

Child and Family Services Reviews Update

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Children's Bureau Emphasizes Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in Round 4 CFSTRs

The Children's Bureau (CB) is encouraging states to consider and include in their Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSTRs) and program improvement planning the perspectives of those who may experience bias, inequities, or underservice, either in their communities or by the systems seeking to serve them. As the CB explained during its national call with states on CFSTR Round 4 held in September 2021, broad, meaningful involvement of system partners and professionals throughout the CFSTR, including persons with lived experience, is necessary to assess disparities and strategize for change. These voices should also be a part of exit conferences and ongoing systemic improvement efforts. Such persons may include people of color, those with disabilities, those speaking English as a second language, LGBTQ+, young people, those living in poverty, and others from historically underserved and marginalized populations.

Focus Groups Planned on Engaging Young People With Lived Experience in the CFSTRs

The Children's Bureau will hold a series of focus groups in the coming months with young people with lived experience to provide a national snapshot of perspectives on how they can be engaged in the work of the CFSTRs. Participants in the three focus groups will be invited to discuss, through a series of questions and prompts, how young people can best be involved in and help to inform (1) the statewide data profiles and statewide assessment, (2) the onsite review, and (3) program improvement planning.

Legal and Judicial Communities' Involvement To Be Enhanced in Round 4 CFSTRs

Legal and judicial professionals are an integral part of every state's child welfare system, which works to achieve positive outcomes for children and their families. Courts, legal representatives, and agencies all have a tremendous impact on how children and families experience the child welfare system and on whether they benefit from the experience. Obtaining agencies', courts', and attorneys' perspectives is critical to understanding overall child welfare system functioning and identifying opportunities for improvement. The participation of legal system representatives from all levels is critical to ensuring that the CFSTR identifies judicial performance strengths and addresses the most pervasive legal and judicial barriers to positive outcomes for children and families served by the state child welfare system.

The fourth round of the CFSTRs will begin in 2022. This presents an important opportunity for enhanced partnerships to support better outcomes for children and families. The Children's Bureau believes it is essential that courts and agencies share responsibility for understanding their systems' level of effectiveness and that they work collaboratively to make improvements

where needed. In Round 3, in states where there was broader involvement from the legal and judicial communities, the Children's Bureau saw improvements in decision-making. Therefore, as Round 4 approaches, the Children's Bureau will be working with state child welfare agencies, State Court Improvement Programs (CIPs), and state legal and judicial communities to further build the breadth and depth of their engagement. In Round 4 as in past reviews, the State CIP will be charged with coordination of legal and judicial system involvement in the CFSR in fulfillment of the State CIP grant requirement to engage in meaningful and ongoing collaboration with the state child welfare agency.

QA Staff Training Module Goes Live

The third and final module, *QA Staff*, of the three-module Quality Assurance (QA) Course is now live on the E-Learning Academy (ELA) site on the CFSR Information Portal. The second module of the QA Course, *Reviewer QA*, was posted previously. The first module is *QA Overview*.

All portal account holders who are logged into their accounts can access the QA Course at <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/e-learning/osri-quality-assurance>. Learners who complete all module activities may request a Certificate of Completion by emailing ela@cfsrportal.org.

Spanish Translations in the Works for CFSR Instruments and Materials

The Children's Bureau is expanding the quantity of CFSR instruments and materials to be translated for Round 4. In addition to the instruments, translations are planned for fact sheets, reviewer briefs, and other guidance documents.