



Enhancing Delivery of Services Steering Committee

**Recommendations to Secretary Barbara
J. Vigil and Children, Youth and Families
Department (CYFD)**

DECEMBER 2022

Executive Summary

In June 2022, the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) Cabinet Secretary Barbara J. Vigil convened a group of twenty-four diverse experts from the child welfare system to form a Steering Committee to provide CYFD with recommendations on how to make improvements related to CYFD.

Specifically, the group was asked to:

- 1.) Take an informed measure of the child welfare system in New Mexico, then use those insights to help CYFD enhance the delivery of services to the state's children and families.
- 2.) Find ways for CYFD to respond to concerns our clients and constituents have raised, without bogging down its ability to serve them in unnecessary and cumbersome layers of bureaucracy.

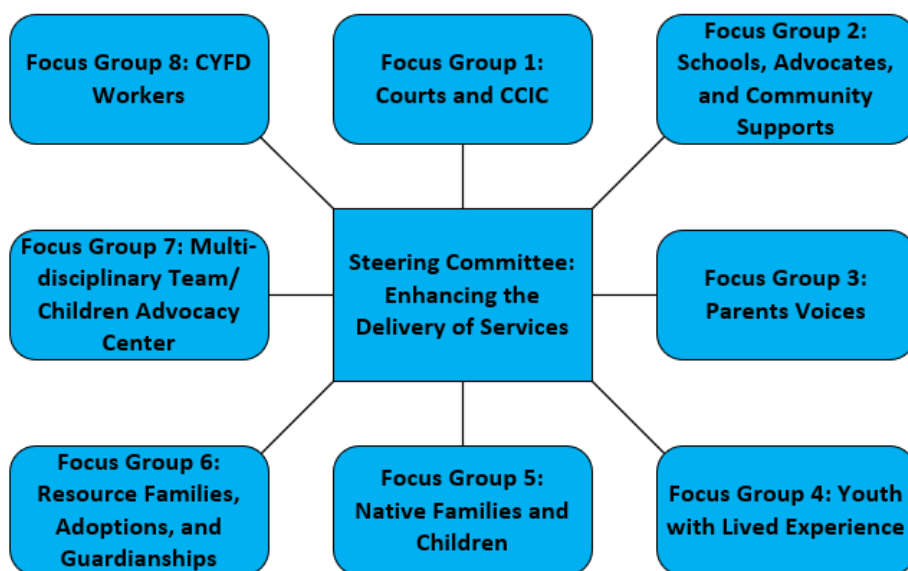
The Steering Committee work and all background information are posted here at the [CYFD Enhancing Delivery of Services Steering Committee](https://cyfd.org/enhancing-delivery-of-services-steering-committee) at <https://cyfd.org/enhancing-delivery-of-services-steering-committee>

Members

Name	Affiliation
Maralyn Beck	Executive Director, NM Child First Network
Judge Catherine Begaye	Presiding Children's Court Judge, Second Judicial District Court
Shelly Bucher	Director, Substitute Care Advisory Council
Representative Meredith Dixon	Member, NM House of Representatives
Alison Endicott-Quinones	Legal Director, Advocacy Inc.
Melissa Ewer	Director, NM Children's Alliance
Gary Housepian	Chief Executive Officer, Disability Rights NM
Queva Hubbard	Parent Mentor Coordinator, NM Family Advocacy Program
Senator Gay Kernan	Member, New Mexico Senate
Senator Linda Lopez	Member, New Mexico Senate
Jolene Martinez	Chief Operating Officer, Families and Youth Innovations Plus
Deannah Neswood-Gishey	Executive Director, Navajo Nation Division of Social Services
Senator Jerry Ortiz Y Pino	Member, New Mexico Senate
Annie Rasquin	Executive Director, CASA First Judicial District
Veronica Ray Krupnik	CASA First Judicial District, Coordinator M.A.P.S Program
Shelley Repp	Executive Director, NM Dream Center
Arika E. Sánchez	Director of Policy and Advocacy, NMCAN
Sean Scates	MDT Coordinator, Chavez County CASA
Judge Angie Schneider	Chief Judge, Twelfth Judicial District Court
Representative Candie Sweetser	Member, NM House of Representatives
Leticia Tafoya	Executive Director, High Desert Family Services
Marsha Vallo	Child Welfare Specialist, Pueblo of Acoma Social Services
Judge Marie Ward	Chief Judge, Second Judicial District Court
Jacqueline Yalch	Director, Pueblo of Isleta Social Services

Work of the Committee

From June 2022 through October 2022, the Committee met ten times. Casey Family Programs conducted numerous focus group discussions with eight stakeholder groups involved in the child welfare system and provided an extensive report from those focus groups to the Committee. The Committee also heard eight briefings on the ongoing work of CYFD and others prior to beginning the process of creating recommendations.



Focus Groups facilitated and administered by Case Family Programs

This document contains one overarching recommendation and fifteen specific recommendations for Secretary Vigil. The recommendations have been formed based on the professional and personal experiences of the Committee members, the information shared in the Focus Groups, and the ongoing efforts of CYFD and others. The Committee chose to include CYFD's ongoing efforts within the recommendations in this report.

Recognizing the diversity of viewpoints of its members, the Committee worked closely to craft the language of the recommendations over many meetings and many hours but did not require consensus to include any recommendation in this report. By way of a survey administered by a neutral third party (the Corinne Wolfe Center for Child and Family Justice at the University of New Mexico School of Law), the group rated the support for each recommendation and provided a priority ranking to provide information to CYFD on where to prioritize efforts. Those rankings and ratings are listed next to each recommendation.

The Committee's recommendations are meant to assist CYFD in becoming a healthier and more effective agency. The following information is organized into four sections: Overarching Recommendation, Internal Responsiveness, External Responsiveness, and Legislative Efforts.

The Overarching Recommendation provides the structure and order in which the recommendations are found within the report. The Committee underscored the need for CYFD to be more responsive internally by establishing the right culture within the organization; there are seven sections in this report discussing internal priorities for enhancing CYFD's delivery of services. The Committee also analyzed the ways in which CYFD should be more responsive externally; there are seven sections in this report discussing external priorities. Finally, the last section of the report examines potential legislative efforts and steps that could support CYFD and Secretary Vigil in CYFD's work toward enhancing responsiveness to the agency's staff and to the children and families that it serves. The Committee provided input on their own support of each recommendation and the priority of each as compared to all fifteen recommendations. Those survey results are provided within each recommendation.

The work of the Steering Committee is greatly appreciated.

Julia Hosford Barnes, Facilitator

Contents

Overarching Recommendation.....	5
Be Internally Responsive: Establishing the Right Culture at CYFD	7
1.A. Study, Review, Establish, and Publish CYFD Protocols to Ensure Child Health and Safety	7
1.B. Establish Internal and External Communication Protocols to Follow	8
1.C. Create and Implement a Culture Change Strategy	9
1.D. Build and Sustain a Professional Workforce.....	12
1.E. Provide Workforce Supports.....	13
1.F. Maximize Federal Title IV-E Funding.....	14
1.G. Develop a Workforce Retention Plan and Training Program	15
Be Externally Responsive: Enhancing Delivery of Services to New Mexico’s Children and Families	17
1.H. Clarify Grievance Procedures and Rights of People Within the System.....	17
1.I. Address Confidentiality Issues	18
1.J. Support Foster Parent Associations.....	19
1.K. Use Data to Identify Trends and Post Data Reports Frequently.....	20
1.L. Make It Easy to Find Information	21
1.M. Improve Utilization of Substitute Care Advisory Council	23
1.N. Continue an Advisory Entity	24
1.O. Legislative Efforts	26
Options Related to Oversight of Grievances (Legislative or Internal Options).....	26

Overarching Recommendation

Overall, the Committee recommends that CYFD continue to work to become a responsive organization both externally to those it serves and internally to the CYFD staff.

For CYFD to be an externally responsive organization, it should:

- ensure the safety of the children and youth that it serves and provide support to families;
- strive to meet the needs and address the concerns of families, children, and young people in the system by being credible, accessible, and forthcoming, and timely in its communication;
- create a culture that is supportive and collaborative that includes honest, respectful, and reciprocated engagement;
- participate in exchange of information with external stakeholders and improve public information via its website; and
- make it easier and faster for clients and constituents to access services and supports, and to report child abuse.

For CYFD to be an internally responsive organization, it should have a workforce that is:

- trauma-responsive,
- professional,
- adequately staffed (especially investigators and permanency workers),
- properly-trained, and
- supported.

NOTE: The order of the recommendations set forth below tracks the organizational structure of this overarching recommendation. Information on the prioritization and support of the Steering Committee members is also identified in each recommendation below and in an endnote to the report.

Steering Committee Members prioritized the recommendations as follows

	Score
1.A. Study, Review, Establish, and Publish CYFD Protocols to Ensure Child Health and Safety	12.33
1.C. Create and Implement a Culture Change Strategy	11.85
1.O. CYFD should support an independent, objective monitoring entity	10.5
1.D. Build and Sustain a Professional Workforce	10.46
1.G. Develop a Workforce Retention Plan and Training Program	10.08
1.E. Provide Workforce Supports	9.38
1.H. Clarify Grievance Procedures and Rights of People Within the System	9.2
1.I. Address Confidentiality Issues	8.62
1.B. Establish Internal and External Communication Protocols to Follow	8.43
1.L. Make It Easy to Find Information	7.14
1.K. Use Data to Identify Trends and Post Data Reports Frequently	6.85
1.N. Continue an Advisory Entity	6.36
1.M. Improve Utilization of Substitute Care Advisory Council	5.73
1.F. Maximize Federal Title IV-E Funding	4.54
1.J. Support Foster Parent Associations	4.23

Be Internally Responsive: Establishing the Right Culture at CYFD

1.A. Study, Review, Establish, and Publish CYFD Protocols to Ensure Child Health and Safety¹

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (18 responses)		
1	I fully support this recommendation	66.67%	12
	I somewhat support this recommendation	11.11%	2
	I don't support	5.56%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	16.67%	3

CYFD's purpose is to ensure the safety of the children and youth it serves and to support families. To ensure success in this purpose, CYFD should:

- Review National Models and the recommendations provided to the Secretary from Collaborative Safety, LLC. against the New Mexico model and improve the processes used in New Mexico.
- Use data to identify needs and support in communities where there is a high prevalence of abuse and neglect referrals.
- Conduct an evaluation on the current safety tool and its effectiveness and its implementation in keeping children safe, preventing children from being left in the cycle of abuse, progressively closing the gaps where the system is failing certain populations, etc.
- Use data to evaluate whether repeat maltreatment is a key indicator that a child is at risk of being in a safe/unsafe situation.
- Better identify, document, and consistently apply standards for investigation decisions. Standardize and consistently apply "substantiated" and "unsubstantiated" determinations.
- Mandate extensive training to all staff on how to properly use all protocols intended to improve the safety of children in the system, including the safety tool.

¹ Comments from steering committee members on 1.A.

I support applying standards for investigation, but I believe that "substantiated" and "unsubstantiated" are insufficient, as no substantiation can mean no abuse/neglect has been found, but it can also be that the family couldn't be located. I think that the distinction is essential and a new category for being unable to locate a family is more informative and will have an impact on subsequent investigations.

I support exploration of Collaborative Safety. I believe the safety tool is already in large review by CYFD in other initiatives.

I believe the rest of the recommendations are made up of assumption of committee members and should not be a top priority of CYFD.

I support determining if the current safety tool is adequate in securing the safety of children with an emphasis on placing child safety over reunification.

1.B. Establish Internal and External Communication Protocols to Follow²

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (18 responses)		
9	I fully support this recommendation	77.78%	14
	I somewhat support this recommendation	0.00%	0
	I don't support	0.00%	0
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	22.22%	4

CYFD should:

- Set communication expectations for all staff to ensure that all communication is approached in a clear, open, empathetic, and non-defensive manner.
- Meaningfully engage with the families and youth it serves through active listening, empathy, and rapport.
- Develop and publish protocols that include points of contact and timeframes to respond to legislative committee, media, and stakeholder inquiries.
- Regarding Statewide Central Intake (SCI) reports, provide a response to the person submitting the report that confirms that the report has been received and is forthcoming (considering confidentiality limitations) and timely in its communication.

² Steering Committee comments on 1.B.

These are aspirations that CYFD should already be working toward. I do not view this as a recommendation to as to how the Department can more effectively provide services to children and families.

A report back for the reporter doesn't seem to prioritize the work of the agency. I am not clear how or if this furthers the goal. Also, the statute mandates confidentiality.

I believe SCI has sufficient procedures and protocols for confirming that reports have been received.

Fully support this idea AND the response times for initial contacts for reports to SCI should be improved to be more reasonable.

1.C. Create and Implement a Culture Change Strategy³

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (18 responses)		
2	I fully support this recommendation	66.67%	12
	I somewhat support this recommendation	5.56%	1
	I don't support	11.11%	2
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	16.67%	3

CYFD should institute a full culture change strategy using the following principles and processes.

The purpose of the culture change is to transform CYFD to a psychologically safe,⁴ fearless, listening, and learning culture, where staff are inspired to perform at a high standard and are provided the resources and support needed to succeed.

A psychologically safe, fearless, listening, and learning culture would look like an agency where:

- Staff are energized by their work and their co-workers.
- Staff are respected and valued for their unique talents and skills.
- Staff know that their views and opinions count.
- Staff can raise problems and tough issues and receive prompt coaching and support.
- It is easy to ask for help and help is readily given.
- It is ok to say “I don’t know,” “I need help,” “I made a mistake,” and “I’m sorry.”
- It is also okay (and expected) to say, “I think we can improve that idea by...,” and “Have we considered (this alternative or factor...)”
- Staff push back, share data, and actively report on what is actually happening on the ground (and thereby create continuous learning loops and agile responsiveness).
- Mistakes are seen as learning opportunities, but clear violations of established policies are sanctioned productively.⁵

³ Steering Committee Comments on 1.C.

These are aspirations that CYFD should already be working toward. I do not view this as a recommendation to as to how the Department can more effectively provide services to children and families.

Culture change must include strategies that allow for staff to perform at a high standard when working outside the department with all who interact with staff such as foster families, teachers, CASA volunteers and the especially the child's family.

⁴ “Psychological safety describes a climate where people feel safe enough to take interpersonal risks by speaking up and sharing concerns, questions, or ideas.” Amy C. Edmonson, *the fearless organization*, p. 22 (2019); *see also* Amy C. Edmondson, Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Jun., 1999), p. 354 ([Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams \(mit.edu\)](https://www.mit.edu/~edmondson/psychological-safety-and-learning-behavior-in-work-teams)) (“Team psychological safety involves but goes beyond interpersonal trust; it describes a team climate characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves.”). Psychological safety is a *team* characteristic, not an individual characteristic. *Id.*

⁵ Productive (fair, appropriate and measured) sanctions for violating *established and clear* policies reinforce an organization’s policies and emphasize the organization’s seriousness about them. Productive sanctions remind staff and others that the organization’s policies matter.

“Teams with high psychological safety focused more on diagnosing [a] problem and improving the process that caused it so it didn’t happen again.”⁶ In a psychologically safe work environment, “people are not hindered by *interpersonal fear*,”⁷ teams trust each other, candor is the norm, creativity and problem solving are regular features of the workplace, experimentation is possible, cross-team/division coordination and communication is enhanced, preventable failures are avoided, and innovation and high performance is achieved.

CYFD should use the following general approach (details and steps to be fleshed out in a full culture change strategy):

- Establish baseline measure of psychological safety in CYFD now (through surveys and/or focus groups and interviews).
- Conduct an initial leadership self-assessment and ongoing discussions with leaders throughout the agency during regular check-ins on how they are doing on key practices that create psychological safety (setting the stage, inviting participation, and responding productively).
- Institutionalize key practices for psychological safety by:
 - Setting the stage for candor (set shared expectations and meaning):
 - Frame the work (child welfare, behavioral health, and juvenile justice = complex/messy systems), leaders set expectations.
 - Use intentional word choices to change the way we think: *Investigation-Study; Error-Accident; Fatality Review-Focused Event Analysis* (disciplined process at a hospital, after a failure to explore the event from multiple perspectives, identifying contributing factors with the goal of improving the system to prevent similar failures in the future).
 - Emphasize purpose: reconnecting with “the why” (why we started doing this work in the first place, what’s at stake, why it matters and for whom).
 - Inviting participation (create confidence that voice is welcome):
 - Demonstrate situational humility (acknowledge gaps).
 - Practice inquiry: Leaders asking genuine, curious, respectful, direct, and concrete questions. For example, for nurses, “was everything as safe as you would like it to have been this week with your patients?”
 - Listen intensely.
 - Establish structures for participation (create opportunities for input, provide guidelines for discussion). Structures for participation include but are not limited to: establishing a core team, blameless reporting-a system of confidential reporting about risks and failures people observed (in medical setting), and at the right time, hold focus groups to share concerns and experiences.

⁶ Edmonson, 2019, p. 38.

⁷ *Id.* p. xv.

- Responding productively (create an orientation toward continuous learning):
Productive Responses include but are not limited to responses that are:
appreciative, respectful, and offer a path forward; listen intensely; acknowledge and thank; destigmatize failure (look forward, offer help, discuss, consider, and brainstorm next steps); create shared understanding of different types of failures (preventable, complex and intelligent) and of productive responses to each; and, sanction clear violations.
- Analyze the results, and adjust one year after baseline assessment, remeasure psychological safety at CYFD.

1.D. Build and Sustain a Professional Workforce⁸

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (18 responses)		
4	I fully support this recommendation	77.78%	14
	I somewhat support this recommendation	0.00%	0
	I don't support	5.56%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	16.67%	3

CYFD is responsible for building and sustaining a professional workforce that is adequately educated, trained, and supported. To achieve this, CYFD should conduct a workforce assessment of field staff all role function that includes:

- Identifying the staffing need in order to be adequately staffed, especially investigators and permanency workers and establish a plan to achieve adequate staffing;
- Identifying the type of minimum education required for each job classification within CYFD and establish a plan to hire or provide opportunities for educational advancement after hire to ensure each staff member has the minimum education requirements within two years of hire;
- Creating a hiring direct pipeline through a variety of avenues, including associations with university programs and paid internships, to recruit qualified staff and match those candidates to CYFD positions, and recruit and hire as many candidates with Bachelor of Social Work degrees as possible;
- Supporting employees to obtain appropriate credentials during work hours, including professional development and access to workshops, for CYFD employees to prepare them for licensure exams; and
- Studying the role and caseload planning function of Permanency Placement Worker, In-Home Services Practitioner, and client service agents to create an appropriate interdisciplinary team.

⁸ Steering Committee comments on 1D.

I support this but believe that there is too much latitude to hire underqualified people in the following statement: "recruit and hire as many candidates with Bachelor of Social Work degrees as possible;" These are aspirations that CYFD should already be working toward. I do not view this as a recommendation to as to how the Department can more effectively provide services to children and families.

If this is not already part of the Kevin S required workforce plan AND something from the above can be added without a burden, then do so.

I.E. Provide Workforce Supports⁹

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (18 responses)		
6	I fully support this recommendation	77.78%	14
	I somewhat support this recommendation	0.00%	0
	I don't support	5.56%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	16.67%	3

CYFD should take the following actions:

- Use coaches: Expand its pool of coaches, who will model effective supervision and provide in-the-moment coaching in difficult cases, especially in cases where there is conflict about direction of the case. Possibly look at 3rd party coaches that would maintain confidentiality but bring a non-bias perspective to the situation.
- Use mentors: Adopt a mentorship model for staff that will include a shadowing requirement.
- Use apprenticeship model: Use an apprenticeship model of attracting and supporting new staff.
- Use reflective supervision: Use reflective supervision for front-line workers.
- Use trauma-responsive care for staff: Use trauma-responsive care that provides safe spaces for internal communication, specified training and self-care, and allows for staff to practice self-care.
- Use safety science: Use the Safety Science model as established by, or similar to, the Collaborative Safety Organization.
- Use Master of Social Work staff: Recruit and use Master of Social Work staff in protective services cases. Use Master of Social Work staff in all protective services cases.

⁹ Steering Committee comments on 1E.

This should include special attention to support County Office Managers.

These are aspirations that CYFD should already be working toward. I do not view this as a recommendation to as to how the Department can more effectively provide services to children and families.

I support all but the external mentor.

I support all elements except for required MSW in all PS cases. This is not realistic in current workforce climate.

I support all of the recommendations but understand that use of Master Social Work staff assigned as the lead in all cases may not be feasible. I think the ultimate goal to to hire and support current employees to obtain MSW. MSWs on staff should regularly staff all protective services cases, if an MSW is not assigned to the case.

This should be done automatically. Why are we telling CYFD leadership to do the job they should already be doing in modeling for staff.

If this is not already part of the Kevin S required workforce plan AND something from the above can be added without a burden, then do so.

1.F. Maximize Federal Title IV-E Funding¹⁰

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (18 responses)		
14	I fully support this recommendation	66.67%	12
	I somewhat support this recommendation	0.00%	0
	I don't support	5.56%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	27.78%	5

CYFD should maximize Federal Title IV-E funding and the state match for it should be requested in the department's budget request to the legislature.

¹⁰ Steering Committee Comments on 1.F

These are aspirations that CYFD should already be working toward. I do not view this as a recommendation to as to how the Department can more effectively provide services to children and families.

Only chasing federal dollars doesn't allow for creativity or innovation. State dollars help fill that need. And, there are parts of Title-IV E that is incompatible with other initiatives or state law which the agency isn't allowed to ignore. I understand the desire to offset costs to the feds, but I prefer the agency to have the discretion to try new things that may not be federally funded.

I believe this recommendation came from members who don't fully understand Title IV-E. CYFD has a dedicated IV-E unit, this is sufficient to understanding IV-E and the "match" potential.

With Federal funding we need to be careful with the requirements attached to the money.

It's not that I don't support this recommendation, it is not needed as it is something CYFD already does and does well.

1.G. Develop a Workforce Retention Plan and Training Program¹¹

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (18 responses)		
5	I fully support this recommendation	66.67%	12
	I somewhat support this recommendation	16.67%	3
	I don't support	5.56%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	11.11%	2

Any CYFD workforce retention and training program, including any that is adopted under the Kevin S. settlement, should recognize that there needs to be a plan for retention of workers and a plan for adequate staff training for new staff when turnover occurs.

CYFD should include the following in their retention and training program:

- Provide support for stress at work. Create a program that provides counseling similar to Employee Assistance Program, but without limitations on the number of sessions and specifically focused on vicarious trauma, burnout of frontline staff and staff mental health, and widely publicize the program with staff.
- Mediate disputes. Contract with external mediators to help resolve disputes.
- Communication training and re-training: provide comprehensive training to all current and new staff on communication at work. This training should integrate information about retaliation and whistleblowing into a broader conversation about how to give and receive feedback, offer ideas to be heard, resolve differences of opinion, etc. The training shall also include training on communication styles and approaching communication in a clear, open, empathetic, and non-defensive manner.
- Adaptive leadership: provide adaptive leadership training.
- Consistent case level training: Provide standard annual training to its attorneys and monitor and mentor the CYFD attorneys, including watching in the courtroom. Utilize the Project ECHO approach of regularly scheduled online sessions for the CYFD legal staff around the state at which experienced attorneys would facilitate case discussions.
- Cross-train staff. Ask the Corinne Wolfe Center for Child and Family Justice to reinstate cross-training of all staff and those involved in the foster care system to study a broad range of issues facing the foster care system.
- Regional support: Strengthen or re-establish the concept of the social work consultant in each region of the state who helps support the supervisors by assisting with case consultations and onsite training, helps workers prepare for court hearings, provides a

¹¹ Steering Committee Comments on 1.G

These are aspirations that CYFD should already be working toward. I do not view this as a recommendation to as to how the Department can more effectively provide services to children and families.

If this is not already part of the Kevin S required workforce plan AND something from the above can be added without a burden, then do so.

second opinion on difficult issues, and frees the county managers to handle more of the administrative duties their position requires.

Be Externally Responsive: Enhancing Delivery of Services to New Mexico’s Children and Families

1.H. Clarify Grievance Procedures and Rights of People Within the System¹²

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (17 responses)		
7	I fully support this recommendation	70.59%	12
	I somewhat support this recommendation	5.88%	1
	I don't support	5.88%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	17.65%	3

CYFD should:

- Create a grievance flowchart. Provide on its website and other publications accessible to the public a flowchart for all grievance processes including *who* gets to grieve *what*, to *whom*, under *what time frame*, and with *what possible outcomes*.
- Create an internal Bill of Rights. Reexamine or, if necessary, create foster parent, youth, and parent bill of rights for service providers/contractors with enforcement mechanisms. CYFD should incorporate all Bills of Rights into either the NM Administrative Code or into the Children’s Code.
- Retaliation and Grievance Policy. Rewrite and enhance CYFD’s retaliation and grievance policies and once revised, actively promote them. Promotion should include easy-to-understand instructions/explanations and visuals such as flow charts. The process should also be streamlined. When making grievance determinations, CYFD should consider decision-making tools such as Ethical Decision-Making in Social Work Practice.

¹² Steering Committee Comments on 1.H

I support this concept. I just want to ensure that all of these things also apply to parents and children and youth, and Fostering Connections participants, not just to foster parents, for example. I do not think statute is the appropriate place for these types of bills of rights, though the administrative code may be.

I am not clear if this is for internal grievance or for those who are making a claim against the department. This is not clear.

I don't believe this needs to be in administrative rules or the Children's Code. The ability to revise should be more responsive than going through rule or legislative changes.

1.I. Address Confidentiality Issues¹³

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (17 responses)		
8	I fully support this recommendation	47.06%	8
	I somewhat support this recommendation	11.76%	2
	I don't support	5.88%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	35.29%	6

Using principles of Ethical Decision-Making in Social Work Practice, CYFD should:

- Develop Written Procedures for Responding to Concerns/Reports. Include a definition of confidentiality, identifying the type of concern/report and response expectations.
- Clarify Conflicts of Interest. Establish clear conflict of interest provisions for Constituent Affairs, Employee Relations Bureau, and Office of the Inspector General, and then train staff on the conflict policy.

¹³ Steering Committee Comments on 1.I

I think this is more vague than our discussion about confidentiality, to the point of being useless as written. The point was to have the department define confidentiality and use that support the modifications of the current confidentiality/sequestration in order to improve communication and the ability to discuss and share data that will inform decision-making, accountability and increase public knowledge of the system.

This is something that should already be happening in CYFD.

I think it can be strengthened with the addition of a phrase making clear that confidentiality is to prevent stigmatizing children and families, not for protecting the Department from accountability or scrutiny.

I support reviewing conflict of interest protocols. I believe there is an assumption being made in part one. The intent on addressing "Confidentiality" is that CYFD is protecting information on the basis of "confidentiality", instead of transparently reporting and handling conflict in cases.

There must be an office of Ombudsman to address the issues that are protected currently through the confidentiality procedures in place.

Wouldn't this be included in 1.B?

1.J. Support Foster Parent Associations¹⁴

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (16 responses)		
15	I fully support this recommendation	56.25%	9
	I somewhat support this recommendation	12.50%	2
	I don't support	12.50%	2
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	18.75%	3

CYFD should coordinate, support, and partner with state, local, and specialized foster parent associations through regular meetings. This would provide an avenue to train foster parents and to introduce new social workers and foster parents to each other. CYFD should recruit and partner with groups interested in developing new foster parent associations.

¹⁴ Steering Committee Comments on 1.J

There are no existing ones, so CYFD needs to play a role in their creation.

Recruiting new foster parents will only be successful if there is mutual respect between the department and those serving in the role of foster parent. Retribution against foster parents is real and we lose many good people when they are mistreated by staff.

In the past it was necessary for CYFD to be a silent support, i.e., dedicate funds for foster parent associations but it cannot be actively involved in the associations and the associations need to be independent.

1.K. Use Data to Identify Trends and Post Data Reports Frequently¹⁵

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (17 responses)		
11	I fully support this recommendation	64.71%	11
	I somewhat support this recommendation	5.88%	1
	I don't support	11.76%	2
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	17.65%	3

CYFD should:

- Collect and release aggregate data on placement disruption, including regional trends for placement, and identify the issues that are raised in multiple placements.
- Use SCI reports to identify trends or persistent issues.
- Post the 13-month Desktop Report by CYFD’s Research, Assessment and Data (RAD) Bureau monthly. (This report summarizes many key protective services metrics to include SCI calls, entries into foster care, short stayers, exits from care, federal indicators, etc.).

¹⁵ Steering Committee Comments on 1.K.

I don't understand how SCI reports can identify persistent issues. I think there are things that can be learned from SCI reports, but I worry that this statement encourages the use of inaccurate inferences. There is more value in identifying trends or persistent issues in substantiated reports, not just reports that come in from any source, made for all kinds of reasons.

I support the collection of data to guide decision-making, but this is also something that should have already been happening in CYFD. I don't think this is high level recommendation to better support kids and families in the system.

It is easy to post data and identify trends. The recommendation needs to read to USE the data for continuous quality improvement.

1.L. Make It Easy to Find Information¹⁶

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (17 responses)		
10	I fully support this recommendation	70.59%	12
	I somewhat support this recommendation	0.00%	0
	I don't support	5.88%	1
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	23.53%	4

CYFD should:

- **Update and improve its website to:**
 - Create user-friendly format, including an effective search feature;
 - Include a quarterly 'what's new at CYFD' section that could include changes in Protective Services Division administration, new initiatives, and updates on existing initiatives;
 - Include a separate data section that includes updated data related to performance and funding measures, including internally and externally collected data;
 - Include a section for presentations/handouts given to legislators and community, and update with follow up information requested during presentations;
 - Include an option to contact individuals via email; and
 - Request feedback on the functioning of the website (i.e., pop-up, quick survey) and make ongoing improvements based on the feedback.
- Improve CYFD contact list to include all employees, updated in real time.
- Improve CYFD organizational charts. Organizational charts of how CYFD is organized should be published and made available to the public. These charts should not only include staff and leadership in Santa Fe, but also the various county offices that exist throughout the state. These charts show how CYFD is organized and should include the supervisory chain of command. (These charts are useful in understanding the design of the department, what teams, personnel, and job titles are structures, and what the lines

¹⁶ Steering Committee Comment on 1.L.

This is another internal aspirational goal to me and not a stakeholder recommendation. I don't support this as a priority.

I support all except posting IPRA and grievance reports. These don't further the purpose of the agency or help for families.

While I believe the website could be improved following many of the recommendations, I also understand IPRA requests are timely and costly. While I agree with identifying the number of requests and timely responses, including pages which could inform fiscal impact and responsiveness, I have questions about providing an actual list of IPRA requests as I think it could trigger numerous duplicative requests that could lead to staff being overwhelmed, and a decline in timeliness to IPRA responses in general.

I do not agree with the publication of IPRA requests. Rather, I would want the recommendation to be to review trends of IPRA requests and to routinely make public information that is repeatedly requested.

I do not believe information on the Employee Relations Bureau should be made public.

I would like to see the TYPES of grievances Constituent Affairs, Office of Children's Rights and the OIG process and if the outcome resulted in any policy or practice changes.

of responsibility are. This helps the public better understand where field workers and their supervisors and managers fit in the overall organization. These organizational charts should be updated quarterly.)

- Improve information regarding Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) Requests. Provide list of IPRA requests made to CYFD, dates of request, dates of associated responses, and number of pages provided should be made public, updated monthly, and made readily available.
- External reports: provide links to external reports and information relevant to New Mexico child welfare.
- Report quarterly on claims, grievances, and dispositions made to CYFD Employee Relations Bureau, Constituent Affairs, Office of Children's Rights, and Office of the Inspector General in the aggregate on the website.

1.M. Improve Utilization of Substitute Care Advisory Council¹⁷

Priority (out of 15)	Support by Steering Committee Members (17 responses)		
13	I fully support this recommendation	47.06%	8
	I somewhat support this recommendation	17.65%	3
	I don't support	11.76%	2
	I support parts of this idea (please explain)	23.53%	4

CYFD should establish a Memorandum of Understanding with Substitute Care Advisory Council as to the expectations of sharing information, responding to Substitute Care Advisory Council’s reports and internal critical incident reviews in a timely manner and take actions to implement recommendations until legislative changes can be made. CYFD should ensure that the Substitute Care Advisory Council is fully funded and expand their authority to include the review of cases with high profile elements or fatalities.

¹⁷ Steering Committee Comments on 1.M.

If no external entity

The idea of responding to SCAC is necessary, but through the avenue of an MOU is odd. It's a requirement.

I believe the SCAC already has this authority and is not dependent on CYFD for funding.

I was in the SCAC group in Santa Fe and this wasn't where we ended. NOTE from facilitation staff: The SCAC provisions are now in two sections of the report: 1.M. and 1.O legislative efforts. .

1.N. Continue an Advisory Entity

Overall Priority (out of 15 recommendations)
13

The Committee discussed ideas regarding the continuance of some type of advisory entity to the CYFD as Secretary Vigil works toward improving the agency’s effectiveness. During the meetings, the following four options were identified, considered, and ranked.

Options related to input as recommended by the Committee:

- Option 1: Continue the Steering Committee. Have the OTS continue to meet with this same stakeholder group on a quarterly basis to review and evaluate progress made on the recommendations of the Committee, provide feedback, and make additional recommendations as needed.

Preferred option (Out of 4)	Members who chose this option (out of 17 responses)
2	35.29% 6

- Option 2: Establish the “children, youth and families advisory committee” as authorized in Section 9-2A-12 NMSA 1978.

Preferred (Out of 4)	Members who chose this option (out of the 4 options)
1	35.29% 6

Section 9-2A-12 – Children, youth and families advisory committee created; members; purpose.

- The “children, youth and families advisory committee” is created. The committee shall be composed of eleven members appointed by the governor. The governor shall appoint persons with demonstrated interest and involvement in children, youth and family services, particularly those services and programs administered or funded by the department. Members shall be appointed so as to provide adequate representation of ethnic groups and geographic areas of the state. At least two members shall be parents who are recipients of services provided by the department, at least two members shall be youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one and at least one member shall be on the governor’s youth council.
- The committee shall assist in the development of policies and procedures for the department.
- The members of the children, youth and families advisory committee shall be reimbursed for their services as provided in the Per Diem and Mileage Act (10-8-1 to

10-8-8 NMSA 1978) and shall receive no other compensation, perquisite or allowance.” Create written expectations for the functioning of the CYF advisory committee. Including meeting expectations, organization, adherence to the OMA, the ability to form ad hoc workgroups with experts and consumers specific to topic of the policy/procedure and to include Substitute Advisory Council Director as a standing agenda item.

- Option 3: Create a Different Model
Create a different model within the scope of the recommendations of the Committee that includes diverse stakeholders from across the state.

Preferred (Out of 4)	Members who chose this option (out of the 4 options)
3 (tied)	11.76% 2

- Option 4: Not Have a Formal Advisory Entity

Preferred (Out of 4)	Members who chose this option (out of the 4 options)
3 (tied)	11.76% 2

1.O. Legislative Efforts

CYFD should support an independent, objective monitoring entity)
Overall Priority. (out of 15 recommendations)
3

The Committee examined how legislative efforts could address or support CYFD in responsiveness. Looking at legislative efforts is a priority for the Committee as it ranked third in the priority list. However, the Committee had varying views about how and when to look at legislative options, as set forth in the survey answers below.

Options Related to Oversight of Grievances (Legislative or Internal Options)

- Survey Question A: Do you think CYFD needs independent, objective monitoring?

Yes	93.75%	15
No	6.25%	1

- Survey Question B: Do you support the recommendation immediately below to study existing structures before looking at new options for independent, objective monitoring? CYFD should convene a workgroup that includes external stakeholders to study existing structures before considering other models. Before attempting to build something new in terms of an independent objective monitoring entity, CYFD should look at refining and/or modifying what already exists.

Yes, I agree with this statement	50.00%	8
No, I disagree with this statement	50.00%	8

- Survey Question C: Do you believe any of the following list should **not** be a part of the legislation related to an independent, objective monitoring effort?

16 responses	Should be part of legislation		Should NOT be part of legislation	
The scope is to listen to complaints, investigate and resolve complaints, identify trends, and create change.	87.50%	14	12.50%	2
Contain confidentiality provision so that federal funding is not jeopardized.	81.25%	13	18.75%	3
Received any information from anyone and can release information that does not identify any specific person. The office can release aggregate	68.75%	11	31.25%	5

data and patterns and that release of data would not be considered a confidentiality violation.				
Has a credible review process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consistent ongoing reporting requirement • Using nationally-recognized case review framework (i.e., modified quality services review) 	93.75%	15	6.25%	1
At a minimum, can recommend changes to the system in which those services are provided.	81.25%	13	18.75%	3
Is accessible	87.50%	14	12.50%	2
Has subpoena power	40.00%	6	60.00%	9

- Survey Question D: If you support an independent, objective monitoring effort, which option do you support?
- Highest rated option: CYFD should support legislation to create an independent ombudsman office providing oversight through legislation.

	14 total responses	
CYFD should support legislation to create an independent ombudsman office housed outside of CYFD providing oversight through legislation	50.00%	8

- Second highest rated option: CYFD should support amending the statute to have Substitute Care Advisory Council act as a third-party entity for grievances/concerns.

	14 total responses	
CYFD should support amending the statute to have Substitute Care Advisory Council act as a third-party entity for grievances/concerns	25.00%	4

- Third highest rated option: CYFD should support legislation to create an autonomous internal ombudsman office.

	14 total responses	
CYFD should support legislation to create an autonomous internal ombudsman office housed at CYFD	18.75%	3

- Lowest rated option: None of the above.

	14 total responses	
None of the above	6.25%	1