

## **Introduction**

New York State is a state supervised, locally administered child welfare system<sup>1</sup>. The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is responsible for the oversight of the fifty-eight local departments of social services (districts), the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe<sup>2</sup>, and the voluntary agencies that contract with districts to provide for child welfare services. Similar to the first Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), OCFS reached out to our local departments of social services, voluntary agencies, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Office of Court Administration and other key state stakeholders to assist in developing our Statewide Assessment and the Program Improvement Plan (PIP). This collaboration focused on the assessment of the review findings; identification of the factors contributing to our performance or report findings; identification of current initiatives upon which to build; and identification of data by which to measure improved performance.

OCFS continues to engage in many initiatives that were started as part of the CFSR PIP to improve outcomes for children and families. Not all of the work done by OCFS or the districts will be captured in this PIP. Rather, this PIP will strategically focus on key areas that are of significant importance to the children, youth and families of our State. While each district will be expected to improve outcomes, OCFS will work most closely with the thirteen districts (Albany, Broome, Dutchess, Erie, Monroe, Nassau, Onondaga, Oneida, Orange, Schenectady Suffolk, Westchester and New York City Administration for Children's Services) with the highest foster care populations, the voluntary agencies they contract with, and their respective courts to identify key strategies that will improve outcomes in these districts. Performance data will be shared with all districts and voluntary agencies throughout the life of the PIP, in order to monitor the effectiveness of practice strategies and system factors that impact outcome achievement. Lessons learned from these thirteen districts will be shared statewide.

## **Background**

The first CFSR was done in New York State in 2001. As with all other states, New York was not in substantial conformity with National Standards and was required to complete a PIP. The PIP was approved by the

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<sup>1</sup> "OCFS is directly responsible for juvenile delinquents placed into its care by the Family Court.

<sup>2</sup> OCFS and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe have a State/Tribal agreement for St. Regis to administer child welfare programs. Hereinafter, St. Regis, unless otherwise referenced, will be included as a "district".

Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau (ACF/Children's Bureau) in April 2003. During 2003-2005, OCFS implemented a series of strategies aimed at improving outcomes for children and families within the child welfare system. OCFS shared performance data, policy papers, and tool kits with local districts and voluntary agencies to improve outcomes. Monthly meetings were held with Strategy Coordinators to monitor the work being done, and to assess statewide performance. While the actual PIP was completed in April 2005, OCFS continued much of the work that began during the PIP. Workgroups such as the Adolescent Services and Outcomes and the Permanency Now (formerly the Adoption Now) workgroup continue to meet and work on issues specific to both groups.

### **Process Used to Develop the Current CFSR Program Improvement Plan**

On May 9, 2008, ACF/Children's Bureau conducted an exit conference with administrative staff from OCFS to review the preliminary findings of the on-site review. The on-site review of 64 cases at three locations (NYC-Administration for Children's Services, Rockland County and Onondaga County), and interviews with state and local stakeholders was held from May 5-9, 2008.

Based on the preliminary findings shared by ACF/Children's Bureau, OCFS began designing a draft PIP which focuses on two major themes: Safety and Permanency/Well-Being.

The draft PIP was vetted with the field in an effort to solicit feedback. OCFS' framework for addressing the outcomes was based on the premise that New York State's work needed to be "statewide and caseworker deep". Three questions were presented at each session with stakeholders:

- Does the CFSR PIP capture the work that needs to get done in order to improve the outcomes of safety (recurrence), and permanency/well being (timeliness and services)?
- How can OCFS effectively implement the CFSR PIP with districts and agencies?
- What forms of communication would you find helpful in the sharing of information related to data and performance practice?

Sessions were held with the stakeholders at the following locations:

- September 17, 2008: Statewide Director of Services (White Eagle Retreat Center)
- September 29, 2008: Court Improvement Steering Committee (Rensselaer)

- September 30, 2008: Upstate Commissioners, Executive Directors of Voluntary Agencies, foster parents, foster youth, Judges, court staff, and advocates (UPS Leadership Summit – Rensselaer)
- October 31, 2008: Tribal Consultation (representatives from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Seneca, Cayuga and Oneida Nations)
- November 19, 2008: Adolescent Services and Outcomes Workgroup (Rensselaer)
- November 24, 2008: New York City and Downstate County Administrators, Executive Directors of Voluntary Agencies, foster parents, a youth, court staff, and advocates (NYC Leadership Summit –Manhattan)

Stakeholders noted that implementation of the PIP will require consistent and ongoing communication with all stakeholders in order for the practice strategies to take root statewide. Feedback indicated a strong preference for face-to-face communication. This can be accomplished through the use of Regional Forums and Director of Services meetings on the state level and supervisor to worker meetings on the local and agency level. These suggestions will be incorporated into the way in which OCFS works with the districts and agencies during the life of the PIP. Wherever possible, the latest in technology will be explored as a possible communication tool.

OCFS will continue our collaborative relationship with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) through meetings and our participation on the OCA Court Improvement Project Advisory Board.

### **Organization of the Program Improvement Plan**

As with the first CFSR PIP, this PIP will be guided by the principles of the OCFS Operational Framework and the Framework of Child Welfare Practice. The PIP is based on practice strategies that are responsive to local community strengths and needs and will have at its heart, family-centered practice to improve outcomes.

On March 17, 2009, the final report from HHS/ACYF was received noting strengths and areas needing improvement.

The report highlighted the following:

#### **Strengths:**

- Item 1, which pertains to the timeliness of investigations, was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 5, which pertains to foster care reentry, was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 10, which pertains to meeting the permanency needs of children with a case plan goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA), was rated as a Strength in both of the applicable cases.

- Item 11, which pertains to proximity of children’s placements to their parents or close relatives, was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 22, which pertains to meeting children’s physical health needs, was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of applicable cases.
- The State also met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability (Composite 4).
- New York was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Quality Assurance (QA) System and Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

**Areas needing improvement:**

- Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs) was substantially achieved in only 34.4 percent of the 64 cases reviewed.
- Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in only 40 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.
- Permanency Outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved) was substantially achieved in only 42.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.
- New York did not meet the national standards for the safety-related data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by their foster parents or facility staff members.
- New York did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the timeliness and permanency of reunification (Permanency Composite 1), the timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2), and achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended periods of time (Permanency Composite 3).
- With regard to individual items, the most critical concern identified pertained to achieving adoptions in a timely manner, which was rated as a Strength in only 18 percent of the applicable cases.
- For the following items, less than 50 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength:
  - Item 13—Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care (47 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 15—Relative placements (45 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 16—Relationship of child in foster care with parents (42 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 17—Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents (36 percent of cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 18—Child and parent involvement in case planning (43 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 20—Caseworker visits with parents (39 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
- The State was not in substantial conformity on the following systemic factors: Statewide Information System; Case Review System; Training; Service Array, and Foster and Adoptive parent Licensing, Recruitment and

To address the areas needing improvement, OCFS has structured this PIP around two key outcomes: safety, and permanency/well-being. Under each of these outcomes is listed a series of practice strategies aimed at improving performance in each area. Several of these practice strategies cut across more than one outcome and will be listed more than once.

Within OCFS, the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (OCFS/CWCS) is the statewide oversight entity for the locally administered child welfare system. OCFS/CWCS provides direct oversight of local districts and licensed voluntary agencies through a regional office structure. OCFS/CWCS provides oversight and support through each of the six regions in the state – Albany, Buffalo, NYC, Rochester, Spring Valley, and Syracuse.

Districts will be required to complete a local self-assessment using performance data and input from local stakeholders to assess strengths in their practice and service delivery system and areas needing improvement. Additionally, they will be required to implement a program improvement plan that focuses on safety and permanency and well-being. OCFS/CWCS will provide enhanced support to the thirteen districts with the highest foster care population as a means of promoting improved outcomes for the majority of the children placed in out of home care and in receipt of preventive services.

As indicated by ACF/Children's Bureau at NY's exit conference, NY needs to focus their efforts on making sure practice initiatives are implemented statewide and drilled down the caseworker level. This will be a key theme in NY's PIP over the next two years. To that end, NY will focus on one primary practice principle- Family Engagement.

Family engagement is both a principle of practice and a set of specific methods by which families are involved in assessing their needs, charting the pathway for meeting those needs and assessing their progress. Starting at the first point of contact and continuing throughout the life of the case, family engagement will be the guiding principle for improving or establishing practices that include involving the parents and youth (and extended family if appropriate) in the assessment of safety, risk, needs and strengths, and in the case planning process through effective use of interpersonal skills, family-friendly local polices, and family meetings. Also included as part of family engagement is concurrent planning, fostering family connections through visiting and the identification and location of all parents. This one key practice principle is the foundation upon which OCFS will base our practice improvement agenda.

## **Program Improvement Strategies**

### **Infuse and implement family-centered principles into casework practice that promotes family engagement across all stages of the child welfare delivery system.**

In 2003, New York State developed a Child and Family Service Review Program Improvement Plan (CFSR-PIP) which had, as its foundation, the advancement of child centered, family focused case practice. At the epicenter of this work is family engagement. National research, as well as input from New York State stakeholders, lead us to the conclusion that when a family is actively engaged in developing a plan to improve their family functioning, they are more likely to commit to the goals and the personal work required to achieve those goals. This year's CFSR-PIP continues New York State's commitment to family engagement as the focus of our efforts. While progress has been made toward the development of a family-led child welfare system, there is more that needs to be done to take this practice statewide.

This decision is based on our belief that families are the experts in their own family and best able to identify their own strengths. Solutions to family issues are most likely to be found within the context of the extended family. The nature of the casework relationship is the key to engaging families. The ability and willingness of families to participate in planning and working toward the common goals is directly related to the beliefs, values, attitudes and engagement skills of the caseworkers. The beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge and skills that caseworkers bring to their work with families and children will determine how well the caseworker is able to engage them in planning and working together toward common goals. Caseworkers need to exhibit empathy, genuineness, respect and cultural awareness in their everyday work with families. These core attitudes for helping, along with interpersonal, assessment, critical thinking and decision-making skills; require development and reinforcement through effective supervision.

OCFS is committed to supporting and enhancing the frontline case practice of family engagement. The CFSR-PIP is targeted at capacity building at the local level, including addressing basic underlying beliefs and principles of family engagement. Developing the caseworkers' and supervisors' knowledge base and skills, supporting cultural competency of frontline casework staff, and enhancing organizational culture and infrastructure are necessary to support family engagement.

Family engagement work begins with the knock on the front door by child protective services. Child protective investigations are usually perceived by families as adversarial since there is, by definition, a questioning of a parents' ability to adequately care for their children. The caseworker needs to engage the family as partners in identifying the resources and needs of the family, and in securing the safety and well-being of the children.

From the initial contacts and through-out the life of the case, family engagement is at the core of helping a family address their children's need for safety, permanency and well-being. In addition to the casework relationship itself (including regular and consistent casework contact with the child and parent/caregiver with a focus on assessing safety and risk of the child) and the impact of that relationship on influencing change, stakeholders involved in developing the PIP identified several key aspects of casework where family engagement is particularly vital. Several of these began during our first program improvement plan and will continue during the current PIP. These include:

- Enhancing Family Decision-making Meetings

In a Family Meeting, parents, children if age appropriate, and relevant extended family or others identified as important to finding solutions, come to the table to plan for protecting the children and keeping them safe. Extended family and fictive kin are vital to developing a web of informal supports around the family and the child(ren) which can be kept in place long after the case is closed to child welfare. These meetings will help illicit information from the family which will be used in making better safety decisions and risk assessments both initially and on an ongoing basis. If out of home placement becomes necessary, the focus of the Family Meeting will include addressing the child's permanency and well being. Once the family has decided what they need to keep their children safe, they can ask the service provider to assist them in achieving their goals. Included in these meetings is the identification of any services the child and parents/caregivers need, a review of the child's stability, the geographic proximity of the placement, whether it is appropriate to place the siblings together, the appropriateness of the child's permanency goal, and a review of the child's educational, medical, and mental health needs. Copies of written case plans and notices of reviews and hearings are shared with the family.

- Enhancing Locating and Engaging Fathers and Relatives

Fathers, who too frequently have been "invisible" in the child welfare planning process, are an essential resource to their child, not only psychologically but also as a resource for helping a caseworker make better safety and risk assessments as well as being a potential permanency resource. Engaging fathers may begin with locating an absent father. Bringing the father into the case planning process, requires sensitivity to complex family dynamics. Once engaged, the father may be able to develop a meaningful relationship with his children, provide a safe home for them, and can model effective parenting to his children. Consideration

of not only the father, but his entire extended family, broadens the opportunity for the child to experience meaningful family connections and potential permanency resources.

- Coached Family Visiting

When a child is placed in out of home care, focused visiting is essential to expediting a successful return home. Utilizing visiting coaches, the caseworker and the parent identify together what the parent needs to learn and use during visiting in order to bring their child safely back home. Coached visiting focuses on the presenting issues that brought the child into care, and may include practicing a skill, developing awareness of child developmental needs, or healing a wounded relationship. An individualized visitation plan is a key part of the overall case plan to support the child's permanency goal.

- Enhancing Concurrent Planning

When a child is placed in out of home care, the caseworker addresses the child's need for permanency with a sense of urgency. This requires the caseworker to engage the parents in developing a plan to return the child home, including identifying an alternative placement resource in the event the child is not able to return home. The caseworker must work concurrently, not sequentially, with the parent and with the identified alternative placement resource.

- Expansion of Family Assessment Response

As part of OCFS' commitment to family engagement, OCFS began implementing a differential response approach to child protective reports, known as Family Assessment Response (FAR) in 2008. During 2008, six districts were approved to implement FAR, Chautauqua, Erie, Onondaga, Orange, Tompkins, and Westchester. In 2009, an additional eight districts/tribes were selected to implement FAR, Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Columbia, Essex, Monroe, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, and Washington. OCFS is looking to further expand FAR during 2010.

FAR is a child protective response that does not require a determination of the allegations and individual culpability for certain families reported to the State Central Register. It is an alternative approach to providing protection to child by focusing on engaging families in informal and formal support services that meet their needs and increases their ability to care for their children. FAR requires an initial assessment of child safety. If a child is assessed to be in danger, the report may not be handled using a family assessment response. States have found that a family assessment approach is less threatening to and more engaging of families. It allows the family to have a larger role in determining what services will benefit their children and

the local district is more likely to be viewed by the family as a helping entity in the future should issues arise that create risk to children.

OCFS will seek to make the FAR legislation permanent as it is to sunset in June 2011.

**Continued collaboration with the Office of Court Administration to enhance court and promote local district and court collaborations aimed at improving timely permanency and improved well-being for children in foster care.**

OCFS and the Office of Court Administration (OCA) are committed to improving permanency outcomes for children in New York State. OCFS and the OCA Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) will work together to build effective collaboration between the Family Court and the social services districts with the highest foster care populations in the State through the Model Court Initiative. OCFS will support the development of enhanced court practices in the Family Courts and provide a process by which certain data maintained by both local departments of social services and Family Courts can be shared to evaluate the impact of innovations to promote improved outcomes for children.

OCFS and CWCIP have identified the following shared goals to improve court practices in support of New York State's Program Improvement Plan:

- Earlier time to permanency (reunification and adoption) will be aided by faster time to court adjudication and disposition in child abuse and neglect proceedings, and termination of parental rights. This will be supported by:
  - Enhanced reporting of relevant data;
  - Conferencing and mediation programs;
  - Promoting that every Family Court appearance is meaningful;
  - Allowing fewer and shorter adjournments;
  - Encouraging all parties and attorneys to appear in family court on time and prepared for the scheduled proceedings and all required reports are submitted in a timely manner; and
  - Once proceedings are commenced in Family Court, proceedings should be concluded expeditiously.
- Children, youth, foster and adoptive parents, and caregivers will be provided notice of and the opportunity to participate in their permanency hearings.
- Reviews of the appropriateness of permanency goals, and services to children, parents and foster parents will occur.

- Families in recovery from alcohol and other drugs will benefit from the inclusion of treatment providers in local collaborations to enhance integrated case planning and coordination.

The specific strategies to achieve these goals will differ among jurisdictions but the hallmark approach will be the development of collaborative, interdisciplinary stakeholder groups in each jurisdiction. This recognizes that system collaboration is important not only at the State level but also at the local level - district by district and Family Court by Family Court. OCFS' strategies will include cross-training so that legal, judicial, social service staff and other stakeholders are trained on topics of mutual interest to further the goals of the collaborative initiative. Integrated training events and local collaborative meetings will be opportunities for Family Court personnel, local departments of social services staff and other stakeholders to identify barriers to effective collaboration and to design effective local change efforts and best practices.

OCFS and CWCIP will designate key staff as members of a Statewide PIP Court Collaboration Project Team to achieve our shared goals. The strategy leads from OCFS and CWCIP will utilize the resources available through the National Resource Centers for Organizational Improvement and Legal and Judicial Issues, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, and other sources to support our work to enhance permanency outcomes for the children of New York State.

#### **Expand trauma informed practice in congregate care**

During New York's first federal CFSR and program improvement plan, there was recognition of the risk associated with models of residential care that focused on controlling children's behavior, rather than enhancing skills for self regulation and control. Interventions that were intended to control and direct the behavior of young people were found to have unintended consequences, including the potential for injuries and sabotaged treatment gains. The framework of trauma informed practice was identified as a mechanism to move residential care to a more collaborative, therapeutic and relationship driven modality. New York is committed to the continued expansion of trauma informed practice as a means to reduce and prevent abuse or maltreatment, as well as to reduce physical restraints in residential foster care settings.

#### **Improve Service Array**

Meeting the mental health needs of children in out-of-home care is critical to promoting their well-being and permanency. The Bridges to Health (B2H) Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver Program is designed specifically for children in foster care with significant mental health needs, developmental disabilities or who are medically fragile. With approval from the Department of Health and Human Services, B2H offers 14 uniquely designed services not otherwise available in the community to children with these complex medical conditions, and does so in the context of their often complicated family and caregiver network.

By supporting children in foster care in the least-restrictive home or community setting, the B2H Waiver Program provides opportunities for improving the health and well-being of the children served, and supporting stability and permanency planning. The B2H Waiver Program consists of three Waivers: B2H for children with serious emotional disturbances (B2H SED); B2H for children with developmental disabilities (B2H DD); and B2H for children with medically fragile conditions (B2H MedF). The B2H Waiver Program is designed to recognize that children in foster care can have many caregivers involved in their lives. In the program, children are served in the most home-like setting possible, involving those in the caregiver network, whenever appropriate—foster family, birth family, and adoptive family members. By wrapping services around the entire caregiver network, B2H hopes to keep children out of more costly, institutional care.

B2H services complement, but do not duplicate, services provided to these children through other programs, such as foster care. The children may enter the B2H Waiver Program only while in foster care, but once in the program they may be eligible for services after discharge from foster care until age 21 if the child remains otherwise eligible. Further, by having the same services available in each waiver for the enrolled children, regardless of the qualifying disability, B2H creates new opportunities for serving children with cross-system needs.

B2H is currently available in the following OCFS Regions: Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Lower Hudson Valley and New York City. There are 12 Health Care Integration Agencies under contract with OCFS with 32 waiver service providers under subcontract with the Health Care Integration Agencies. As of March 31, 2009, there were 550 children enrolled in the 1476 available slots. OCFS will expand the B2H Waiver Program to the two remaining regions – Buffalo and Long Island, with a goal of providing 3305 slots statewide.

Additionally, through the OCFS and OCA court collaboration, families affected by substance abuse will be the focus of a pilot in three counties. Protocols will be developed for handling cases that intersect the Family Court, child welfare and substance abuse systems.

OCFS will also continue our collaboration with sister state agencies exploring ways to improve service accessibility and availability for children and families. Currently, OCFS is participating in the Children's Cabinet with a focus on Disconnected Youth and the Commissioners Committee on Cross Systems focusing on the Office of Mental Health's Children Plan. Both of these initiatives are aimed at improving New York State's service array.

### **Redesign Statewide Information System**

The Statewide Assessment noted concerns regarding the accuracy and currency of information relevant to a child's goals due to challenges surrounding the timeliness of data entry into New York's statewide information system

(CONNECTIONS). OCFS has proposed several ways to promote more timely data entry of permanency planning information in CONNECTIONS that will increase the accuracy of the information available to caseworkers.

The CONNECTIONS Transformation Business Team was formed in November of 2007 and tasked with assessing the needs of caseworkers and making recommendations to create a more caseworker-centric system. One of the areas the Business Team has looked at is the timeliness and accuracy of program choices and planning goals.

As part of CAMP (CONNECTIONS Architecture Modernization Project), a priority has been placed on streamlining and simplifying the navigation within the system. Caseworkers will no longer need to drill down several levels to access necessary information and then drill back out to return to their starting point. Once the transformed workload is rolled out in the first part of 2010, caseworkers will be provided with "Fastpaths" to navigate to various components of the electronic case record. Ultimately, caseworkers will be able to access placement and permanency goal information from their workload with one or two clicks as compared to the many steps currently necessary. By simplifying navigation, caseworkers will need to devote less time to data entry.

Additionally, the Business Team has been working with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to streamline the Permanency Hearing Report that is produced by caseworkers and provided to Family Court. This document provides a summary of key information about each child in Foster Care. Currently this document is a template that the caseworker must complete or modify prior to each Permanency Hearing. In the second half of 2010, a new dynamic Permanency Hearing Report will be available to caseworkers. One feature of this enhanced document is that it will display only those questions that pertain to the child's permanency goal. This will make it more evident to the caseworker when the goal is incorrect or out-of-date. For example, if the child's goal is adoption and the document is presenting questions regarding a return to the parents, this should prompt the caseworker to update the goal in CONNECTIONS.

Another way OCFS plans to promote timely case recording is by providing foster care caseworkers with roughly 1,800 laptop computers by the end of 2009. It is believed that this will help to free caseworkers from the need to continually return to their offices to input data. Allowing caseworkers to access CONNECTIONS case data from a remote location means they will be able to record changes to permanency goals while still at Family Court or elsewhere in the field, and to document casework contacts. The more quickly and easily caseworkers can record this information, the more likely it is to be correct and up-to-date.

OCFS believes that these three strategies will help to promote more contemporaneous documentation in CONNECTIONS which will, in turn, lead to more accurate and reliable permanency planning data.

**Expand recruitment of foster and adoptive parents and clarify foster care standards for consistent implementation statewide**

Foster and adoptive parents play a critical role in providing permanency and well being for children entrusted to their care. Local districts and agencies should establish and maintain a pool of qualified, ethnically and racially diverse foster/adoptive parents. To assist local districts and agencies with the challenges of recruitment, OCFS has a training contract that provides foster/adoptive family recruitment and retention technical assistance, consultation, and materials development to local districts and agencies. This contract is designed to support the on-going recruitment and retention of ethnically, racially, and culturally competent foster and adoptive parents.

OCFS will strengthen the language of its training contracts and work with the trainers to enhance the current technical assistance provided to districts and agencies on recruiting and retaining foster/adoptive families that reflect the cultural, ethnic and racial diversity of the children being placed into care. It should also include a focus on finding foster and adoptive families for adolescents, and sibling groups. Technical assistance should include the latest in recruitment tools and strategies.

OCFS regional office staff will review and share data indicating the rate of placements of children and youth with families of similar race and ethnicity with training contract staff. Working jointly with OCFS Regional staff, training contract staff will assess district readiness and identify what technical assistance is needed.

Additionally, OCFS is committed to improving the safety of children who live in foster boarding homes in New York State. OCFS will work together with local departments of social services and voluntary agencies to review and clarify as necessary the standards for certifying/approving foster boarding homes to promote statewide consistency in the implementation of foster care standards.

**Enhance training of local and voluntary agency staff to address the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties**

OCFS will conduct a survey of local districts and a conference call with voluntary agencies to identify their training needs for 2011 and to identify barriers to their participation in trainings. This information will be used to inform OCFS' training plan and its implementation.

Additionally, OCFS will review and provide guidance related to the initial and ongoing training and technical assistance offered by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to voluntary agency staff, who through the

Improved Outcomes for Children initiative will be responsible for the case planning and management of child welfare cases (preventive and foster care). ACS's training and technical assistance will focus on Family Team Conferencing facilitation training. Refresher days will also be included.

**Attachment A Children's Bureau  
Child and Family Services Reviews  
Program Improvement Plan  
Suggested Standard Format**

States are encouraged to use this PIP standard format to submit their PIP to the Children's Bureau Regional Office. The standard format includes the following sections:

- I. PIP General Information
- II. PIP Strategy Summary and TA Plan, Matrix Instructions and Quality Assurance Checklist
- III. PIP Agreement Form (authorizing signatures)
- IV. PIP Matrix

**I. PIP General Information**

CB Region:	I	II	X	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
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28. Brian Kelley, CONNECTIONS Business Team, OCFS

\*List key individuals who are actually working on the PIP and not necessarily everyone who was consulted during the PIP development process.

- **Primary Strategies:** In this section of the PIP Strategy Summary and TA Plan, the State summarizes the broad strategy approaches that address the key concerns from the review and serve as a framework for goals/negotiated measures, benchmarks, and action steps. These approaches include the overarching reforms and continuing strategies that build on prior program improvement plan activity. The primary strategies should reflect integration with the timeframes of other plans, such as the CFSP. Primary strategies should be assigned unique numbers to allow cross-walking to action steps and benchmarks.
- **Key Concerns:** In this section, the State summarizes the key concerns that will be addressed over the course of the PIP implementation period. These key concerns should be consistent with those identified through the CFSP and included in the Final Report.
- **TA Resources Needed:** In this section, the State identifies the TA resources needed to carry out the provisions of the strategies for each year of the PIP. The source, frequency, and duration of the TA should be summarized, including both Federal and non-Federal sources.

## PIP Strategy Summary and TA Plan

State: New York

Date Submitted: May 5, 2009; resubmitted September 21, 2009, resubmitted December 11, 2009

See attached

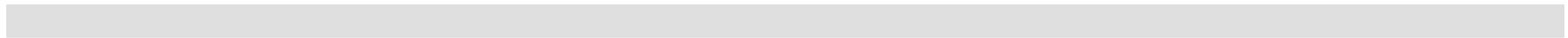


**Amendments**

This section should be completed only in the event of renegotiations regarding the content of the PIP, pursuant to 45 CFR 1355.35(e)(4). Copies of approved, renegotiated PIPs must be retained and distributed as noted above immediately upon completion of the renegotiation process.

The renegotiated content of the attached PIP, as summarized below, has been approved by State personnel and the Children's Bureau Regional Office with authority to negotiate such content and is approved by Federal and State officials:

<b>Renegotiated Action Steps, Benchmarks or Improvement Goal</b>	<b>Date Renegotiated</b>	<b>Approval of State Executive Officer for Child Welfare Services</b>
		<b>Approval Children's Bureau</b>



#### IV. PIP Matrix

State: New York

Type of Report: PIP: X Quarterly Report:      (Quarter:     )

Date Submitted: May 5, 2009; resubmitted September 21, 2009; Resubmitted December 11, 2009

#### Part A: Strategy Measurement Plan and Quarterly Status Report

Primary Strategy:					
Goal:					
Action Steps and Benchmarks	Person Responsible	Evidence of Completion	Quarter Due	Quarter Completed	Quarterly Update
<i>Renegotiated Action Steps and Benchmarks</i>					

#### Part B: National Standards Measurement Plan and Quarterly Status Report

Safety Outcome 1: Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment	
National Standard	94.6%
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	88.7
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period	86.3
Negotiated Improvement Goal	86.8
Renegotiated Improvement Goal	

Status (Enter the current quarter measurement for the reported quarter.)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
<b>Safety Outcome 1: Absence of Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care</b>												
National Standard	99.68%											
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	99.66%											
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period	98.27											
Negotiated Improvement Goal	98.37											
Renegotiated Improvement Goal												
Status (Enter the current quarter measurement for the reported quarter.)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification</b>												
National Standard	122.6											
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	96.3											
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period	90.8											
Negotiated Improvement Goal	93.4											
Renegotiated Improvement Goal												
Status (Enter the current quarter measurement for the reported quarter.)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Timeliness of Adoptions</b>												
National Standard	106.4											
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	57.8											
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period	56.1											
Negotiated Improvement Goal	57.7											

Renegotiated Improvement Goal												
Status (Enter the current quarter measurement for the reported quarter.)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Achieving Permanency for Children in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time</b>												
National Standard	121.7											
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	110.8											
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period	110.8											
Negotiated Improvement Goal	113.9											
Renegotiated Improvement Goal												
Status (Enter the current quarter measurement for the reported quarter.)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Placement Stability</b>												
National Standard	101.5											
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	108.1											
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period												
Negotiated Improvement Goal												
Renegotiated Improvement Goal												
Status (Enter the current quarter measurement for the reported quarter.)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12

**Part C: Item-Specific and Quantitative Measurement Plan and Quarterly Status Report**

Outcome/Systemic Factor:_____		Item:_____											
Performance as Measured in Final Report													
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period													
Negotiated Improvement Goal													
Method of Measuring Improvement													
Renegotiated Improvement Goal													
Status (Enter the current quarter measurement for the reported quarter.)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	