

# Child and Family Services Reviews

## STATE LEGAL-JUDICIAL SPECIALIST



### What is the State Legal-Judicial Specialist?

The state's selected Legal-Judicial Specialist will join the state's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) team to assist and support an elevated understanding of how legal and judicial policies and practices contribute to the outcomes achieved as part of the CFSR's review of the state's child welfare system.

The State Legal-Judicial Specialist is an expert in state child welfare laws and legal and judicial practices. They will assist in providing context and explanation for questions related to legal and judicial policies and practices arising during the CFSR. Adding this role to the state's CFSR team is encouraged but not mandatory.

The role of the State Legal-Judicial Specialist will be discussed during CFSR planning calls between the Children's Bureau and the state. Once the child welfare agency and Court Improvement Program (CIP) have jointly decided to add this role to the state's CFSR team, the State Legal-Judicial Specialist should be identified no later than 6 months before the onsite review.

### Who:

A person with a legal background chosen by the CIP and child welfare agency in consultation with the federal team. They are able to take on this time-limited assignment and:

- Have in-depth knowledge of legal and judicial policies, practices, and systems within the state;
- Understand federal and state child welfare laws;
- Have direct child welfare practice experience (do not need to be in current practice); and
- Have CFSR experience (preferred).
- Suggested individuals:
  - CIP Director or staff
  - Director of state agency/organization that represents parents
  - Director of state agency/organization that represents children
  - Retired judge or jurist in residence
  - Other court personnel with relevant background and experience

### Responsibilities:

- Participate in State Team Training on the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions and case review process.
- Work with the CFSR Unit Legal-Judicial Specialist to develop legal and judicial practice considerations for reviewers.
- Provide consultation to reviewers, quality assurance staff, and the federal team regarding any legal or judicial-related questions. (Will not give case ratings or provide opinions on how to rate case review items.)
- Support the design and development of questions for legal-judicial stakeholder interviews based on trends and data analysis identified in the Statewide Assessment and other areas for exploration, as negotiated by CB and the state, if needed. Participate in legal-judicial stakeholder interviews to provide clarification of legal processes and language as needed or requested by the review team.
- Assist the CFSR Legal-Judicial Specialist in summarizing legal and judicial practice trends observed during the statewide assessment and onsite review process.