSR/PIP, and other CQI processes. The communication plan should establish a continuous feedback loop coordinated by the agency.

2. Integrate Performance Assessments

The CFSP/APSR and CFSR all include an assessment of or update on the child welfare system's performance on the Child and Family Outcomes and Systemic Factors. Coordinated strategic planning and monitoring require integration of the performance assessments used in these processes. These assessments are also useful for evaluating an agency's readiness to manage a disaster (e.g., assessing technology capacity) as well as evaluating an agency's readiness to implement prevention programs.

As noted previously, for Round 4 of the CFSR, CB has announced that it is reintegrating the statewide data indicators to the CFSR/PIP process. The metrics from the statewide data indicators will be connected with a systematic inquiry and review framework that is grounded in sound measurement and integrates the principles of CQI in both the CFSR and PIP processes (Children's Bureau, 2020). Some of the content for the Statewide Assessment overlaps with the CFSP/APSR, and the same expectations for collaboration with youth, families, and other partners exist across all planning processes. States should use a systematic approach rooted in data (both quantitative and qualitative) to assess performance for the CFSP and subsequent APSRs. Coordination and joint planning with CB are critical at the onset of each of these processes (e.g., CFSP/APSR and CFSR PIP).

As the state agency begins the integration of performance assessments, connecting with its CB Regional Office as part of a joint planning process can clarify federal requirements and expectations. The Planning and Implementation Team should gather all available data and evidence to accurately evaluate the system's performance on key measures (e.g., Outcomes, Systemic Factors, state-specific metrics). Holding discussions with Regional Office staff related to working with partners such as youth, families, and others to inform this process may be particularly beneficial.

As updated assessments are developed, the Planning and Implementation Team should create a comprehensive data plan that includes all pertinent internal and external data sources, then collect and analyze the information. Working together, the team should draw conclusions based on the analyses, prioritize the findings, and establish the specific problems to be addressed. Planning and Implementation Team members will then take a deeper dive to identify possible contributing factors and explore and validate potential root causes, before finally isolating the root causes to address through the change effort (e.g., the CFSP or CFSR PIP). In updating each performance assessment annually, the Planning and Implementation Team will reflect on the previous assessment to monitor progress, map trends, and identify gaps. Integrating these assessments will provide a consistent measuring rod against which the state/territory may evaluate its performance.



For more information on problem exploration, see <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/problem-exploration/>.

Remember: Problem exploration and data analysis can be used by agencies to inform decisions throughout CQI and strategic planning processes. It is essential not only for helping lay the foundation for the initial stages of a process but also for helping to measure plan outcomes and success rates and enabling teams to adjust plans accordingly.

3. Align Improvement Plans

Child welfare agencies develop plans for improvements in response to findings from performance assessments and monitoring processes. Specifically, teams review assessment information and prioritize the outcomes based on needs, strengths, and resources. **Using an integrated approach to system improvement, the Planning and Implementation**

Team should establish goals, objectives, strategies/interventions, and action steps for implementation that align across planning and improvement processes. As part of this process, they should plan to outline measurement plans and identify performance indicators, measures, and benchmarks, as well as roles/responsibilities and timeframes/timelines to align the plans for improvement across the agency.

As teams plan changes to address problems and needs, they should consider developing a **theory of change** to map the pathways they want to take from an identified problem to a desired solution or outcome (Center for States, 2018c). A theory of change outlines what changes need to occur to eliminate the root cause of the problem and achieve the desired outcome, as well as how and why the changes need to happen (PII-TTAP, 2016).



For step-by-step guidance on developing a theory of change, see: <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/theory-of-change/>.

Before a jurisdiction selects the program, strategy, or intervention to implement as part of the CFSP or CFSR PIP, the Planning and Implementation Team should develop a comprehensive understanding of the populations whose outcomes it wishes to change, including their characteristics and needs. The state or territory should then use this information to inform the selection of the most appropriate interventions that are likely to improve the identified outcomes for the target populations.



For more information on intervention selection and design/adaptation, see <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/intervention-selection-design-adaptation/>.

The Planning and Implementation Team must determine and clearly articulate the overarching goals of the CFSP and CFSR PIP based on the changes the state/territory hopes to achieve by the end of the improvement period(s). The goals should align with the state's prioritized needs, respond to improvement efforts mandated by federal regulations, and reflect the input of key internal and external partners.

4. Coordinate Implementation of Improvement Efforts

States, territories, and local jurisdictions (e.g., counties, parishes, etc.) should first assess their readiness for implementing the interventions outlined in the CFSR PIP and CFSP before beginning implementation. This will allow the jurisdictions to identify the infrastructure development and technical assistance required for implementation.



For more information on assessing readiness, see <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/readiness/>.

After developing objectives and selecting specific interventions to meet needs and challenges and achieve the plan's goals, the Planning and Implementation Team should establish an implementation plan for each intervention or change (including changes in the agency's disaster and prevention plans). This involves documenting the identified goals, target populations, objectives, selected interventions, and core components. The Planning and Implementation Team can use the results of the readiness assessment to develop an implementation plan for the new solutions they're putting in place. For example, agencies might document the specific actions to be taken for each intervention, including the actions needed to put the necessary supports (e.g., infrastructure) in place, the required timeframes, and the sequencing of key actions. At this stage, it is important for the team to prioritize the implementation of interventions since implementing all of them at once may overwhelm the agency's workforce or strain available resources.

As much as possible, the implementation plans for these improvement processes should be aligned across the board to avoid redundancies and to make sure that monitoring and evaluation plans are in place for each intervention implemented. Existing CQI practices can be used in conjunction with monitoring and reporting processes to assess implementation. Agencies should not expect to align these processes all at once but should do as much as they can at every phase of this work. Agencies can work with CB to determine how the CFSR statewide data indicators and outcomes can be used to inform strategic planning work.

Once finalized, the Planning and Implementation Team should implement and manage the plan (e.g., from the CFSR PIP or the CFSP) in coordination with all other planning and improvement processes, including communicating the plan to

State Highlight

One state made it a practice to regularly crosswalk CFSR data with its current CFSP. Teams communicated and shared data about what was happening in the field and how it connected to the state's strategic plan. Along the way, they were able to make well-informed changes to the plan when necessary and explain why the changes were needed with the backing of solid data points. Continuously sharing and connecting data among processes can help states more accurately align their strategic plans and aim for more targeted long-term improvement.

all participants and supervising implementation. Representatives of existing planning teams (e.g., CFSP, CFSR PIP, Disaster Planning, Prevention Planning) should review the implementation plans and bring them back to their standing team meetings for discussion and feedback. The Team will assess progress and improvements at regular intervals and adjust as needed, including scaling up and sustaining interventions when appropriate, as described in the following section.

5. Assess Improvement in Outcomes and Make Plans for Adjustment or Expansion

Once the plans for improvement are implemented in all areas, jurisdictions should measure improvements in outcomes to determine whether the interventions are having the desired effect and adjust as necessary, addressing potential concerns with specific interventions and their implementation. States and territories should use these evaluations to determine when specific interventions are ready for expansion and which ones will need adjustment. Throughout this process, agencies should use information obtained from youth, families, and other agency partners in feedback loops to identify and refine implementation efforts.



For information on monitoring, evaluating and making adjustments to interventions, see <https://capacity.child-welfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/monitoring-evaluating/>.

The Planning and Implementation Team should analyze data and evidence related to initial implementation efforts to determine whether interventions are ready for expansion based upon the criteria established in the implementation plan, considering information received through feedback loops and the process, fidelity assessment, and outcome measures. The Planning and Implementation Team should take a holistic approach to these evaluations, regularly assessing the impact of all system improvement efforts and the interventions/solutions from each plan for improvement. This coordinated approach will help states and territories ensure they are making improvements in all required areas and working toward improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children, youth, and families.

As jurisdictions determine that specific interventions are ready for expansion, they should assess and adjust the implementation plans as needed, determining whether the rollout schedule, sequencing, etc., are still appropriate based on the data and evidence from the feedback loops and the process, fidelity, and outcome measures. The Planning and Implementation Team should review supports and readiness activities for the next sites to determine whether they are prepared to begin implementation activities. This will be an ongoing process until the intervention is statewide and/or fully implemented for the target population.

States and territories should establish and put into operation plans and mechanisms to sustain the improvement efforts after the completion of the CFSR PIP and realization of the CFSP plan for improvement. After achieving the outlined goals/objectives in these processes, jurisdictions should look to other areas needing improvement and repeat these processes to implement improvements and effect change. It is especially important to maintain fidelity to effective processes that were previously established so that progress is maintained as new initiatives are implemented.

Conclusion

CB provides guidance for states to help them integrate their strategic planning and monitoring processes. This can promote better teaming between federal and state partners and make their processes more efficient to achieve the larger goal of improving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children, youth, and families across the nation. The strategies and tools presented here encourage teams to explore different ways of improving their systems through process integration, which can help agencies to:

- ◆ Realize efficiencies in process-related tasks
- ◆ Develop plans for improvement that are aligned across processes
- ◆ Adjust their plans using comprehensive, current data and evidence
- ◆ Report more efficiently for all planning and monitoring processes

Because planning, monitoring, and reporting processes are continuous and cyclical, states should explore new strategies in whatever stage of a change process they may find themselves. Sustainable change need not, and indeed cannot, occur immediately and at full scale. Therefore, teams are encouraged to think about how they can improve and coordinate their processes incrementally and strategically. Going forward, teams can continue to leverage their strengths and assess their challenges in an ongoing cycle of improvement.

Working With the Capacity Building Center for States

[The Center for States](#) can provide customized, jurisdiction-specific services to help states prepare, develop, implement, and monitor CFSPs. This may include support and consultation related to engaging partners, as well as help with integrating the CFSP with all applicable state plans and system improvement processes. You can [find your state's Center Liaison](#) and their contact information on the Center website or visit the Center's [Contact Us](#) page for more details.

Center for States Resources

The Center has developed the following resources to support states with change management, disaster planning, and prevention planning efforts.

Change and Implementation in Practice Series

To support teams with sustainable approaches for putting specific improvements in place, the Center offers a variety of resources as a part of the Change and Implementation in Practice series. These resources build on implementation science and include step-by-step guidance to help child welfare agencies implement change and address barriers to improving outcomes for children and families. Because the combined federal planning, monitoring, and reporting processes and the change and implementation approach follow a CQI framework, agencies can use the resources in this series in the context of processes already in place (e.g., ongoing CQI, monitoring, and strategic planning).

The series offers a high-level overview webpage, an in-depth brief on each topic, training videos with a workbook, and archived webinars with a related discussion guide. The series resources walk teams through the following change and implementation topics:

- ◆ [Teaming](#)
- ◆ [Problem exploration](#)
- ◆ [Theory of change](#)
- ◆ [Intervention selection and design/adaptation](#)
- ◆ [Readiness](#)
- ◆ [Implementation planning and capacity building](#)
- ◆ [Intervention testing, piloting, and staging](#)
- ◆ [Monitoring, evaluating, and applying findings](#)

Agencies may find it helpful to use this series in conjunction with CB's CFSP/CFSR implementation guide as the series highlights similar strategies alongside more in-depth steps for implementation that can help agencies carry out the CFSP/CFSR integration guidance.

The [Change and Implementation in Practice: Overview](#) brief provides additional information on series topics and organization. In addition, a brief on racial equity in change and implementation helps teams consider ways to be intentional about advancing race equity while implementing new child welfare programs and practices. Access the briefs and related resources at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/change-implementation/>

Coping With Disasters and Strengthening Systems

To assist agencies with the process of disaster planning and review, the Center has developed the **Coping With Disasters and Strengthening Systems** series. Agencies can use the publications and tools in the series to assess an agency's disaster preparedness, create or modify a disaster plan, learn how to work with youth, families, and communities throughout the process, and prepare to manage any disaster. Access the series at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/coping-with-disasters-and-strengthening-systems>

Prevention Planning Resources

The Center has two series to assist states considering how to integrate prevention planning into strategic planning efforts.

Visioning for Prevention: Protecting Children Through Strengthening Families offers tools and resources to support the development of a shared vision for prevention. Access the series at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/prevention/vision-prevention/>

Prevention Planning Into Action includes resources designed to help agencies actively developing and implementing prevention plans. Access the series at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/topics/prevention/prevention-planning>

Let Us Know What You Think

Scan the QR code to the right or use this link: https://icfinternational.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0e8NowzcF-d7q2Eu?Q_CHL=qr to access a short survey and let us know about your experiences using this publication.



Additional Resources

The following additional resources can support states as they work on implementing integrated strategic planning at their child welfare agencies.

CFSR

In addition to the resources listed below, additional resources related to CFSR Round 4 will be forthcoming. Please check the **CFSR Portal, Round 4 Resources** webpage regularly.

Capacity Building Center for States. (n.d.). *CFSR Round 3 statewide data indicator series*. <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/cfsr-data-syntax-toolkit/>

Child and Family Services Review Information Portal. (n.d.). Child Welfare Policy and Legislation. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/legislation-policy-and-technical-bulletins-related-cfsrs>

Children's Bureau. (2014). *A guide for implementing improvement through the CFSP and CFSR*. <http://kt.cfsrportal.org/ktwebservice/download.php?code=39fd3c0f6f1a910b5ff0c18b4e544fe395d419a7&d=73148&u=publicdownload>

Children's Bureau. (n.d.). *General information and overview of the CFSR process*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews/overview>

Children's Bureau. (n.d.). *Round 3 of the CFSRs*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews/round3>

Children's Bureau. (n.d.). *Round 4 resources*. <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources/round-4-resources>

Children's Bureau (2020). *Child and Family Services Review technical bulletin #12*. <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources/round-4-resources/2020/cfsr-technical-bulletin-12>

Children's Bureau. (2021). *Child and Family Services Review technical bulletin #13*. <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/announcements/cfsr-technical-bulletin-13>

CQI

American Public Human Services Association and National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators. (2014). *A guide to build capacity for child welfare using the CQI process*. https://ncwwi.org/files/Data-Driven_Decision_Making_CQI/A_Guide_to_Build_Capacity_for_Child_Welfare_Using_the_CQI_Process.pdf

Capacity Building Center for States. (2015.). *CQI training academy*. <https://learn.childwelfare.gov/lms/enrol/index.php?id=5> (free CapLEARN registration required)

Capacity Building Center for States. (2016). *Introduction to focused CQI services*. <https://learn.childwelfare.gov/lms/enrol/index.php?id=34> (free CapLEARN registration required)

Capacity Building Center for States. (2016). *Focused CQI services: Indepth skill building (8-module curriculum for teams)*. <https://learn.childwelfare.gov/lms/enrol/index.php?id=55> (free CapLEARN registration required)

Casey Family Programs and National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. (2005). *Using continuous quality improvement to improve child welfare practice*. <https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/cqi-casey-nrc-may-2005.pdf>

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). *System reform*. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/>

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). *Using data to inform program improvement*. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/info-systems/program-improvement/>

JBS International. (2015.). *CQI training academy: Foundations of continuous quality improvement*. Access via CapLEARN at <https://learn.childwelfare.gov/> (registration required)

Strategic Planning

Center for States. (2021). *Strategic planning in child welfare: Strategies for meaningful youth, family, and other partner engagement*. <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/resources/strategic-planning-engaging-partners>

Center for States. (n.d.) *Strategic planning in child welfare* [webpage]. <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/topics/cqi/strategic-planning>

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). *Strategic planning process*. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/administration/implementing>

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. (n.d.). *Strategic planning*. <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/strategic.htm>

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. (2004). *Strategic planning for child welfare agencies*. <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/strat.plan.pdf>

Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center. (n.d.). *Strategic planning toolkit*. <https://www.ovct-tac.gov/views/resources/dspStrategicPlan.cfm>

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- Children's Bureau. (2020). *CFSR technical bulletin #12*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/training-technical-assistance/cfsr-technical-bulletin-12>
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- Children's Bureau. (2014a). *Child and Family Services Review fact sheet*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-fact-sheet>
- Children's Bureau. (2014b). *Child and Family Services Review technical bulletin #7*. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cfsr_tb7.pdf
- Children's Bureau. (2014c). *A guide for implementing improvement through the CFSP and CFSR*. <http://kt.cfsrportal.org/ktwebservice/download.php?code=39fd3c0f6f1a910b5ff0c18b4e544fe395d419a7&d=73148&u=publicdownload>
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Appendix A: Federal Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting Processes Matrix

The information below reflects the most current guidance available from CB and the Administration for Children and Families. For the most updated information, please see the links in the “Additional Information” section of the table below.

Federal Monitoring and Reporting Processes				
	CFSP	APSR	CFSR	PIP
Purpose	A 5-year strategic plan describing a state’s or tribe’s vision, goals for strengthening its child welfare system, and proposed integration and administration of programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. ²	A narrative report on progress made toward meeting each goal and objective of the CFSP. It also contains any changes in goals and objectives and services to be provided in the upcoming year.	This monitoring process enables CB to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements ◆ Determine what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services ◆ Assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes³ 	Addresses areas of nonconformity identified in the CFSR. Create lasting and statewide systemic change in key areas identified in the CFSR, while also addressing the immediate needs of children and families.
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Due every 5 years. ◆ Current cycle: FYs 2015–2019. ◆ The next CFSP planning for FYs 2020–2024 will be due by June 30, 2019.⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Due every year subsequent to CFSP. ◆ June 30 prior to the year for which state or tribe is applying.⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ For all states: FYs 2015–2019. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ States submit the completed Statewide Assessment Instrument no later than 2 months before the start of the Onsite Review period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ States must submit PIPs to CB for approval within 90 calendar days from the date on which the state is notified that it is not operating in substantial conformity with CFSP outcomes or systemic factors.

² Children’s Bureau. (n.d.). *State and tribal Child and Family Service Plan*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/programs/state-tribal-cfsp>

³ Children’s Bureau. (2014). *Child and Family Services Review fact sheet*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/fact-sheet/child-and-family-services-reviews-fact-sheet>

⁴ Children’s Bureau. (2018). *Program instruction ACYF-CB-PI-18-01*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/pi-18-01>

⁵ Children’s Bureau. (2018). *CFSP/APSR reporting requirements for states and tribes*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/cfsp/apsr-reporting-schedule-states-and-tribes>

Federal Monitoring and Reporting Processes

	CFSP	APSR	CFSR	PIP
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ General information ◆ Assessment of performance ◆ Plan for improvement over the 5-year period ◆ Agency services ◆ Consultation and coordination between states and tribes ◆ Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) ◆ Monthly caseworker Visit formula grants and standards for caseworker visits ◆ Adoption Incentive Payments (section 473A of the Act) ◆ Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Activities (applicable states only) ◆ Targeted plans within the CFSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ General information (collaboration) ◆ Update on assessment of performance ◆ Update to the plan for improvement and progress made to improve outcomes ◆ Update on service description ◆ Program support ◆ Consultation and coordination between states and tribes ◆ Monthly caseworker visit formula grant ◆ Adoption and legal guardianship incentive payments ◆ Child Welfare Demonstration Activities (applicable states only) ◆ Quality assurance system <p>Additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Section D: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) State Plan Requirements ◆ Section E: Chafee Foster Care Independence Program ◆ Education and Training Voucher Program ◆ Section F: Updates to Targeted Plans within the FYs 2015–2019 CFSP ◆ Section G: Statistical and Supporting Information ◆ Section H: Financial Information 	<p>Statewide Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Section I: General information about the state agency and a list of the Tribes, partners, and other participants involved in developing the assessment. ◆ Section II: State data profiles for the safety and permanency outcomes. ◆ Section III: Assessment of the seven outcome areas and explanation of the state’s performance in meeting the national standards as presented in section II. ◆ Section IV: Assessment of the statewide functioning of each of the seven systemic factors. <p>Onsite Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ State-conducted case reviews OR ◆ Traditional case reviews ◆ Cases must be reviewed using the Onsite Review Instrument: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Face Sheet ◆ Section I: Safety (Safety Outcomes 1 and 2) ◆ Section II: Permanency (Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2) ◆ Section III: Well-Being (Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Goals, strategies, or interventions ◆ Key activities ◆ Statewide data indicators requiring improvement (not required for Round 3 CFSR) ◆ Case review items requiring quantifiable measurement ◆ Systemic factor items requiring quantifiable measurement ◆ Program Improvement Plan reporting schedule ◆ Technical assistance

Federal Monitoring and Reporting Processes

	CFSP	APSR	CFSR	PIP
Child and Family Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Permanency for children. ◆ Well-being of children and their families. ◆ The nature, scope, and adequacy of existing child and family and related social services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ States should review the CFSR Statewide Assessment Instrument to ensure that all outcome items and systemic factor items are addressed in the 2019 APSR assessment and that data and information provided address the CFSR requirements. 	<p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect. ◆ Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. <p>Permanency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. ◆ The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families. <p>Family and child well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. ◆ Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs. ◆ Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The PIP must address any areas identified as not conforming with one or more of the seven outcomes or seven systemic factors assessed in the CFSR.

Federal Monitoring and Reporting Processes

	CFSP	APSR	CFSR	PIP
Systemic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The 2015–2019 CFSP requires states to assess their performance on the CFSR’s seven systemic factors.⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ States should review the CFSR Statewide Assessment Instrument to ensure agreed-upon systemic factor items are addressed in the 2019 APSR assessment and that data and information provided address the CFSR requirements.⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Statewide information system ◆ Case review system ◆ Quality assurance system ◆ Staff and provider training ◆ Service array and resource development ◆ Agency responsiveness to the community ◆ Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The PIP must address any areas identified as not conforming with one or more of the seven systemic factors assessed in the CFSR.
Additional Information	<p>Please visit https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/programs/state-tribal-cfsp/state-toolkit to see the most current information on the CFSP.</p>	<p>Please visit https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/programs/state-tribal-cfsp/state-toolkit to see the most current information on the APSR.</p>	<p>Please visit https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources to see the most current information on CFSR Rounds 3 and 4.</p>	<p>Please visit https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews to see the most current information on the PIP.</p>

⁶ Children’s Bureau. (2014). *Child and Family Services Review technical bulletin #7*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/child-and-family-services-review-technical-bulletin-7>

⁷ Children’s Bureau. (2018). *Checklist for 2019 APSR due June 30, 2018*. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/state_checklist_2019.pdf

Appendix B: Timing of Integrated Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting

The 2020–2024 CFSP requirements and parameters may differ from the information below. Please use the links in the table above to see the most current information on these processes.

Every 5 Years or More (Long-Term)

Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)

Updated assessment of Child and Family Outcomes and Systemic Factors and plan for improvement

Five-year strategic plan describing a state's or tribe's vision, goals for strengthening its child welfare system, and proposed integration and administration of programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. Includes assessment and reporting of the following:

CFSP requirements (for the 2015–19 CFSP)

1. General Information
 - a. State Agency Administering the Programs
 - b. Vision Statement
 - c. Collaboration
2. Assessment of Performance (Child and Family Outcomes and Systemic Factors)
 - a. Safety (Safety Outcomes 1 and 2)
 - b. Permanency (Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2)
 - c. Well-being (Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3)
 - d. Systemic Factors
3. Plan for Improvement
 - a. Goals
 - b. Objectives
 - c. Measures of Progress
 - d. Staff Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation
 - e. Implementation Supports
4. Services
 - a. Child and Family Services Continuum
 - b. Service Coordination (45 CFR 1357.15(m))
 - c. Service Description (45 CFR 1357.15(o))
 - d. Service Decision-Making Process for Family Support Services
 - e. Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment
 - f. Services for Children under the Age of Five
 - g. Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries
5. Consultation and Coordination Between States and Tribes
6. CAPTA State Plan Requirements
7. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee)
 - a. Background
 - b. NYTD
 - c. Instructions for Chafee Portions of CFSP
 - d. Education and Training Vouchers Program
 - e. Consultation with Tribes

8. Monthly Caseworker Visit Formula Grants and Standards for Caseworker Visits
9. Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments (section 473A of the Act)
10. Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Activities (applicable states only)
11. Quality Assurance System
12. Targeted Plans
 - a. Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan
 - b. Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan
 - c. Disaster Plan
 - c. Training Plan

Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR)

Formal assessment of Child and Family Outcomes and Systemic Factors for federal monitoring

Federal reviews to assess performance on Child and Family Outcomes and Systemic Factors using the Statewide Assessment and Onsite Review and to plan and implement strategies for improvement using the PIP (see Program Improvement Plans below). Collaboration between CB, state child welfare agency, and system partners is critical to the CFSR and ensuring conformity with federal child welfare requirements.

Statewide Assessment

CB prepares and transmits the data profile to the state, after which the state evaluates its performance on the Outcomes and Systemic Factors using the Statewide Assessment Instrument, which includes the following sections:

- I. General Information (Agency Information, Review Period, and Participants)
- II. Safety and Permanency Data (State Data Profile)
- III. Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes and Performance on National Standards
 - A. Safety (Safety Outcomes 1 and 2)
 - B. Permanency (Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2)
 - C. Well-Being (Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3)
- IV. Assessment of Systemic Factors
 - A. Statewide Information System
 - B. Case Review System
 - C. Quality Assurance System
 - D. Staff and Provider Training
 - E. Service Array and Resource Development
 - F. Agency Responsiveness to the Community
 - G. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Onsite review

A team of reviewers examines case records and conducts case-related and child, youth, and family interviews to collect qualitative and quantitative information on the Outcomes and Systemic Factors to supplement the data and information reported through the Statewide Assessment. Case reviews are conducted using the Onsite Review Instrument, which is organized as follows:

- ◆ Face Sheet
- ◆ Section I: Safety (Safety Outcomes 1 and 2)
- ◆ Section II: Permanency (Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2)
- ◆ Section III: Well-Being (Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3)

Every 2–4 Years (Short-Term)

Program Improvement Plans (PIP)

Plans to create systemic change based on results from federal and state monitoring, including:

Round 3 CFSR

Once the CFSR ends and CB issues the final report with determinations of substantial conformity, states are expected to continue their collaboration with the legal and judicial communities, families, Tribes, community partners, and other key partners to develop a PIP in consultation with CB. States should use their CFSP/APSR, Statewide Assessment, and ongoing CQI processes as a foundation for PIP development. By engaging with its partners and CB in ongoing review of data and in the development and implementation of the CFSP, the state should be well positioned to strategically address in its PIP any Outcomes and/or Systemic Factors requiring improvement.

The PIP includes:

- ◆ Agency information and timeframes (submission date, approval date, effective date, implementation period, reporting schedule)
- ◆ Part 1: Goals, strategies/interventions, and key activities
- ◆ Part 2: Measurement plan

Other monitoring processes for which a jurisdiction may implement a PIP or similar improvement plan include:

- ◆ Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews
- ◆ National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Reviews
- ◆ Automated Foster Care and Adoption Reporting System (AFCARS) Assessment Reviews
- ◆ Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS)
- ◆ State CQI Processes

Yearly (Annually, Semiannually)

APSR (upcoming APSR requirements will differ from below)

Interim assessment of Child and Family Outcomes and Systemic Factors

A narrative report on progress made toward meeting each goal and objective of the CFSP, any changes in goals and objectives, and services to be provided in the upcoming year. The APSRs are organized similarly to the CFSP, as outlined above, and include Grantee, Waiver, and PIP reporting.

2019 APSR Requirements

1. General Information (collaboration)
2. Update on Assessment of Performance
3. Update to the Plan for Improvement and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes
4. Update on Service Description
5. Program Support
6. Consultation and Coordination Between States and Tribes
7. Monthly Caseworker Visit Formula Grant
8. Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments
9. Child Welfare Demonstration Activities (applicable states only)
10. Quality Assurance System

Section D. CAPTA State Plan Requirements
Section E. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and Education and Training Voucher Program
Section F. Updates to Targeted Plans within the 2015–2019 CFSP
Section G. Statistical and Supporting Information
Section H. Financial Information

PIP reporting (periodic)

Monitoring of implementation of interventions and efforts to achieve PIP goals (e.g., periodic Round 3 CFSR PIP reports)

Once CB approves the PIP, federal officials partner with the state to jointly evaluate progress in meeting PIP goals. Once all goals are met, the PIP is complete.