



Children, Youth & Families Department

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

New Mexico

Children, Youth and Families
Department

2025-2029

Child and Family Service Plan
(CFSP)

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SECTION 1: VISION AND COLLABORATION

STATE AGENCY ADMINISTERING THE PLAN

The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) is the designated State agency that administers the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program (Title IV-B subpart 1), the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program (Title IV-B subpart 2), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Title IV-E, and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and Education and Training Voucher Program. As such, CYFD is responsible for federal mandated child welfare services for children and families in New Mexico.

CYFD consists of a Cabinet Secretary who reports directly to the Governor, and two Deputy Cabinet Secretaries that oversee Protective Services, Family Services, Juvenile Justice Services and Behavioral Health Services. Each service area has a Director, Deputy Directors, Associate Deputy Directors and Managers that provide an array of services to children, youth and families. CYFD Administrative Services and Human Resources, under the guidance of an Administrative Services Director and a Human Resources Director, supports all the service areas, to include support with budget and revenue, financial management, employee assistance, hiring and personnel management, and information technology services. The Office of the Cabinet Secretary includes the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the Inspector General, the Office of Advocacy, Constituent Affairs, Office of Tribal Affairs, Office of Performance and Accountability, and the Legislative and Community Affairs Liaison which provide support to Protective Services, Family Services, Juvenile Justice Services, and Behavioral Health Services.

In August 2024, CYFD began an organization wide restructuring and Protective Services was restructured into three pillars that includes support from internal Children's Court Attorneys. Child protective investigations (Investigation Pillar), permanency planning services (Permanency Pillar), and out of home placement services (Placement Pillar) are provided throughout the state of New Mexico. The administration of these services is centralized through the Office of the Secretary, with direct services offered through county offices located within five designated regions in the state. Protective Services also provides a 24 hour a day, seven day a week intake hotline for reports of allegations of abuse and neglect. Statewide Central Intake (SCI) is responsible for screening received reports and assigning screened reports for investigation for the entire state.

Protective Services executive management structure consists of a Director, a Deputy Director of Investigations, a Deputy Director of Permanency, a Deputy Director of Placement, a Deputy Director of Operations, and one Chief Children's Court Attorney. There are seven Associate Deputy Directors who report to their corresponding pillar Deputy Director, likewise there are 32 County Managers who report to their corresponding pillar Associate Deputy Director. Protective Services has in-house Children's Court Attorneys located throughout the state who are managed by Regional Attorney Managers under the Chief Children's Court Attorney.

Family Services is a new division born out of the recent organizational restructuring. Family Services offers prevention services, family outreach/differential response, In-Home Services and Intensive Family Support Services, and the CARA plan of safe care program. The Family Services Division consists of a director and four managers that administer prevention and intervention services under Title IV-B Subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, differential response, and CARA plans of safe care. Family Services is responsible for the provision of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State grant,

the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention grant, and the Children’s Justice Act Grant. Family Services is also responsible for the oversight and management of the Title IV-E Prevention Plan once the plan is approved by the Administration for Children and Families.

Recently, Fostering Connections has been slated to move under Family Services. The Fostering Connections program is responsible for providing support and services for youth starting at age 14 through age 23. Fostering Connections is responsible for administering the John H Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition into Adulthood, and the Education and Training Vouchers Program. The Fostering Connections program is the vehicle for engaging young people in a relational way based on youth experience in the child welfare system, prevent homelessness, and to ensure their transition to adulthood is supported. *See the John H Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition into Adulthood (Chafee Plan) located in Section 4 of this report for more detail about the Fostering Connections Program.*

The Protective Services Placement Pillar and Office of Performance and Accountability are responsible for the Child and Family Services Plan, AFCARS and NCANDS reporting, and carrying out federal programs under Title IV-B subpart 1 - Child Welfare Services, Title IV-E Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship programs, and the Adoption Promotion and Kinship Navigator programs under Title IV-B Subpart 2 – Promoting Safe and Stable Families.

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

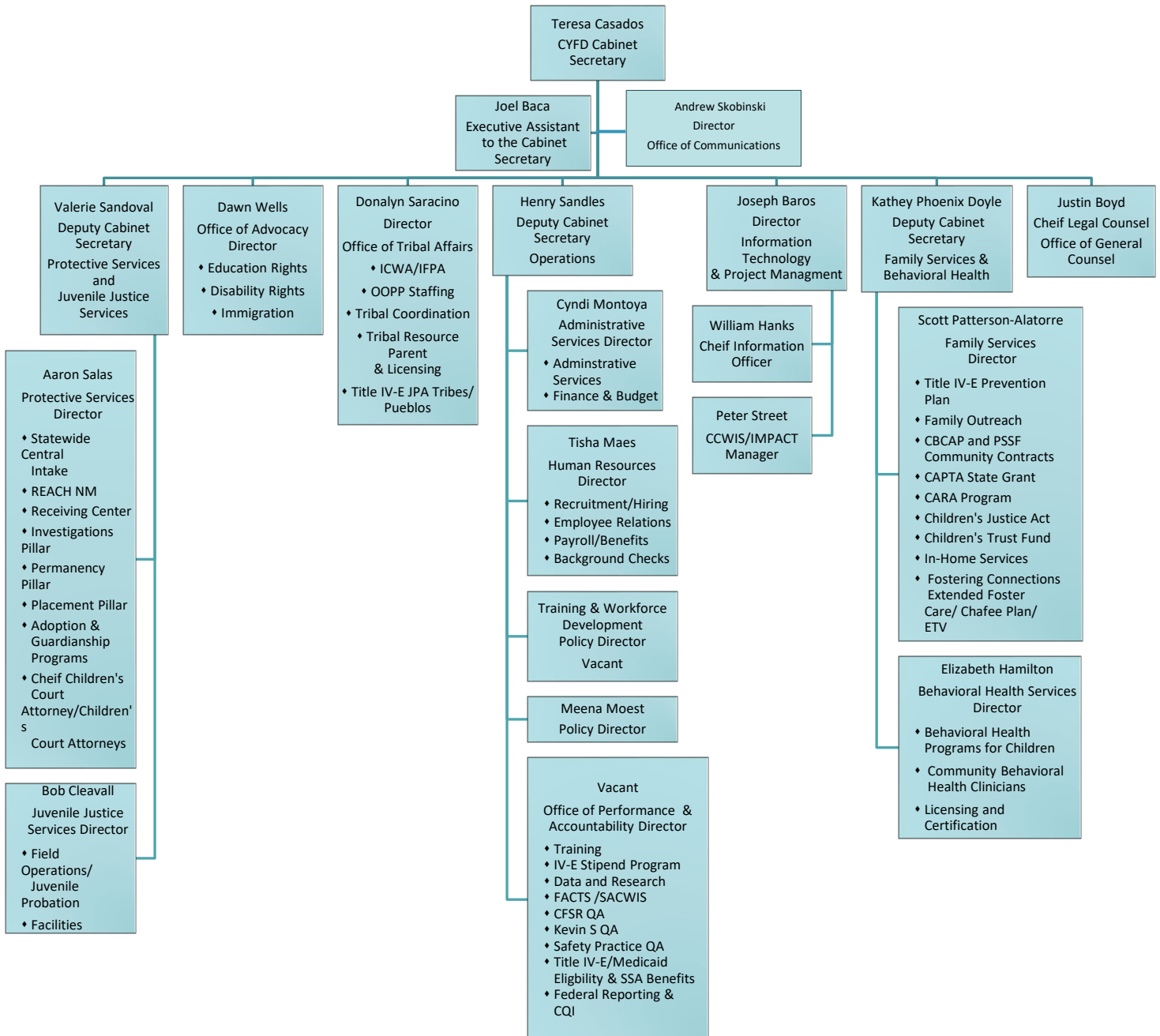
Vision

A New Mexico where all children, youth and families are healthy, safe, thriving and strengthened by their culture and community.

Mission

- Nurture the strength and resilience of families.
- Partner with children, families and communities based on trust and transparency.
- Serve by listening and learning from our diverse cultures to keep children, youth and families healthy, safe and thriving.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



COLLABORATION

As part of the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan, New Mexico has worked across the state's child welfare system to support the prevention of child and youth maltreatment and work toward better outcomes for children and families. Moving forward in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan, CYFD continues to work with key stakeholders in creating an equitable child welfare system, with a diverse group of individuals to better understand the impact of system involvement to improve services and outcomes statewide.

In preparation for the state's Child and Family Services Review, New Mexico is in the early stages of identifying how community and stakeholder involvement will be the foundations for identifying promising practices and work on areas needing improvement in not only CYFD, but across the service array and judicial system. CYFD recognizes the need for community and stakeholder input in making meaningful system changes and continues to work with partners across the state.

CYFD recognizes the need to improve how families, children, youth, Tribes, courts, and other partners will be involved in continued development of the 2025-2029 Child and Families Services Plan. Since 2021, CYFD has experienced workforce instability in key management positions as well as field worker vacancies that have pushed driven the agency to triage to focus on safety and wellbeing of children. Over the next five year, CYFD will begin incorporating key child welfare stakeholders in quality assurance reviews and continuous quality improvement activities that include reviews of current performance data, assessments of agency strengths and areas needing improvement, and progress on the activities and goals toward improvement in the 2025-2029 CFSP five-year strategic plan.

To promote equitable treatment and outcomes, CYFD will work with the Office of Tribal Affairs to appropriately and effectively engage with its 23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos, African American Community, and undocumented children and families.

Resource Parents

CYFD continues to work on providing quality support to and communication to Kinship Guardians and Resource (Foster and Adoptive). Since the pandemic, CYFD has been able to provide more virtual options for training and communication by offering virtual training sessions and conference, and more opportunities for virtual meetings through platforms like Zoom or TEAMS. Virtual training and meetings seem to work better for Kinship Guardians or Resource Parents who work or live in rural or remote areas.

With the increase of more virtual options, Protective Services Placement Pillar staff has seen success in quickly identifying and addressing issues, concerns, or requests for information or assistance by Kinship Guardians and Resource Parents. The increase in engagement and communication can be seen through the following examples and on-going meetings below.

Online Information Meetings: On-going monthly on-line information meetings are held for families inquiring to foster or adopt in Southern New Mexico. The Placement Pillar Southern Team recruits families by sending flyers to resource parents encouraging them to invite friends to the meeting. Flyers are also posted on social media platforms, such as Facebook event pages.

Monthly Foster Parent Meetings: Placement Pillar Managers and Supervisors hold quarterly meetings for Resource Parents to provide them with updates and information on training topics. Through the County Based Recruitment and Retention Plan, the county offices collaborate with the Placement Pillar to identify community support and events for Kinship Relatives and Resource Parents.

Foster Adoption Ministry Support Group: Dona Ana County Placement Pillar staff works with experienced resource parents who offer support to their peers through group meetings.

Pre/Post Adoption and Guardianship Support: New Mexico (NM) FIESTA program offers support to a network of families who have and/or are in the process of finalizing an adoption or guardianship and to licensed resource foster families currently caring for children and/or youth in the NM foster care system. The goal of NM FIESTA is to build natural peer-to-peer supports between families and offer functional tools and recommendations by lived experience peer mentors to enhance the family's ability to meet the unique needs of the children and youth they care for. NM FIESTA offers childcare to reduce barriers for participation and an array of resources to equip families and CYFD/adoptive professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to promote adoptive and guardianship stability and increase placement stability for children and youth in care.

In addition, All Faiths offers intensive case management, professional development, and adoption/guardianship placement services to families in the process of adopting and/or who have finalized an adoption. The Case Management service delivery model utilizes an approach to trauma from a whole child perspective to support the adult caregivers and the children in the family simultaneously. This program is grounded in trauma-informed, evidenced-based behavioral health methodologies such as Nurtured Heart and Nurturing Parenting Program with intensive case management/parent psychoeducation to help remove social, educational, and financial barriers to healing. The professional development offered through All Faiths is catered to meet the individualized professional needs for CYFD staff, CYFD identified service providers and/or agencies, resource parents, adoptive and/or guardianship families, and/or natural supports. The post adopt/guardianship placement services aim to target the unique needs for referred adoptive and/or guardianship/kinship care families. Service duration will vary based on intake and individualized needs assessment. Each family will have an individualized service plan developed to meet their unique needs. The goal of the post adopt/guardianship services is to increase adoptive and/or guardianship stability by assessing for immediate needs, offering support, providing functional interventions-to include crisis intervention and planning, and develop life-long healthy strategies and/or locating long-term services, if needed.

Licensing: Throughout the remainder of 2023 CYFD updated the Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing Standards in collaboration with Nations, Pueblo, and Tribal partners. In January 2024, the new licensing standards were published and in effect. The new licensing standards aim to provide an easier path to licensure for relatives and fictive kin. Because of the collaborative process with our Nations, Pueblo, and Tribal partners CYFD eliminated the need for an initial relative assessment and an initial home study for relatives and fictive kin. The process now includes a comprehensive relative assessment that does not duplicate questions and efforts as was the case in the previous process.

Cultural Disproportionality: Stakeholders continue to express the need for more Native American resource families, noting there may be people who qualify who have native blood but are not familiar with the rules, so additional information and support is needed through the process. Some Native American families might believe they cannot afford to become resource parents and fear CYFD caseworkers may not understand Native American traditions that may be a barrier to licensure. Stakeholders believe caseworkers should discuss cultural needs and differences to eliminate misunderstanding and barrier to licensure. These barriers have been addressed in the new Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing Standards. CYFD worked with members of New Mexico Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations on eliminating barriers to licensing more Native American resource families. The addition of the relative assessment and elimination of some home building standards that were a barrier to some families who may live on a pueblo or reservation.

The Office of Tribal Affairs has added Native American Resource Parent Consultant (NARPC) position, whose responsibilities will include establishing professional and supportive relationships with CYFD workforce, Tribal ICWA/Social Workers, community-based providers, and stakeholders. The NARPC is a subject matter expert for CYFD and resource families. This NARPC will provide mentorship and participate in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of coaching/training plans for CYFD staff and resource families, which support compliance with ICWA/IFPA and improves practice outcomes for Native children, youth and families. Additionally, the NARPC will work closely with the PSD's Placement pillar and the N/P/Ts to support the development and implementation of Native American Resource Parent Recruitment and

Youth

Youth and young adults are encouraged to participate in leadership activities such as legislative advocacy, policy/procedure development, staff interview and selection, and program evaluation in multiple ways within the agency. Youth and young adults are voting members of the Extended Foster Care (EFC) Advisory Board to support and guide ongoing implementation and improvement of the program. Youth and young adults continue to be a part of the hiring panel for all Fostering Connections staff. Youth and young adults are also compensated for their participation in all these efforts, including workgroups, panel discussions, participation on interview panels, and focus groups where they provide input and feedback around lived experiences and ideas for system improvements and growth.

During FY24, FC has integrated input from young people with lived experience to revitalize Leaders Uniting Voices, Youth Advocates of New Mexico [LUVYANM] in addition to recommendations received last fiscal year. Youth voice has shaped the new in-person meeting format and has formed regional chapters for LUVYANM to cater to a larger audience of young people across the state. Chapters have been designed to meet monthly with a statewide meeting occurring quarterly to bring all youth members together.

LUVYANM meetings provide a space for learning and practicing life skills, developing leadership skills, building supportive networks, sharing resources and information, storytelling, and advocacy. Young people that choose to participate are encouraged to share their feedback and aspirations for the group to make it as youth led as possible. Young people are also encouraged to join in the planning and implementation process to develop additional coordination, outreach, and facilitation skills that promote confidence building to co-facilitate group functions. Youth Engagement Coordinators then collaborate with Fostering Connections staff, young people, and community partners to raise awareness of the group, address obstacles for participation, and to create strategies for achieving the group's decided goals.

Fostering Connections also utilizes many opportunities to seek and obtain input and feedback from our youth. Due to ongoing challenges with large in-person gatherings, Fostering Connections utilized the following venues in in FY23-24:

The FY23 ILY Conference Town Hall: A conference planning organization was utilized to host the virtual conference. One session included the annual town hall where CYC and youth and young adults presented their findings and recommendations for the LUVYANM rebuild. Participants were provided the opportunity to respond to the plan and overall supported the proposal for regionally based chapters that would allow for more direct community engagement and advocacy.

Individual Feedback from LUVYANM Members and Youth Leaders: The two full-time Youth Engagement Coordinators continue to support youth and young adults in providing access to opportunities to participate in various workgroups that guide program evaluations and implementation, to serve as members of the hiring committee for new FC staff, and to serve on committees (including the EFC

Advisory Committee) to provide recommendations for improvement and expansion of services provided by Fostering Connections. Additionally, youth input led directly to the continuation of the “Covid phone program” using state general funds to provide low barrier access to phones and data cards to youth and young adults that was administered from FY21-FY24. While the “Covid phone program” is no longer this led to being able to utilize emergency discretionary funds to support young people with accessing reliable communication to support them in achievement of their goals.

Parents

Resource parents expressed an interest in CYFD caseworkers assisting with relationship building with parents when possible, including how to navigate visitations. Recognizing the relationship between biological and resource parents can sometimes take time to build, resource parents wanted to express the importance of letting the parent know they are not there to take their place and that this topic should be included in resource parent training. There is also the need to ensure that children in foster care need to maintain connections with siblings and other relatives and fictive kin. CYFD Caseworkers should communicate with relatives about the status of their relatives in care. As a result, CYFD has begun statewide implementation and cultural change through the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) in New Mexico. QPI ensures that all children and youth in care experience quality parenting every day with the primary goals of helping them thrive and having strong and positive relationships. QPI incorporates attachment theory and developmental and neurological research into its approach to child welfare. QPI works with experts in these fields to educate staff and caregivers on the impact of this research on daily practice.

CYFD also recognizes the need to improve outreach and engagement with parents while working through an investigation or legal custody case. Over the next year, CYFD will work with community providers to increase engagement and participation in feedback with parents with lived experience in the child welfare system. This effort will be outlined in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review.

CFSR Community Meetings were held in FY24 in Bernalillo, Dona Ana, and McKinley counties. Community members, including parents were provided information about the CFSR process, how they could get involved in the statewide assessment, become a peer reviewer, assist in program improvement plan (PIP) development and were provided an opportunity to provide feedback to the agency during the meeting.

Judicial and Court System

New Mexico Court Improvement Project: The New Mexico Court Improvement Program (CIP) and CYFD continuously collaborate, with most of the work via the CIP’s multidisciplinary task force called the Children’s Court Improvement Commission (CCIC). The CCIC’s 2021-2024 Strategic Plan created six workgroups, all of which have participation from CYFD employees. These workgroups and the projects they are working on include the following:

1. **Early Intervention Legal Services Workgroup:** The Early Intervention Legal Services Workgroup created a pilot called the Family Wellbeing Legal Consultation Services program that ran from December 2, 2022, through May 8, 2024, in the Second Judicial Court. The purpose of this pilot was to provide families with the option of having pre-petition legal consultation prior to a legal filing. Contracted attorneys (through the CIP/AOC) consulted with families on matters such as voluntary placement agreements, in-home service agreements and other challenges that may have required a legal case had no adjustments been made to the family situation. CYFD Investigators provided purple pamphlets to families at the initial meeting with a family allowing

the families to self-refer to their program. When a family centered meeting was planned, CYFD made referrals to the program to have the attorney reach out to the family.

2. **Data Driven Strategies Workgroup:** CYFD data analysts and AOC's CIP Data Analyst frequently collaborate in this workgroup that even had a panel presentation at the 2024 Children's Law Institute that included both parties along with others from the workgroup.
3. **Enhanced Family Supports Workgroup:** The Enhanced Family Supports Workgroup drafted an Order on Family Time that is being piloted in the Second, Eighth, and Twelfth Judicial Districts. CYFD was a key partner in the creation of this order and trained their staff on the use of the order in the piloted judicial districts. The pilot began January 2024 and will run for one year at which time data will be reviewed to see if the use of the order shall expand to other courts of the state.
4. **Legal Stakeholders Workgroup:** The members of the Legal Stakeholder Workgroup and CYFD worked hand in hand to ensure continuous quality improvement with the Fostering Connections Program. This included, but is not limited to, creating best practices guidelines for fostering connections, holding training, and surveying young people, attorneys, judges, and staff regarding the program.
5. **Reinstatement of Parental Rights Workgroup:** This workgroup drafted legislation allowing for the reinstatement of parental rights in certain situations with the goal of reducing the number of young people who age out of the system. The legislation has not been presented to the legislature yet and was handed over to the Children's Code Task Force for review.
6. **Crossover Youth Workgroups:** The Crossover Youth workgroup has both CYFD protective services and CYFD juvenile justice members who work with others regarding issues pertaining to children who are in CYFD custody and have juvenile justice cases.

Finally, CYFD leadership attended and participated in the CCIC's Strategic Plan Development Retreat on Friday, March 1st, 2024, in Albuquerque where members reconnected, in-person, to start creating an inclusive process for developing a new CCIC Strategic Plan over the next year.

Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA): With the passage of the Family Representation and Advocacy Act, work began on developing proposed policies and practices for the recently established Family Representation and Advocacy (FRA) Commission, which serves as the oversight agency for OFRA. CYFD representatives continued their involvement with the FRA Commission and assisted as a support role in the FRA Commission's work to successfully establish the Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA). The FRC issued a final report and recommendations to the FRA Commission and has completed its work.

The FRA Commission hired OFRA's first Director, who started in January 2023. Since January 2023, OFRA has hired 3 members of its leadership team (the Directors of the Legal Services, Administrative Services, and Interdisciplinary Services Divisions) and contracted with attorneys to represent all children, youth, respondents, and eligible adults in Children's Court cases. During this initial start-up period, OFRA and CYFD entered into a Title IV-E agreement for reimbursement of administrative expenses related to attorney services and training. On July 1, 2023, OFRA began representing clients statewide and continues to expand its growing interdisciplinary services and offices.

OFRA issued their initial SFY24 Strategic Plan to build out their Office with four core goals:

- **Goal 1:** Administer core legal services that will ensure due process, enhance client engagement, and promote client dignity.
- **Goal 2:** Develop and implement policies and practices that provide for maximum efficiency and accountability.

- **Goal 3:** Develop and implement policies and practices that promote manageable attorney caseloads and fair compensation.
- **Goal 4:** Launch Interdisciplinary Legal Services for families in Bernalillo County built on the practices of Cornerstone Advocacy.

ICWA Court: The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) court provides a specialized judicial proceeding over ICWA cases. ICWA court continued in FY24 and had demonstrated determinative impacts on ICWA cases with an overwhelming percentage of cases resulting in achieving permanency through reunification or guardianship whereby termination of parental rights is avoided. CYFD actively participates in the ICWA court format, and in staffing and workgroup sessions regarding its expansion to other districts in New Mexico.

Children's Court Judges Association: CYFD continues to collaborate with, provide presentations to, and provide updates to the Children's Court Judges Association regarding child welfare developments and changes in law. This has included presentations on juvenile justice detention matters, visit hosts and initiatives surrounding a move to resource parents, and activities and plans around Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The collaboration with Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) staff has continued and impacts not just the Children's Court Judges Association but also the Court Appointed Attorney Program to assure that IV-E funds are being leveraged to provide key training and support opportunities to practitioners and court staff.

In FY24, CYFD presented topic such as the Partial Corrective Action Plan of the Kevin S. case, Preparation and Planning for Round 4 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in New Mexico, and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. Feedback from Judges was positive, and all presentations were well-received.

Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos (Also See Section 5 – Consultation with Tribes)

Tribal-State Judicial Consortium: The Tribal-State Judicial Consortium's (TSJC) purpose is to build closer relationships between the state and tribal courts and enhance communications. CYFD continues to work with the TSJC, an advisory committee to the New Mexico Supreme Court and the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). Subcommittees address state services for tribal children, full faith and credit, collaboration, and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The mission of the TSJC is to "encourage and facilitate communication and collaboration between State and Tribal Court judges on common issues, focusing on domestic violence, domestic relations, child custody, child support, child abuse/neglect, and juvenile justice and addressing questions of jurisdiction and sovereignty as they relate to each particular issue."

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs): CYFD's Protective Services Division, Office of Tribal Affairs and Office of General Counsel continue to regularly meet with Nations, Pueblos and Tribes (N/P/Ts) within the state to provide information and propose the opportunity for N/P/Ts to enter JPA's with CYFD for Title IV-E and State funded foster care maintenance payments on behalf of children in tribal custody. OTA has reserved weekly timeslots each Friday for meetings with the N/P/Ts to discuss Title IV-E and state subsidized funding requirements, request technical assistance and bring forth any concerns or issues regarding the JPA process.

New Mexico Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium (NMTIC): NM TIC was founded in February 2015 and is comprised of tribal ICWA representatives who advocate to preserve the culture, traditions, and identity of all Indian children by working to enforce the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. NM CYFD has partnered with NM TIC and has served as an interested party member during their monthly meetings. Through CYFD's Office of Tribal Affairs, the work with NM TIC has helped to strengthen the

partnership between the N/P/Ts and the state to improve outcomes for children, youth and families being served by NM CYFD.

New Mexico Partners: NM Partners was established in August 2015 and was created to support effective and efficient pathways to permanency for Native American families through culturally informed education, advocacy, and collaboration with tribes, state agencies and the court. Core membership is the Tribal-State Judicial Consortium (TSJC), NM Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium (NM TIC), Navajo Nation, NM CYFD, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and Tribal/State youth with lived experience. The Partners meet on a quarterly basis and have unified in this partnership on a common purpose to demonstrate effective and equitable government-to-government relationships to uphold ICWA, meet the needs of Native children and families, and serve as a model for navigating 21st Century Indian child welfare.

Weekly Tribal Procedure Workgroup: CYFD's Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) began hosting weekly discussion and review of CYFD procedures in March 2022. This workgroup was created to encourage and support tribal voice as the department revises and creates procedures which impact child welfare practices affecting Native children, youth, and families. Through their representatives, N/P/Ts can share how past procedures and policy have negatively impacted Native children, youth, and families, and work with the department in a constructive manner to strengthen and improve practice.

The Children's Court Improvement Commission (CCIC): The OTA Director and a representative of CYFD's Office of General Counsel attends regularly scheduled quarterly meetings of the CCIC and provides guidance, feedback and information on tribal related policy, procedure and legislative issues involving Native American children in state custody matters.

Weekly Meetings with Human Services Department (HSD) Tribal Liaison: The Office of Tribal Affairs, Protective Services Federal Reporting Bureau and the Office of General counsel meet with HSD's Tribal liaison (weekly) and the Medicaid Assurance Department (biweekly) to discuss, collaborate and problem solve regarding the development and expansion of access to culturally relevant services, treatments, interventions and supports, including traditional and customary healing, through Medicaid, for children in state custody.

Other State Agencies

Medical Assistance Division (MAD) of Health Care Authority (HCA):

1. Biweekly Meetings: The Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit meets with MAD Quality Bureau and other MAD staff to discuss tracking needs and services for Children in State Custody (CISC) as part of the Kevin S Settlement Agreement. These meetings provide opportunities for discussion and preparation of the roll out of the new Medicaid Turquoise Care program beginning July 1, 2024. As part of this transition, all CISC will be assigned to one Managed Care Organization instead of assigned across three different Managed Care organizations.
2. Quarterly Meetings: The Title IV-E/Medicaid unit and Fostering Connection have quarterly meetings with the MAD Eligibility staff to discuss issues around eligibility and maintenance of Medicaid for Children in State Custody (CISC) and youth that age of foster care at age 26, or youth that come to New Mexico who have aged out of foster care from another state.

Department of Health (DOH): In FY 2022, CYFD provided the New Mexico Department of Health \$200,000 in CBCAP and CAPTA America Rescue Plan Act funding to support a statewide Safe Sleep campaign. CYFD staff continue to participate in the statewide Safe Sleep Campaign which has included media awareness and advertising (social media, radio, billboards, pamphlets, bus ads, etc.). DOH, CYFD, and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department have collaborated to provide pack n' plays and

baby boxes to hospitals across the state. CYFD plans to support DOH to expand distribution of safe sleep materials including pack n' plays and baby boxes to service providers across the state and to Protective Services county offices over the next five years.

CYFD has members on three of the five panels of the New Mexico Death Review which was established in 1998 and re-compiled in 2001 to examine the circumstances that contribute to the deaths of infants, children, and youth in New Mexico. Each Death Review Panel brings together multidisciplinary teams of experts from professional and community agencies to systematically evaluate information on maternal and child death events as well as identify risk factors in these deaths. These panels focus on systems changes that lead to greater collaborative efforts and improvements in maternal health and safety and/or child health and safety. Cases are grouped by the type of death events and reviewed accordingly by the following panels: suicide, unintentional deaths, maternal mortality review (MMR), the fetal and infant mortality review (FIMR) and child fatality review (CFR). The NMCFR releases an annual report that is posted to the New Mexico Department of Health public website. Case identifying information surrounding maternal and child fatalities is confidential.

Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD): The Early Childhood Education and Care Department is the stand-alone agency that administers programs and services for children aged 0 to 5. CYFD Family Services Division continues to partner with ECECD in supplementing their services with home-based and evidence-based prevention services to families with children ages 0 to 5 through the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs. Collaborative efforts include:

- **Family Support Services:** Target services will be prioritized for parents and secondary caregivers who have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Infant Mental Health Teams:** CYFD Behavioral Health Services is partnering with ECECD providers for the provision of infant mental health services.
- **Families FIRST:** A perinatal case management program which assists clients in gaining access to medical, social, and educational services that are necessary to foster positive pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infants and children.
- **Home Visiting Including the Neonatal Intensive Care Home Visiting Services:** A prevention program for families to receive support prenatally through their child's third/fifth birthday. The provider visits the family in their home (or setting of comfort) to share resources, support the caregivers, partner with the family to complete screenings, and develop goals for the child and family to guide services.
- **Early Intervention:** Intervention that serves families of infants and toddlers with, or at-risk of, developmental delays. Children under the age of 3 who are the subject of a substantiated report of child maltreatment are referred to the state's early intervention program, Family Infant Toddler (FIT), for an assessment.
- **Child and Family Nutrition Programs:** Nutrition programs that contribute to the healthy growth, development, and wellness of young children and adults through nutrition support services in New Mexico. The Summer Food Service Program serves children ages 1-18; the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serves all ages.
- **Childcare Assistance:** New Mexico subsidizes the cost of childcare for eligible families/children ages 6 weeks to 13 years (up to 18 if special supervision is required).
- **NM PreK:** The NM PreK program prepares three and four-year-old children for school readiness.

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT IN CURRENT PERFORMANCE IN IMPROVING OUTCOMES

The New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) assesses and shares data regarding safety, permanency, and wellbeing outcomes on a monthly and annual basis with both internal CYFD staff and external child welfare stakeholders. New Mexico has a dedicated quality assurance team that travels the state performing case reviews in selected counties using the federal On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI). A random selection of In-Home Services cases and Permanency Planning cases are reviewed in a selected county each month. The team visits the scheduled county for that month and spends a week reviewing selected cases and interviewing staff, parents, resource parents and age-appropriate children who are participants in those cases.

The CFSR QA Manager works with the Office of Performance and Accountability Director and Deputy Director to schedule counties across New Mexico annually. The annual schedule includes both of New Mexico's largest Metropolitan areas, Dona Ana County and Bernalillo County, and medium to smaller counties to ensure that each county is reviewed once every two years. Ratings (*see Safety, Permanency, and Well-being Outcome tables below*) are based on the number of cases reviewed for an outcome or item that is rated as "substantially achieved" on the federal OSRI.

Cumulative data is collected throughout the year to provide a roll up of annual results for all Safety, Permanency, and Well-being outcomes. These results are used in the calculation of targets for Safety, Permanency, and Well-being outcomes for the next five years. This data is also used to inform goals and strategies in Section 3, Plan for Enacting the State's Vision.

CALCULATION OF TARGET OUTCOMES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

CYFD's Target Outcomes were calculated by examining baseline data from 2022 and 2023. It should be noted that CYFD adopted the Round 4 OSRI in the middle of CY 2024, but results were combined to produce a single performance metric for each item (*See Table 2.1*).

In comparing progress made from CYs 2022 to 2023, each OSRI item was categorized based on the following:

- A decline in performance that was statistically significant (Items 5, 6, 12C, and 14);
- A decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant (Items 1, 4, 8, 11, 12B, 16, 17, and 18);
- An improvement in performance that was NOT statistically significant (Items 2, 7, 10, 12A, and 13);
- An improvement in performance that was statistically significant (Items 3, 9, and 15).

These categorizations are helpful for the agency to set priorities for areas of concern to address, and targets are set in accordance with the better performance between the two years. The tables that follow show each established target based on achieving a statistically significant improvement upon the better performance within the baseline data. Targets are rounded up to the nearest percent.

For those items that have already improved in a statistically significant manner from one year to the next (3, 9, and 15), slightly more modest targets have been set. CYFD intends to track year-over-year

performance to ensure the agency is making steady progress toward meeting these targets and will note any proposed changes during the five-year period.

Table 2.1

Outcome	2022 Performance (Percent Substantially Achieved)	2023 Performance (Percent Substantially Achieved)	Percent Improvement Needed	Target	Does target represent a statistically significant improvement on best- performing year?
Safety Outcome 1	89.1%	84.1%	7.9%	97%	Yes
Item 1: Timeliness of initiation of investigations of reports of child maltreatment, including face-to-face contact	89.1%	84.1%	7.9%	97%	Yes
Safety Outcome 2	57.9%	58.4%	11.1%	69%	Yes
Item 2: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	56.9%	57.1%	17.1%	74%	Yes
Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management	62.0%	73.2%	4.8%	78%	No
Permanency Outcome 1	17.5%	13.8%	12.5%	30%	Yes
Item 4: Stability of foster care placement	75.5%	73.9%	10.5%	86%	Yes
Item 5: Permanency goal for child	79.8%	59.4%	9.2%	89%	Yes
Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	38.2%	18.8%	12.8%	51%	Yes
Permanency Outcome 2	52.5%	70.7%	12.3%	83%	Yes
Item 7: Placement with siblings	80.0%	89.4%	7.6%	97%	Yes
Item 8: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	64.2%	56.8%	13.8%	78%	Yes
Item 9: Preserving connections	43.0%	62.1%	7.9%	70%	No
Item 10: Relative placement	60.9%	72.5%	10.5%	83%	Yes
Item 11: Relationship of child in care with parents	62.9%	56.0%	19.1%	82%	Yes
Well-Being Outcome 1	48.8%	41.6%	12.2%	61%	Yes
Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	49.0%	40.0%	11.0%	60%	Yes
Item 12A: Needs assessment and services to children	69.4%	70.8%	10.2%	81%	Yes
Item 12B: Needs assessment and services to parents	47.9%	44.9%	12.1%	60%	Yes
Item 12C: Needs assessment and services to foster parents	81.8%	69.0%	10.2%	92%	Yes
Item 13: Child and family involvement in case planning	60.3%	61.9%	10.1%	72%	Yes
Item 14: Caseworker visits with child	79.3%	67.4%	8.7%	88%	Yes
Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents	40.5%	53.8%	16.2%	70%	No
Well-Being Outcome 2	85.1%	79.7%	8.9%	94%	Yes
Item 16: Educational needs of the child	85.1%	79.7%	8.9%	94%	Yes
Well-Being Outcome 3	58.0%	37.3%	12.0%	70%	Yes
Item 17: Physical health of the child	69.5%	57.4%	11.5%	81%	Yes
Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of the child	55.3%	48.4%	13.7%	69%	Yes

The CYFD Quality Assurance Team and the Federal Reporting/CQI coordinators will work with the county offices after each county CFSR review in developing a County Improvement Plan (CIP) that support achievement of the goals and strategies withing the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan. County Office Managers and Supervisor will take lead in inviting key stakeholders to the CIP planning meeting and any subsequent meetings. Key stakeholders may include, but is not limited to community services providers, resource parents, Judges, attorneys, Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos, and people with lived experience.

SAFETY, PERMANENCY, AND WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

Safety Outcome 1

	2020-24 CFSP Final	CY 2024 Rating	CY 2025 Rating	CY 2026 Rating	CY 2027 Rating	CY 2028 Rating	Target
SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.							
Each calendar year, 97% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Safety Outcome 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	84.1%						97%
ITEM 1: Timeliness of initiation of investigations of reports of child maltreatment, including face to face contact.							
Each calendar year, 97% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	84.1%						97%

Safety Outcome 1/Item 1: Item 1 saw a decrease from a substantially achieved rating of 89.06% in 2022 to 81.13% in 2023. As discussed in our methodology section above, item 1 is categorized as a decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant. However, although the decrease was not statistically significant to address as a priority in Section 3 -Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision, CYFD will continue to monitor the progress of this item over the next year and through Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review. CYFD will plan to involve key child welfare stakeholders such as people with lived experience, attorneys, judges, community providers, and resource parents in progress made toward goals established in the 2025-2029 CFFSP through CYFD’s Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

In New Mexico all reports of alleged child abuse and neglect go through CYFD’s Statewide Central Intake (SCI) and are either screened in or screened out as not meeting criteria for investigation. The intake supervisor makes the final screening decision as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four hours from receipt of the report. Screening decisions are made immediately on any report containing allegations of present safety threats to a child. When a report is screened in, it is assigned a priority based on the severity and immediacy of reported allegations. CYFD CPS Investigations procedure (8.10.3.9) PR 9-Assignment and Initiation of Investigation and CPS Intake procedure (8.10.2.12) PR 12 – Intake Decision outlines three types of reports/decisions:

- 1. Emergency (E) Report/Decision:** When the SCI worker receives a report that meets the criteria of an emergency the SCI worker staffs the report with a SCI supervisor or manager. After staffing, if the report is still determined to be an emergency, the SCI worker assigns the report to the SCI supervisor and/or manager. The SCI supervisor and/or manager then assigns the report to the county’s investigation supervisor and/or manager. The investigation supervisor assigns the emergency report to an investigation worker immediately upon receipt of the report from SCI. An emergency report requires an investigation be initiated within three hours of the SCI Supervisor’s screening decision.
- 2. Priority One (P1) Report/ Decision:** When the SCI worker receives a report that meets the criteria of a P1 status, the SCI worker staffs the report with a SCI supervisor and/or manager. If the report remains a P1 after staffing, the SCI worker assigns the report to the SCI supervisor and/or manager. The SCI supervisory staff assigns the report to the county investigation manager and/or

supervisor. The investigation supervisor and/or manager assigns the P1 report immediately upon receipt of the report from SCI. A P1 report requires an investigation to be initiated within 24 hours of the SCI Supervisor's and/or Manager's screening decision.

3. **Priority Two (P2) Report/Decision:** When the SCI worker receives a report that meets the requirements of a P2 report, the SCI worker gives the report to the SCI supervisor and/or manager. If the SCI supervisor and/or manager agrees with the P2 determination, they assign the report to the county investigation and/or manager in FACTS. The investigation supervisor and/or manager or senior PSD investigation worker designated by the investigation supervisor assigns the P2 report no later than one business day of receipt of the report from SCI. A P2 report requires an investigation be initiated within five calendar days of the SCI Supervisor's screening decision.

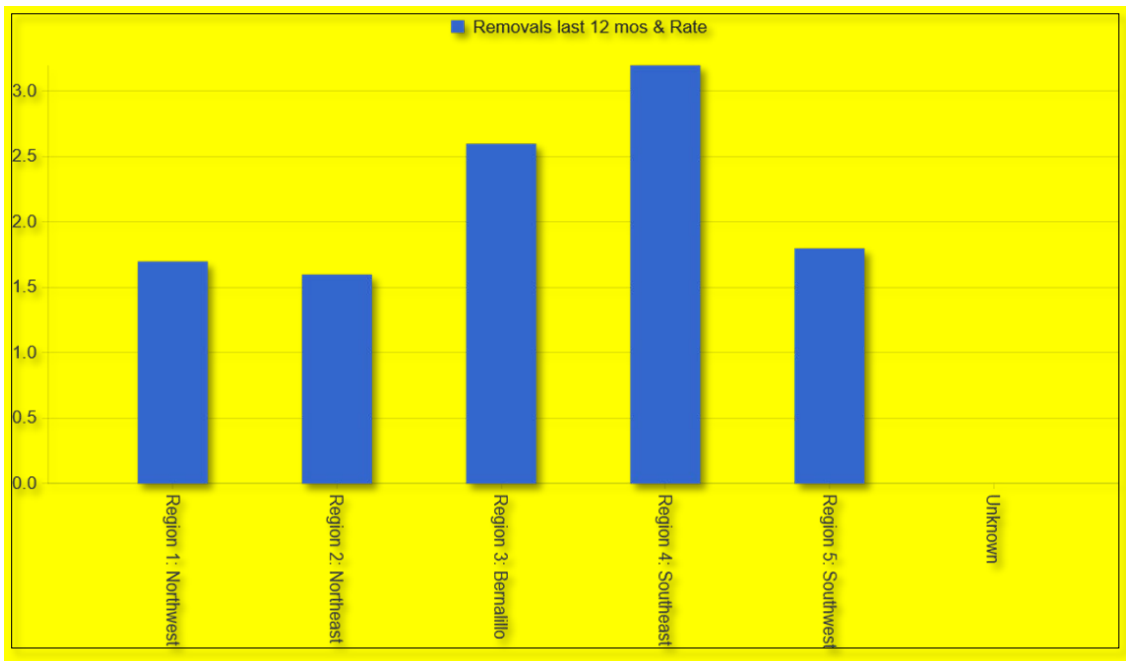
CYFD also utilizes its Results Oriented Management (ROM) system to review data on initiation. From May 2023 to May 2024, ROM shows timely initiation was achieved 94.1% overall. In addition to the ROM data, the newly created Safety Practice Quality Assurance team has been reviewing investigations and collecting data since February 2024. The Safety Practice Quality Assurance team has reviewed 165 investigations from around the state to date. Of those, 81.2% were initiated timely. The data tells CYFD that the CFSR and investigation review data is more consistent and likely a more accurate picture of initiation across the state. This is likely due to inaccuracies of the initiation time that is entered in the FACTS system and it not being congruent with the actual initiation time or the initiation time that is in the documented narrative of the investigation, which would account for the higher initiation rates documented in ROM. Often the investigator or the investigations supervisor enters the initiation time in FACTS as soon as the investigation is created in the system; however, the narrative documentation may be entered much later and not match up with the date and time documented in FACTS. This requires the due diligence of the investigator and supervisor to ensure they match prior to closing the investigation.

Safety Outcome 2

	2020-24 CFSP Final	CY 2024 Rating	CY 2025 Rating	CY 2026 Rating	CY 2027 Rating	CY 2028 Rating	Target
SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.							
Each calendar year, 69% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Safety Outcome 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	58.4%						69%
ITEM 2: Prevention of entry into foster care or re-entry into foster care after reunification.							
Each calendar year, 74% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	57.1%						74%
ITEM 3: Efforts to assess and address risk and safety concerns relating to children in their homes or while in foster care.							
Each calendar year, 78% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 3 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	73.2%						78%

Safety Outcome 2: Safety Outcome 2 had a final rating of 55.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 83% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. CYFD has consistently underperformed in reaching targets within Safety Outcome 2. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Safety Outcome 2 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan. CYFD will plan to involve key child welfare stakeholders such as people with lived experience, attorneys, judges, community providers, and resource parents in progress made toward goals established in the 2025-2029 CFFSP through CYFD's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

The chart below shows the removal rates for 2023. Of note there is a higher rate in the Southeast Region compared to the other regions, except for Bernalillo, our largest metro region. This number is determined by the ratio of the number of children entering care (removed) in the year ending in each report period to the number of children in the child population (per 1,000) in the geographic area served by the agency.



CYFD ROM Data 2023

As indicated in the chart below, New Mexico has consistently had a higher number of short stays compared to other states given that New Mexico requires law enforcement to give CYFD custody. At times, law enforcement can insist upon a hold when it is not always necessary, accounting for some of these short stays. Other factors that may contribute to short stays are: CYFD cannot reach parents to safety plan but eventually get a hold of them a short time later; a hold is taken, but the child runs away so the hold is released; or if the parent lives a distance away and a hold is taken until the parent can come to the child. A long view of the short stay trend indicates that agency efforts to reduce unnecessary short stays have been successful, particularly when we observe the percentage of total entries that last fewer than 9 days.

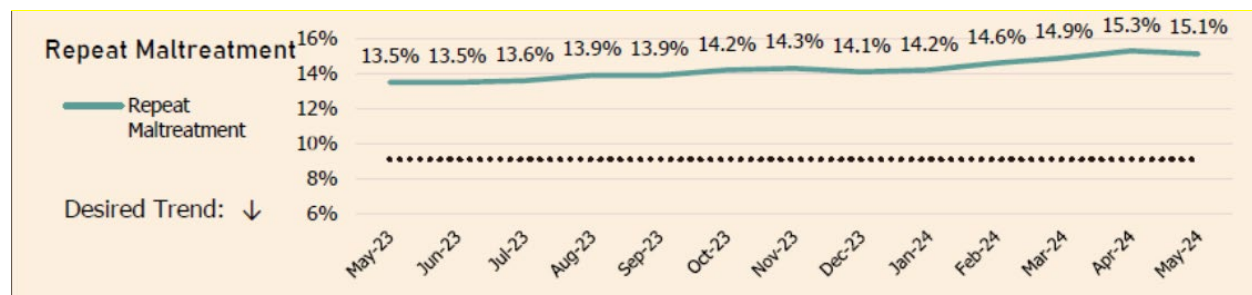
	SFY 2019	SFY 2020	SFY 2021	SFY 2022	SFY 2023	SFY 2024
All entries	1646	1310	1054	1025	1251	1187
Short stays	746	465	306	295	310	305
% of entries that are short stays	45.3%	35.5%	29.0%	28.8%	24.8%	25.7%

CYFD ROM Data SYF 2019-2024

Additionally, CYFD is committed to tracking and addressing Federal Data Indicators Repeat Maltreatment and Maltreatment in Foster Care.

Item 2: Item 2 had a final rating of 57.1% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 98% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 2 is categorized as an improvement in performance from CY 2022 to CY 2023 that was NOT statistically significant. With the establishment of the Family Services Division as part of CYFD's organizational restructuring and the work on the Title IV-E Prevention Plan, item 2 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan, Section 3 – Plan for Enacting the State's Vision.

Repeat Maltreatment



CYFD ROM Data 2023-2024

New Mexico has consistently struggled with repeat maltreatment and is above the federal target of 9.8%. Over the last year, the rates have appeared to increase steadily. This trend seems to track back to whether services are provided to families or not. One Chaves County contract provider reported having a good array of services in the county and having a strong relationship with the local CYFD office which supports them in providing services to families. However, they also noted a lack of data regarding CYFD referrals to their agency versus community referrals. Despite this, Chavez County has a Recurrence of Maltreatment of (57/310) 18.4%, which is higher than the overall state average of 15% and it is not clear why. Some note that the rates of substantiation vary by county which in turn can increase the repeat maltreatment if they are more likely to substantiate in the first place.

The rate of removal is also variable. It is also noted that when a family is referred to Home-Based Prevention Services, whether it is internal or an external contract provider referral, a warm handoff meeting should be occurring in which the family, investigator, and provider all meet in person to transfer the case. It is not clear if these meetings always occur as they are not being tracked. As the rates of substantiations are going up, referrals to Home-Based Prevention Services are going down. One manager noted that referrals to contracted Home-Based Prevention Services are low because the

referral form is too long. Recently CYFD Home-Based Prevention Services have been assisting with completing the referral form, and the feedback is that it's helped with referrals. The intention is that this will be implemented with contacted providers as well to assist in increasing referrals. The hope is that as more families are served either by increasing referrals or serving a wider population by changing the referral criteria, the state will see a decrease in repeat maltreatment.



CYFD ROM Data 2023-2024

Maltreatment in Foster Care

When looking at maltreatment in foster care, New Mexico is again above the Federal threshold of 9.8%. One permanency manager felt this is because the current SDM Safety assessment does not fit with permanency cases. The agency is currently working with Evident Change on developing a reunification assessment. We are also currently looking at incident reports and how those are managed with the intent of addressing issues sooner before they result in full investigations of maltreatment by foster parents. One issue that we have noted is that there is a different policy surrounding investigations on foster parents and the SDM safety assessment is not meant to be utilized on foster parents. The agency had worked with Evident Change on creating a substitute care provider safety assessment, but the use of this tool never made it into formal policy and therefore is not used consistently. When comparing substantiations in relative foster homes compared to non-relative homes, relatives have fewer allegations and a lower percentage of substantiations. The hope then is that as relative placements continue to increase; maltreatment should decrease. However, maltreatment in care can also include reports on children who are on runaway status or for incidents that occur during visitation and during trial home visit.

In 2023, the Safety Practice QA team reviewed 24 investigations of substantiated maltreatment of children in care and found that only 8/24 (33%) were on licensed foster parents, the remainder occurred during trial home visit or unsupervised visitation with the parent. A reunification assessment and services provided during trial home visits should hopefully impact this in a positive way. Properly assessing safety prior to a trial home visit and not moving to a trial home visit within six months of removal also had an impact on this. The QA teams have found that permanency staff are under utilizing the formal safety assessment. Policy directs them to complete the assessment prior to each court hearing, prior to beginning of unsupervised visits and prior to beginning a trial home visit but this is not occurring consistently. The hope is that the more the agency becomes policy driven and workers adhere to it, the better the assessments and interventions provided will be.

Home Based Prevention Services

CYFD offers Home Based Prevention Services to promote the safety of children, reduce the risk and reduce the recurrence of maltreatment of children by their parent and/or guardian without the intervention of the courts. CYFD Home Based Prevention Services Procedures (8.10.6.8) PR 8 – Purpose of Home-Based Prevention Services outlines the general programs as services that are:

1. an integrated, trauma informed, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing problems in family functioning; and
2. a service provided to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment. Home-Based Prevention Services include In-Home Services (IHS), Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS), Family Support Services (FSS) and Community-based Intervention, Prevention and Reunification (CBIPR) services.

The In-Home Services (IHS) Practitioner functions as a facilitator of change by utilizing the Family Connections evidence-based practice model to aid families in meeting jointly defined goals that eliminate danger indicators, enhance parental protective capacities, and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, provide the family skills to address crisis, and to modify the situation that led to the need for services. The In-Home Services Practitioner and Supervisor must ensure fidelity of the Family Connections model through utilization and application of the Family Connections Manual.

Despite the existence of Home-Based Prevention Services, CYFD continues to consistently rate below the target rate for Item 2. When considering services to prevent removal, the state of New Mexico overall has a smaller capacity to provide ongoing services through the Home-Based Services program. New Mexico is struggling to find a professional and trained workforce to provide various levels of monitoring or intervention, the state would benefit from building workforce capacity both internally and externally to address behaviors and actions that put children at risk for entering foster care.

One barrier identified is that the CYFD offers Home-Based Prevention Services internally through CYFD and externally through contracted Community Based Prevention, Intervention, and Reunification (CBPIR) providers. CBPIR providers collect data on how many families they serve, but it is difficult to discern trends from the various providers, or their data is incomplete. Inconsistent methods of data collection led to some data quality and completeness issues; in particular, it has been difficult to identify how many families complete the program successfully and then are later reported back to the agency for repeated maltreatment. CYFD has yet to determine how "successful completion" should of a Home-Based Prevention service should be defined or measured. CBPIR providers have performance measures outlined in their contracts, which are calculated and reported at the end of each fiscal year. These performance measures are based on whether a family has a substantiated maltreatment claim during services or within 6 months after ending services. Another noted issue impacting this item is that, according to our Safety Organized Practice model, services should not be equated with safety. Often, when investigators are asked about safety-related services during the CFSR reviews, they have trouble articulating these services because of this messaging.

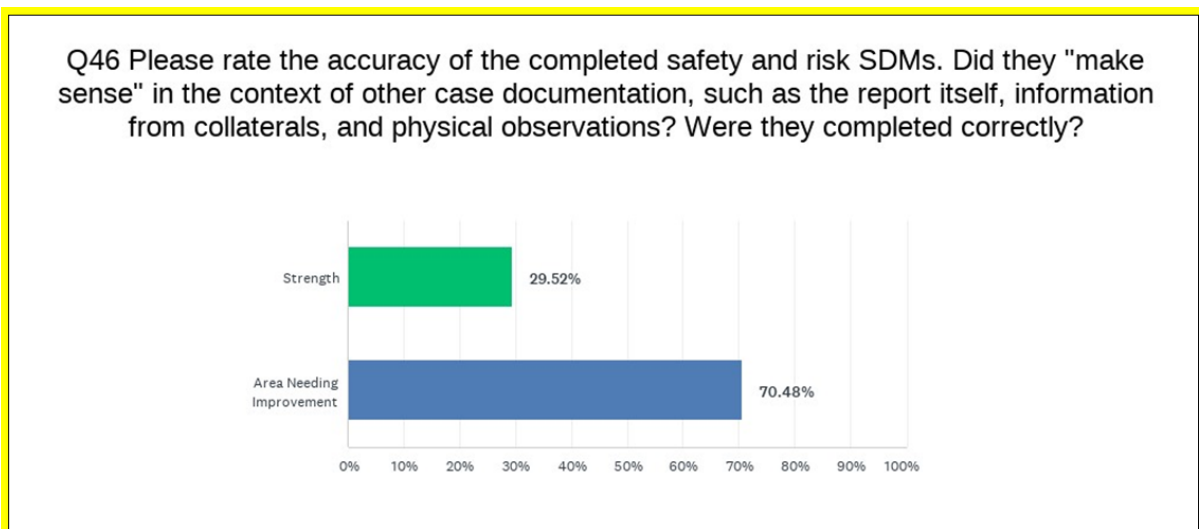
The ability of the investigators to identify appropriate services for the families varies. There is the question of whether appropriate services are being referred to or provided to the family. At times an investigation is closed before the family has been determined as truly safe and the external provider then must call Statewide Central Intake (SCI) to open another investigation. In some cases, due to minimal services in the area, families can be referred to the same services repeatedly with the hope of a different outcome. Investigators commented on the lack of "teeth" to get families to engage in services.

IHS and IFSS are voluntary programs, however families may believe participation is *obligatory* and not *voluntary*, and fear their children being removed from them; or families are reminded the services are voluntary and then disengage. Families engage with voluntary services until investigations close their case and then the family withdraws their participation. It does not appear that we are currently collecting data as to why families choose to disengage from internal or contracted external providers. IHS and IFSS serve families that have been identified as high risk by the SDM assessment, but the hope is to expand to possibly provide services to families that are at low or moderate risk to possibly prevent

them from becoming high risk. It would benefit CYFD to ensure appropriate referrals are being made to Family Support Services.

Item 3: Item had a final rating of 73.2% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 79.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. Although there is improvement in the rating, there are still areas of concern that have been noted by CYFD. The CFSR QA unit has found that often staff are completing informal assessments of safety accurately, however struggle in completing the formal SDM assessments accurately. At times the formal assessment does not match with what the actions taken in the case suggest. Item 3 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan, Section 3 – Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision.

CYFD utilizes the Structured Decision Making (SDM) model for safety and risk assessment assessments. CYFD also utilizes safety plans when there is a danger indicator present, but the child can be maintained in the home via a 21-day safety plan. CYFD also utilizes 5-day respites as part of a safety plan, in which a child may stay with someone the parent identifies for 5 days. In addition to the CFSR QA data, the CYFD Safety Practice Quality Assurance team has been reviewing investigations and collecting data since February 2024. Since February 2024, the team has found that 70.48% of cases reviewed showed that CYFD are not completely the SDM accurately or correctly.



CYFD Safety Practice Quality Assurance Team Questionnaire Data February 2024 to May 2024

Many of the field staff struggle with completing these formal tools timely and accurately. In discussion with staff, some noted that risk and safety is the first thing taught in New Employee Training, a time when a worker learns a lot in a short period, and it is not taught in the context of the life a case and when it should be utilized. It is also noted that after this initial training, there is not a refresher training option for staff and supervisors to really review the policy and procedures on how to complete these tools correctly. Supervisors must approve these assessments and so they approve them even when they are inaccurate. Errors often found include not completing the assessment on the correct household (the allegation household), not identifying the caregivers accurately (only those in the same household), not including all the children in the assessment, and not correctly identifying the danger indicators.

There are also errors in the outcome itself, where we are deeming children unsafe but not documenting a removal or removing children but deeming them safe with a plan or deeming them safe with a plan

but not documenting an actual safety plan. Safety plans seem to be underutilized as they are either not documented correctly or the investigator is incorrectly completing the safety assessment, removing children when a plan could be completed or completing a safety plan but not calling it as such. Investigators also struggle with completing assessments at key points in the case to reflect change over time. We often see only a single assessment for an investigation which is what policy requires, but it also directs us to complete them due to changes in circumstances or household composition. Some investigators found it helpful to carry copies of the full safety assessment tool with them in the field or bookmark the manual on their phones, but this is not an overall practice. Supervisors also noted that sometimes there is a discrepancy in the assessment an on-call worker does and then what is assessed at follow up by the primary investigator. Often for on-call, the workers responding may be permanency or placement workers, and therefore not as well trained in investigations and the safety assessment.

The CFSR QA team also notes that permanency is not adequately assessing the safety of children that remain in the home when siblings are in care and at times In Home Services will wait for investigations to respond rather than addressing concerns in the moment, which all impact this item. Evident Change has also advised that the SDM tools are not appropriate for our prevention providers but there is not another tool that can be utilized at this time. With such a large number of safety assessments not being completed accurately, this also impacts measurements of repeat maltreatment and maltreatment in foster care.

Permanency Outcome 1

	2020-24 CFSP Final	CY 2024 Rating	CY 2025 Rating	CY 2026 Rating	CY 2027 Rating	CY 2028 Rating	Target
PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.							
Each calendar year, 30% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Permanency Outcome 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	13.8%						30%
ITEM 4: Children in foster care are in stable placements and any placements changes are made in the child’s best interest and are consistent with achievement of the Permanency goal.							
Each calendar year, 86% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 4 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	73.9%						86%
ITEM 5: Establishment of appropriate permanency goals for the child in a timely manner.							
Each calendar year, 89% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 5 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	59.4%						89%
ITEM 6: Concerted efforts are made to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child.							
Each calendar year, 51% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 6 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	18.8%						51%

Permanency Outcome 1: Permanency Outcome 1 had a final rating of 13.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 45.7% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. CYFD has seen a decreasing performance in reaching the target for Permanency Outcome 1. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Permanency Outcome 1 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan. CYFD will plan to involve key child welfare stakeholders such as people with lived experience, attorneys, judges, community providers, and resource parents in progress made toward goals established in the 2025-2029 CFFSP through CYFD’s Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Item 4: Item 4 had a final rating of 73.9% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 75.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD was just slightly under the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 4 is categorized as a decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant.

Protective Services Placement and Permanency Pillar staff have reported reduced unplanned moves for children placed with relatives and fictive kin and have reported increased stability for children and youth placed with relative and fictive kin. Many permanency supervisors and workers agreed that “kids just do better when they are with relatives.” Despite the positive steps in placement stability, there is work to be done for older youth who have higher behavioral and mental health needs. The CFSR QA team noted

the areas needing improvement were due to unplanned placement moves that were unrelated to the youth's needs or goals to achieve permanency. Additionally, as recognized in the Kevin S settlement agreement, older youth with higher behavioral health needs are often ending up in office stays, moving from shelter placement to shelter placement, or lingering for long periods of time in multiple in state and out of state Residential Treatment Centers. These unplanned and continuous placement moves have a negative impact on placement stability, but more importantly are damaging to the youth's safety and overall well-being and adding additional trauma to these youth's lives.

CYFD is working to launch the Foster Care Plus model in the state in hopes of training and supporting a cadre of resource parents, including relative resource parents, that will take higher needs and children and youth with increased behaviors into their homes. The goal is to provide higher level of support to both the resource parent and the child in the that home to stabilize placements for higher needs children and youth.

Item 5: Item 5 had a final rating of 59.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 78.2% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a significant decrease in performance in calendar year 2023 and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, Item 5 is categorized as a decline in performance that was statistically significant. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Item 6 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan.

The CFSR QA team found that Protective Services has continued to do well establishing appropriate case goals for children first entering foster care, however, there are continued issues related to timely change of plan when reunification is no longer an option and issues related to timely motion to terminate parental rights. Courts often provide parents with more time to work on reunification past the established federal timelines, especially when parents begin to really engage in the case plan late in the case. This often occurs when parents who struggle with substance abuse disorder need more time due to delays in accessing treatment or relapse resulting in more time in treatment programs. This continues to be an item of struggle for the state with Protective Services continuing to address barriers presented by the courts related to change of plans. This is an item in need of collaboration with parents with lived experience, Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Office of Family Representation and Advocacy.

Item 6: Item 6 had a final rating of 18.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 57.1% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 6 is categorized as a decline in performance that was statistically significant. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Item 6 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan.

The CFSR QA team reviewed many cases in the last year where children were in care beyond Title IV-E Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regulations. There continue to be children in care beyond 36 months and efforts to achieve permanency seemingly are not being pursued. Some of the themes noted by the CFSR QA team were that that CYFD was not making steps toward finalizations of adoption and guardianship cases, the courts are not moving cases along, CYFD has delayed the Change of Plan Staffing, scheduling issues or no docket time with the court and delays in Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) hearings, adjudication hearings are not completed or are delayed and not completed timely, the court not accepting CYFD change of plan, CYFD not making steps toward dismissal of cases, inaccurate and poor quality reports to the court, and TPR overturned by the appellate court.

The CFSR QA also notes that for Item 6 another factor contributing to delays is worker turnover for attorneys as many counties have a legal representative desert, if you will, and are working with attorneys from other areas who are rotating the through the counties within a region.

Permanency Outcome 2

	2020-24 CFSP Final	CY 2024 Rating	CY 2025 Rating	CY 2026 Rating	CY 2027 Rating	CY 2028 Rating	Target
PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS ARE PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.							
Each calendar year, 83% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Permanency Outcome 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target	70.7%						83%
ITEM 7: Siblings in foster care are placed together unless separations is necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.							
Each calendar year, 97% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 7 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	89.4%						97%
ITEM 8: Sufficient frequency and quality of visitation between a child in foster care and their mother, father, and siblings.							
Each calendar year, 78% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 8 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	56.8%						78%
ITEM 9: Preservation of the child’s connections to their neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school, and friends.							
Each calendar year, 70% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 9 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	62.1%						70%
ITEM 10: Efforts to place child with relatives.							
Each calendar year, 83% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 10 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	72.5%						83%
ITEM 11: Efforts to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and their mother or father or other caregivers other than just arranging visitation.							
Each calendar year, 82% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 11 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	56%						82%

Permanency Outcome 2: Permanency Outcome 2 had a final rating of 70.7% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 72.3% of cases (or higher) would

rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD just missed the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. Case review data shows improvement in CY 2023 for items 7, 9 and 10. This is likely due to concentrated efforts to place and license with relatives and fictive kin. CYFD is still struggling with items 8 and 11 and is likely due to difficulty engaging parents in the case. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for improving engagement with parents will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan. CYFD will plan to involve key child welfare stakeholders such as people with lived experience, attorneys, judges, community providers, and resource parents in progress made toward goals established in the 2025-2029 CFFSP through CYFD's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Item 7: Item 7 had a final rating of 89.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 90.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see an increase in performance in the last three years, coming in slightly under the target set for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 7 is categorized as an improvement in performance that was not statistically significant.

The permanency pillar and placement pillar have worked over the past year to keep siblings in foster care together. In the southwest area of the state, permanency supervisors report that the increase of relative and fictive kin homes has helped with sibling placement and that working with the parent and relative in putting supports in place have helped in ensuring that siblings can safely stay together while in foster. Additionally, New Mexico Treatment Foster Care Agencies have agreed to place siblings in Treatment Foster Care together even when the sibling does not qualify for Treatment Foster Care. Permanency supervisors have also stated that more work has been done in training and supporting licensed resource homes in taking siblings groups and ensuring that those placements are appropriate for all siblings in the group. In Lea County, permanency workers are working to keep connections and frequent visitation between siblings (when appropriate and safe) when siblings are not placed together. In these cases where there are large sibling groups, the permanency staff ensure that daily to weekly connection is occurring. CFSR QA would like to see more in agency efforts to normalize TFC and meeting children's mental health needs with work around the child returning to the previous foster home setting so that going to TFC does not constitute a disruption in the placement, but rather a pause, especially with a pre-adoptive home, and siblings can remain together on their permanency path.

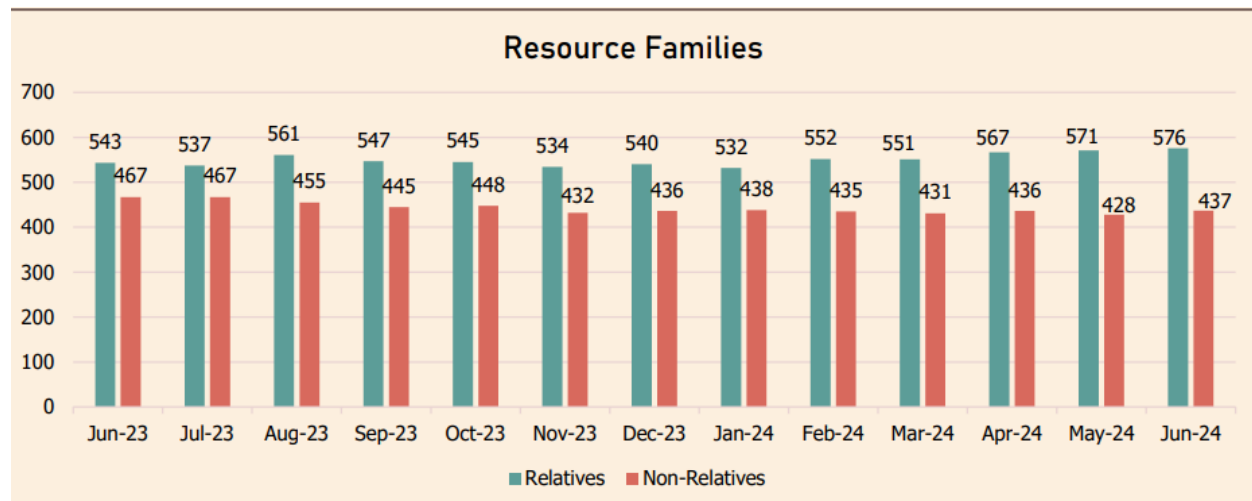
When older youth in foster care do not want to live with younger siblings, the Fostering Connections staff work with youth to choose housing options appropriate for their age and emotional and behavioral development. Fostering Connections staff work with permanency planning workers to maintain and/or repair those relationships. Lastly, many relative resource parents have stated that the availability and support around daycare for children, when the relative resource parent must work has helped with willingness to take sibling groups.

Item 8: Item 8 had a final rating of 56.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 66.7% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a decrease in performance from CY 22 to CY 23 and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 8 is categorized as a decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant. The decline in performance could be attributed to the difficulty in engaging parents and ensuring that visitation is frequent (more than once a month) and visits are of good quality. When youth with lived experience were asked about visits with parents and siblings, they provided the following feedback:

- Youth visited with dad and brothers twice weekly at same time. Visits were at the father's home, unsupervised. Youth never felt unsafe during these visits.
- Youth visited with an older 19-year-old brother, on occasion in the place where the brother lives. Never felt unsafe with brother.
- No visits with mom or stepdad. Youth lives with one sibling. Youth has requested to have visits with half siblings but is unsure where they reside; visits have not occurred.
- Youth lives with siblings in relative foster home. Visits tended to be in the home for the holidays, no safety issues.

Item 9: Item 9 had a final rating of 62.1% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 66.8% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw an increase in performance from CY 22 to CY 23 and came in slightly below the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 9 is categorized as an improvement in performance that was statistically significant. The improvement is most likely due to increased placement with relatives and fictive kin. Permanency supervisors report that relatives are more likely to preserve connections for children in foster care.

Item 10: Item 9 had a final rating of 62.1% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 66.8% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw an increase in performance from CY 22 to CY 23 and came in slightly below the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 9 is categorized as an improvement in performance that was statistically significant. The improvement is most likely due to efforts over the past year to increase placement and licensure with relatives and fictive kin.



CYFD ROM Data 2023-2024

Item 11: Item 11 had a final rating of 56% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 96.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 11 is categorized as a decline in performance that was not statistically significant. The decline in performance is most likely due to difficulty in engaging parents or in finding parents when they seem to disappear after children are taken into custody. This may also be due to lack of effort to

keep up connections between children and parents when a parent is incarcerated. CYFD recognizes there needs to be improvement in the communication and engagement of parents who are incarcerated. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Item 11 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan. The CFSR QA team noted that the areas needing improvement in the relationship of child in care with parents included counting video or telephone contact as visits rather than face-to-face contact between children and parents. In addition, parents are not being invited or encouraged to participate in school activities and case conferences, doctor's appointments with the child, or engagement in the child's after-school activities or hobbies. While there have been some strong and positive examples of foster parents providing mentoring and serving as role models to the parents, this practice needs to be consistently applied so that there are more opportunities for foster parents and parents to participate in appointments and activities of the child in care together.

Well-Being Outcome 1

	2020-24 CFSP Final	CY 2024 Rating	CY 2025 Rating	CY 2026 Rating	CY 2027 Rating	CY 2028 Rating	Target
WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.							
Each calendar year, 61% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Well-Being Outcome 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	41.6%						61%
ITEM 12: Efforts to assess the needs of and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents to identify services necessary to achieve case goals and address issues relevant to involvement with family.							
Each calendar year, 60% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 12 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	40%						60%
ITEM 13: Efforts to involve the parents and children in the case planning process on an on-going basis.							
Each calendar year, 72% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 13 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	61.9%						72%
ITEM 14: Frequency and quality of visitation between caseworker and children sufficient to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being and promote the achievement of the case goal.							
Each calendar year, 88% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 14 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	67.4%						88%
ITEM 15: Frequency and quality of visitation between caseworker and parents of children sufficient to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being to promote the achievement of the case goal.							
Each calendar year, 70% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 15 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	53.8%						70%

Well-Being Outcome 1: Well-being Outcome 1 had a final rating of 41.6% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 76.1% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a consistent decline for this outcome and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. CYFD will plan to involve key child welfare stakeholders such as people with lived experience, attorneys, judges, community providers, and resource parents in progress made toward goals established in the 2025-2029 CFFSP through CYFD's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Item 12: Item 12 had a final rating of 40% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 82.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. This item is broken out into three subsections: 12A – Needs Assessment and Services to Children, 12B – Needs Assessment and Services to Parents, and 12C – Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents. For sub-item 12A, there was a slight increase in performance from CY 2022 (69.4%) to CY 2023 (70.8%). Performance for sub-item 12B decreased from CY 2022 (47.9%) to CY 2023 (44.9%). The most significant decrease occurred in performance for sub-item 12C going from 81.8% in CY 2022 to 69% in CY 2023.

Sub-Item 12A: Although there was a slight improvement in performance in this Sub-Item, the improvement was not statistically significant, and the agency has not met the set goal. This Sub-Item pertains to the assessment of needs and provision of services to meet the needs of the child. Major themes identified by the CFSR QA team include the following:

1. Both in foster care and in-home services cases, CYFD does not consistently engage children in intensive interviews to assess their needs; the CFSR QA team has observed a trend that field workers are increasingly spending less time (and less "quality" time) with the children on their caseload. This appears to be due to staffing and training issues within the agency. Field staff have expressed frustration with staff turnover rates, which exacerbates retention issues. The CFSR QA team has also observed that field staff appear not to have been provided adequate on-the-job training to reinforce the skills and practices learned in new hire training, particularly around the assessment of needs and provision of services as it relates to Item 12.
2. CYFD is focused on meeting children's concrete needs, but does not consistently address social and emotional needs, such as opportunities for socialization, engagement in groups/teams/activities, self-esteem building, and social competency development.
3. CYFD is struggling to provide adequate life skills and prepare youth for transition into adulthood. The agency has established policy and practice around providing these services to youth, especially for those youth who will reach the age of majority while in foster care, but the field has not been adequately trained to provide all the information and services that are available to children and youth transitioning out of foster care.

Sub-Item 12B: The CFSR QA team noted that the areas needing improvement in this item (Needs Assessment and Services to Parents) include not making efforts with parents who are not engaged, particularly as it pertains to in-home services; and not working with the secondary parent or parent not residing in the home, especially parents who are incarcerated. In addition, when the plan has been changed from reunification, CYFD is not continuing to work with parents and addressing their needs. CYFD needs to follow up on recommendations from formal assessments conducted with parents and work to ensure those recommendations are followed. When efforts are made, they are minimal and do not meet the standard for concerted efforts.

Sub-Item 12C: There was a significant decrease in performance in this Sub-Item, and the agency has not met the set goal. This Sub-Item pertains to the assessment of needs and provision of services to meet the needs of foster parents. Themes identified by the CFSR QA team include the following.

1. There is a lack of collaboration between the permanency and placement units when working with foster parents.
2. While there is an increase across the state in placing children with relatives, there is a lack of caseworker finesse in working with the family's and in taking the extra time needed to hear them out, to explain the processes within the agency that impact them, with a struggling workforce and workers spread thin in their time and schedules, this concept with relative resource parents is lacking.
3. Due to exceptionally high worker turnover, there is less communication between caseworker and foster parents and less follow-up in assessing and responding to their needs- this issue can also be tied to issues with disruption in placements (Item 4). The agency used to have placement specialist workers to go in and support foster homes that struggled to meet children's need, but this concept has slipped, and the positions are no longer available. Sometimes caseworkers recognize that there are issues in the home but are not addressing it and not providing supports to the foster parents to maintain the placement. The agency has offered things like family counseling to improve relationship with the child and foster parents, but this is not a common practice and there is little in the way of guidance to further support foster parents.

Resource parents were interviewed about their experiences with CYFD; many of the review were positive and it appears there are conversations occurring to address foster parent needs, however, it does not appear that these conversations, referrals, supports, and informal assessments are being recorded in the case record.

Interview with Resource Parents (Visits)

During the review period, how often did you meet with your CYFD placement worker in person? (N=30)		
Never	3	10%
Less than Monthly	5	16.67%
At least Monthly	20	66.67%
More than Monthly	1	3.33%
Declined to Answer	1	3.33%

What was the typical duration of in person visits with the CYFD placement worker? (N=30)		
More than an hour	4	13.33%
At least an hour	11	36.67%
30-59 minutes	10	33.33%
15-29 minutes	2	6.67%
Less than 15 minutes	0	0%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	1	3.33%

Selected Comments from Resource Parent Interviews:

- At least monthly but more often if I needed help.
- The Treatment Foster Care (TFC) agency placement worker conducted these visits.
- The placement worker has visited the home maybe 3 times during the PUR.
- Once a month and then a 5-day visit after a child is placed in the home. "Placement worker is best worker this resource parent has ever had".
- The resource parent said a placement worker visited her every 2-3 months over the past year. She said that there was very little contact with the prior worker, but the current worker is more consistent and visits every 2 months.
- The placement worker visits the home every other month. Resource parents also see placement worker at events such as court, but full discussions take place during the home visits only.
- My worker typically visits for 1.5 to 2 hours. We talk in depth. She gives me support and I can vent.
- The visits are typically 45 minutes to one hour. The placement worker and the PPW visit together. The worker accommodates the resource parents' schedule.
- They arrive and say hi. They ask about me and my husband. They ask about the kids. They ask if there is anything new. They ask if there have been any changes or problems. The new worker does not speak Spanish, so this has been an issue.
- Worker interviews resource parent with what seems like standardized questions, there is a walkthrough of the home, looks at bedrooms, and confirms exit plans if needed in emergency.
- Worker and worker/supervisor came to home and asked how children were doing, interacted with the children, made sure house was in order and there was working water and electricity, assess the bedroom of children so it is safe, checked on emergency list and for escape route in emergency.
- Talking to the children, talking to resource parent, informing of upcoming court hearings for children. Currently working with a staff person on guardianship requirements.
- Placement worker would ask if checks were coming in regularly for the care of the target child. The worker would ask if resource parent needed referrals. The worker would have conversations with everyone in the household. Also discuss the target child's school status, behavioral issues, and medications.
- The placement worker asked how the girls were doing, how the relative resource parents were doing, observed the home environment and if there were safety concerns.
- The placement worker asks about the children and meets with them individually. She asks about safety issues. She checks the home including the refrigerator, door alarms, and bedrooms. She checks all the medications and their storage and counts their pills. (Treatment Foster Care Agency Resource Parent)
- The worker checks in on how I am doing and how the kids are doing and what their needs are. I have teens and she is really good at sharing everything with the youth, so they know what is going on.

- The worker spends time individually with me and asks about my needs. We review how the kids are doing. She makes time to spend with each child individually. She usually brings a toy or game. She has a very good relationship with the kids.
- The worker sits with me and asks about my needs. We talk about each child and their needs. She walks through the home and interacts with each child.
- We would sit at the table and talk about how things were going and how the target child was doing. We would review any paperwork. They would ask about my needs.
- The workers arrive on time as scheduled. The PPW and placement worker meet with resource parents and talk about how the kids are doing and the PPW meets with the children individually and tours the home.
- The worker visits with me and talks with all of us together. She talks with the kids individually. She asks about our needs.
- The worker always asks me how I am and tours the home. The visits are great. The worker is really supportive and cares about me. My house is a little crazy as I have six kids and lots of animals. I enjoy the visits with my worker.
- The worker has standardized questions that she asks and notes on the computer during the visits. Visits includes how it is going, do you have any needs, are there any outstanding payment issues from doing respite, if the child had concerning behaviors, and placement worker spends play time with the children. If the child is verbal, placement worker spends individual time with the child. Worker peeks around the house to observe for any changes.
- Placement worker talks about children's appointments for dental care, well child checks, schooling, and anything that is going on with the children or the family. Talk about the scheduled visits for the following month.
- The placement workers answer questions regarding the target child, where visits are to take place, any concerns the resource parents have. Also talk about reimbursement of expenses such as crib, car seat and travel expenses.
- During visits, they went over concerns regarding the child(ren), needs of child(ren) or the resource parents, walk through of the house if there were new kids in the home, court if there is an upcoming hearing, engage with the children, and talk about school and day care.
- Resource parents and placement worker talked about was going on with the children and visits with family who reached out. Visits were usually in the dining room or living room so the worker would walk through the house and see the children's rooms.

Item 13: Item 13 had a final rating of 61.9% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 89.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Parents were interviewed about their experiences with CYFD and case planning. The data below indicates that many parents are not part of the case planning process, and some parents are receiving copies of their case plans from their attorneys.

Interview with Parents (Case Planning)

Thinking about case planning with CYFD, were you able to provide input into your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	7	23.33%
No	23	76.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Parent Interviews:

- The parent "talked to the worker about the case plan before the worker put the plan together but the worker pretty much told mom what needed to be done".
- Discussions about case planning have not occurred. The workers are not responsive to the parent. Parent was incarcerated for fines and agency refused to reschedule a meeting to discuss the mediation between the relative foster parents and parents. The agency supervisor has lunch with the relative foster parents so there appears to be a conflict of interest.
- The worker and parent talked about progress that has been made, mom's recovery, unsupervised visits, attendance at NA meetings. These issues have been addressed during the monthly home visits between parent and worker. The worker and parent talk about these issues and tasks as they have been completed.
- The worker encourages parent to continue working on the plan and the services. The worker provides a lot of encouragement for the parent to make progress towards reunification.
- It is very difficult for parent to reach the worker, so no discussions have occurred about case planning.
- The workers were trying to find places that would take mom for inpatient services, but the services did not work out for health reasons as they don't provide good medical care.
- The worker talks about the need to attend more of the children's appointments and need to continue showing behavioral changes which mom doesn't really understand what that means as she left the baby's daddy, has housing, and is financially stable now.
- The parent had a few conversations with worker about case plan and typically just reviewed what was left to be done.
- Case planning items are discussed in court and mom attends all hearings. The worker tells mom what the plan contains after the plan is presented to judge.
- The parent and worker talk about what parent needs to do, worker talks with mom about what is left on treatment plan and the need for housing before transition home can begin.
- The parent asked the worker repeatedly what parent needed to do, but worker never got back to the parent about what needed to be done, no follow-up from worker. Parent consistently was told to keep doing what she is doing with UA's and medication management.
- There are no discussions about case planning with the workers due to multiple workers assigned.
- The parent tells the worker what his treatment plan is via the inpatient program. The worker is happy and proud of the work the parent is doing, then adds to the list of the things that are in the case plan. The parent and worker review the plan.

- The parent stated that the same plan is reviewed during every visit. In court, workers report that the parent hasn't met goals on case plan which parent disputes.
- There were one-way conversations of parent giving the worker information. Parent felt that it was a template of basic needs that all parents participate in, i.e. counseling, taking kids to places and not defined for this parent.
- The worker goes through the itemized case plan. Worker says where they are doing great or discusses when the issues need to be addressed more or differently to accomplish the goal. The parents can give input and opinion.

Interview with Parents (Case Planning)

Have you been provided a copy of your case plan each time it is updated? (N=30)		
Yes	13	43.33%
No	17	56.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Parent Interviews:

- The parent's attorney provided the parent with the case plan not the worker. This parent stated that she has not received paperwork from the agency about why they took custody of child in the first place.
- The Court told parent that agency sent document to wrong address in neighboring community although the parent said the case record contained the correct address.
- The agency record had the wrong address on file as it was recorded as the neighboring community when they could have looked at prior family record for correct address. This stepmother did not receive a case plan as a result.
- Only one time during the period under the review that the parent received a copy of the treatment plan.
- Parent said that workers may have emailed case plan to the old address as parent kept telling workers that it was an old email address. Parent never received a case plan at the new address. Parent told workers "At least 20 times of the new email address."
- Last received copy was at beginning of case.
- The parents have not had copy of case plan since 2021.
- The parent may have received the case plan from his attorney last week but parent plans to set appointment with attorney to review the case plan.

Youth with lived experience were interviewed about their experiences with CYFD and case planning. The data below indicates that many youth are to some extent, part of the case planning process. It does appear through interviews that youth are not always receiving copies of case plans.

Interview with Youth (Case Planning)

Thinking about case planning with CYFD, were you able to provide input into your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	20	66.67%
No	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Youth Interviews:

- Youth is not aware of case plan.
- The entire time in custody, youth wanted to be emancipated and was told that she was in custody and unable to care for self. Youth is currently trying to get in contact with her worker to find out what she needs to do as youth wants to have it planned and mapped out.
- Case plan is about adoption and behavior. Youth thinks CYFD is working on a new case plan as he heard foster parent and caseworker talking about that. Youth was able to give input: worker asks if he wants to be adopted, yes, and why. The youth reported giving input about finishing family therapy and beginning individual therapy.
- Youth stated she provided input but felt stressed as there was not a lot of time to process the information when certain meetings and discussions were occurring. Youth was able to talk about services and progress with the worker.
- Youth had input into case plan, but agency staff were poor at putting services in place. i.e., family therapy was court ordered 1.5 years, but CYFD did not set it up and youth found a therapist on her own.
- Case planning was poor, and the youth believed the staff were not really there to support the youth. Youth would tell the staff one thing that he wanted to pursue, and they would do something else even though they asked his opinion in the first place. Youth did not feel he was at all heard about case planning.
- The worker asked what he wanted as he was 16 years old and had good input. Youth talked to worker about strengths and needs. Talked about the progress he was making.

Interview with Youth (Case Planning)

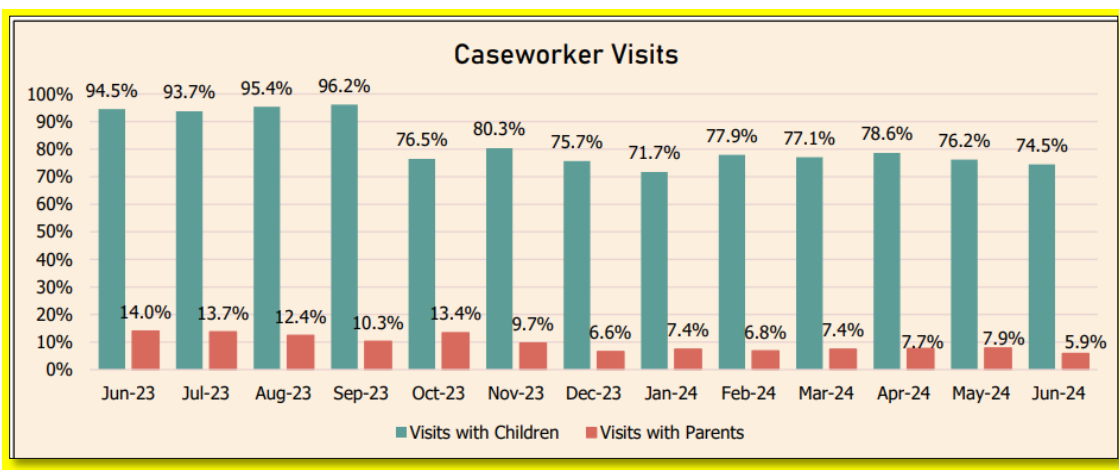
Have you been provided a copy of your case plan each time it is updated? (N=30)		
Yes	12	40%
No	18	60%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Youth Interviews:

- Youth received plan via email.
- Youth did not receive copy of case plan but believes the relative foster parent had a copy.
- Maybe was provided it in book of documents foster parent was given but not given to youth.

Item 14: Item 14 had a final rating of 67.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 92.5% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Caseworker visits with children has been an area of concern over the past year, CYFD has struggled to meet the threshold required for the Monthly Caseworker Visit Formula Grant within Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. Looking at Chart 1 below, it appears the decline started in September of 2023, and has remained flat hovering in the upper seventieth percentile. This could be due to turnover or could be linked to the major reorganization of CYFD investigation, permanency, and placement units being divided into pillars. The intent of the pillars was to allow workers to concentrate on their tasks and their caseload' one of the unintended consequences was the not having a unifying County Office Manager in the office to provide guidance to the workers in that offer. With the pillars there are 3 different managers that float between county offices in their respective regions.



CYFD ROM Data

Interview with Youth (Visits with Caseworker)

During the review period, how often did you meet with your CYFD worker in person? (N=30)		
Never	2	6.67%
Less than Monthly	9	30%
At least Monthly	19	63.33%
2-3 Times per Month	0	0%
Weekly	0	0%
More than Weekly	0	0%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Where did in person visits with the CYFD worker typically take place? (N=30)*		
Foster Home or Placement	25	83.33%
Home of Parent/Guardian/Caregiver	0	0%
CYFD Office	3	10%
Community Setting	2	6.67%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

**Note: Interviewee were able to identify more than one setting where visits typically occurred, therefor the total number and percentage exceeds 30.*

What was the typical duration of your visits with the CYFD worker? (N=30)		
More than an hour	2	6.67%
At least an hour	4	13.33%
30-59 minutes	17	56.67%
15-29 minutes	2	6.67%
Less than 15 minutes	3	10%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Did the CYFD worker meet with you individually and alone during at least a portion of each visit? (N=30)		
No: There was no alone time during any visits	2	6.67%
Sometimes the worker met alone and individually	7	23.33%
The worker always met with me alone and individually	19	63.33%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Youth Interviews:

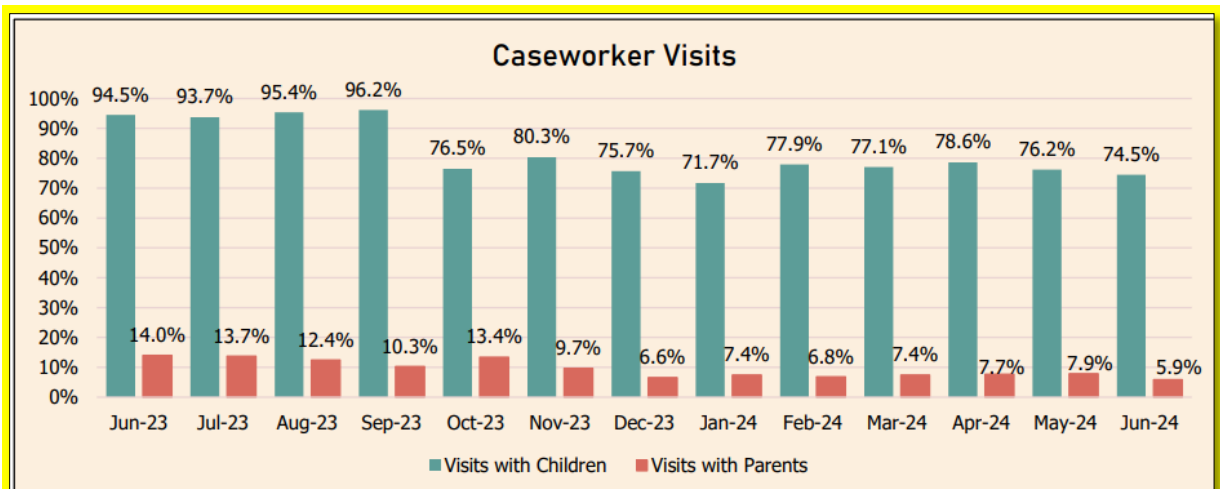
- The worker "would go to youths' room, ask if she was ok, and ask if there were any changes from last visit." Youth stated, "I wish I was over exaggerating, but it was exactly like that." Youth believed she could trust only 1 of 4 workers who were assigned as primary but not the others. -Youth said she could be honest with just 1 of 4 of those assigned workers. Youth hasn't met current worker who was assigned more than a month ago.

- The former worker asked if she felt safe or needed anything. Also asked about any upcoming appts and checked how the youth was doing. The current worker assigned 2 months ago has not had in person visits with the youth.
- Worker asked how things were going, had the youth sign a form that verified the worker visited with the youth, and worker would ask if the youth had a copy of the bill of rights.
- Worker has a set of questions about grades, if they feel safe in the home, if they wish they lived with their mother or somewhere else. Visits were mostly about school and which school is the best option for the youth. Asked how cheer and competitions were going.
- Visits were always short. Visits were pleasant, the worker discussed the same things every month, however nothing was done to help youth and always the same discussion.
- The worker is super friendly. They typically sat at table and had group discussion with youth, aunt, and uncle then worker meet with youth individually. During individual time, they talked about how it was going, basics about his situation and visits were thorough. Youth stated the worker is "very cool."

CFSR QA has noted that in home service caseworkers still struggled to conduct individual visits with children, one on one, during their home visits with the family, impacting the quality rating in the item. Permanency workers have been opening templates in the system to indicate that they have seen children monthly, but specific notations of those interactions are lacking, putting the actual contact into question, and the frequency of the monthly visits have been seen declining as the work-force is stretched thin.

Item 15: Item 15 had a final rating of 53.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 73.1% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

CYFD has work to do in increasing the number of visits with parents. One trend seems to be difficulty in engaging and visiting with parents that are incarcerated or when parents are out of state. Parents stated during interviews that visit were not consistent and that often it was difficult to get a hold of the worker or often not sure who their worker is.



CYFD ROM Data

Interview with Parents (Visits with Caseworker)

During the review period, how often did you meet with your CYFD worker in person? (N=30)		
Never	10	33.33%
Less than Monthly	15	50%
At least Monthly	4	13.33%
2-3 Times per Month	1	3.33%
Weekly	0	0%
More than Weekly	0	0%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Where did in person visits with the CYFD worker typically take place? (N=30) *		
Home	13	43.33%
CYFD Office	13	43.33%
Community Setting	0	0%
Court	0	0%
Not Applicable: No Visits	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

What was the typical duration of your in person visits with the CYFD worker? (N=30)		
More than an hour	0	0%
At least an hour	5	16.67%
30-59 minutes	6	20%
15-29 minutes	5	16.67%
Less than 15 minutes	4	13.33%
Not Applicable: No Visits	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Parent Interviews:

- During the PUR, maybe met with worker in 6 of the 12 months.
- No contact with CYFD worker since right before start of PUR. The parent went to office once during PUR, was given hair follicle test and told them it would show as positive. There was no contact in follow-up to tell parent of the test results or next steps. The case has been open for 35 months. There is an adoption plan, but no termination of parental rights (TPR) motion filed.
- Met with the supervisor one time about 2 months ago. There have been no other visits from any CYFD staff. I was incarcerated for part of PUR.

- The worker had face to face visits with parent maybe 3 or 4 times in past 12 months. Half of the time, visits were scheduled and not unannounced visits. The parent said it would have been crucial to do unannounced visits, especially in preparation for THV and during THV.
- Worker brought children to parents' home for visits, but the worker sat in car during visits and at end of visit, took children back. No in person discussions about the case. (Reviewer note: kids in care 52 months, TPR motion filed in March 2023 and no advancement since then).
- 6 in-person visits in PUR. When worker sets a home visit with the parent, the worker does not notify the parent that he will not be coming to the home visit
- Visits between parent and worker were coincidental and not planned by the worker. The worker frequently says that they need to meet but this has not occurred.
- The worker reported that they have no contact info for the parent, but they know where she lives, works, have her phone number and still no contact.
- There was one worker that met with the mother face to face during the PUR.
- Mom moved to another state in 2019. Worker has planned 3 trips during PUR to visit mom in the state mom resides but then cancelled those trips. The parent does not know why trips were cancelled.
- The parent has moved several times during PUR with no home visits on a reunification plan. The parent was in jail for 4 months during PUR.
- The worker has visited parent once in office to make calendar for visits. All other visits are in the home.
- Most visits were in the home with a few visits in the office.
- There has only been 1 visit in the home and all other visits have been in the office when the mom demanded a meeting.
- The parent stated that the visits are only long enough "to shut the mother up so she will leave the office."
- The worker scheduled an appointment with parent to talk about services, but it was cancelled and was not rescheduled. The visits lasted for maybe 5 minutes and were not planned but more coincidental type meetings. The visits were very brief. There were no home visits in PUR.
- The worker did a walk through the home, which was 10 minutes. The other visits were a bit longer than 10 minutes but less than a half hour.
- Visits typically were for 10 minutes.

Well-Being Outcome 2

	2020-24 CFSP Final	CY 2024 Rating	CY 2025 Rating	CY 2026 Rating	CY 2027 Rating	CY 2028 Rating	Target
WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.							
Each calendar year, 94% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Well-Being Outcome 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	79.7%						94%
ITEM 16: Efforts to assess children’s educational needs and appropriately address identified needs in case planning and case management activities.							
Each calendar year, 94% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 16 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	79.7%						94%

Well-Being Outcome 2/Item 16: There was a decrease from CY 2022 of 17.5% to 15.22% in CY 2023. In the FY 2020 - 2024 Child and Family Services Plan, a target was set that at least 45.72% of cases reviewed for Permanency Outcome 1 would be rated as substantially achieved. CYFD was not able to reach the set target for the FY 202-2024 period. All three items under Permanency Outcome 1 will be addressed in Section 3 – Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision and will be closely monitored as CYFD enters Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review. **CYFD will plan to involve key child welfare stakeholders such as people with lived experience, attorneys, judges, community providers, and resource parents in progress made toward goals established in the 2025-2029 CFFSP through CYFD’s Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.**

The decline in this item can mostly be attributed to the challenges faced with workforce, post-COVID pandemic. Following the covid pandemic CYFD has had difficulty in filling vacancies and retaining the existing workforce. For workers who are new to the field, the training received is insufficient to adequately prepare them for the “real life” events that happen in the field. New workers are required to receive training in curriculums in a classroom setting which does prepare new workers for the field work they are hired to perform. Without the field training, the new worker is ill prepared to fully understand their role in the educational system and how they can positively advocate on behalf of the client. For the more seasoned worker, the challenges identified are related to excessive caseloads and their inability to properly fulfill every need for every child. Moreover, seasoned workers are unable to share their experience in the field and mentor new workers because they are inundated with managing their own caseload. This is problematic. Consequently, the children who need educational assessments, advocacy and educational services do not receive the services they need during the schoolyear. Other trends witnessed by the CFSR QA is the lack of follow-up by in-home services workers with educational services or not addressing education if it is not an issue/concern identified in the referral or if the parent indicates there are concerns. Many times, children with educational concerns are not identified until the QA reviewer identifies a concern during the QA review and raises the concern to the worker/supervisor (i.e. failing grades, child is retained, special/developmental needs, new/existing individual education plans).

The strength in this item comes from the early intervention service referrals performed with children below the age of 3. Although CYFD is strong in the submission of these referrals, there are issues with follow-up by workers after the referral is sent and accepted by the provider. Many times, the CYFD

workers do not follow-up with the provider about the type of services being provided to the child or additional concerns that may have been identified during the service provision period. CYFD hopes to see improvement in this item with the Office of Children's Rights and Advocacy fully staffed. The OCRA include one staff attorney and one specialist to work on educational rights and needs for children in state custody.

Well-Being Outcome 3

	2020-24 CFSP Final	CY 2024 Rating	CY 2025 Rating	CY 2026 Rating	CY 2027 Rating	CY 2028 Rating	Target
WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.							
Each calendar year, 70% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Well-Being Outcome 3 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	37.3%						70%
ITEM 17: Physical health needs of children, including dental health needs.							
Each calendar year, 81% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 17 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	57.4%						81%
ITEM 18: Mental health/behavioral health needs of children.							
Each calendar year, 69% of cases reviewed will rate as “substantially achieved” for Item 18 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	48.4%						69%

Well-Being Outcome 3

There was a decrease from CY 2022 of 17.5% to 15.22% in CY 2023. In the FY 2020 - 2024 Child and Family Services Plan, a target was set that at least 45.72% of cases reviewed for Permanency Outcome 1 would be rated as substantially achieved. CYFD was not able to reach the set target for the FY 202-2024 period. All three items under Permanency Outcome 1 will be addressed in Section 3 – Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision and will be closely monitored as CYFD enters Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review. CYFD will plan to involve key child welfare stakeholders such as people with lived experience, attorneys, judges, community providers, and resource parents in progress made toward goals established in the 2025-2029 CFFSP through CYFD’s Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Item 17: Item 17 had a final rating of 57.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 83.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

The CFSR QA team found that Protective Services has gone down in this area from 2020 – 2024 due to barriers created by COVID-19 that severely impacted the agency’s ability to secure well-child checkups and dental screenings. As providers opened up for services in 2022, CYFD had gotten out of the habit of scheduling these physical and dental exams. This occurs when employees do not have the ability to access these services, such as during COVID, and they fall out of practice of scheduling them and

monitoring them. The agency was also impacted by its inability to receive documentation from medical and dental providers during the Covid pandemic. Providers did not have the staff or resources to provide CYFD with medical or dental records. After the pandemic, CYFD staff were out of the habit of obtaining records from providers and reviewing them. The CFSR QA team has found that Protective Service staff are relying on the foster parents to schedule and follow-up on these services.

Even staff who were able to stay on top of making referrals for these services, long wait lists or lack of appointment availability were often a barrier. As part of the implementation of the Kevin S Settlement, CYFD reached an agreement with the state's Department of Health to help get these appointments accomplished timely through the strategic use of county Public Health offices. This has led to a recent improvement of outcomes related to children receiving well-child checks within 30 days of entering out-of-home placement.

Item 18: Item 18 had a final rating of 48.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 84.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. The agency has continued to struggle to meet the goal for Item 18. The CFSR QA team has identified a primary cause of this struggle as a lack of training and understanding of the agency's policy regarding Medication Oversight. In an effort to meet the standard in the Children's Code that children are to be free from unnecessary or excessive medications, CYFD has implemented policy outlining specific steps to be taken when a child is recommended or prescribed psychotropic medication, including a requirement that the agency approve any medication and medication changes through a discussion with the prescribing provider, parent/guardian/custodian, and the supervisor on the case within seven calendar days of the recommendation.

In addition, the policy requires the agency to document the child's medication in the case management system and in each court report, including medications, changes in medications, impact, and side effects. It has been observed by the CFSR QA team that field staff is either unaware of the policy requirements regarding psychotropic medications, or the standard is not enforced through supervision and on-the-job training. In an effort to alleviate the detriment on the agency's performance in this Item caused by a lack of understanding of this policy, the CFSR QA team has provided copies of the policy to each county selected for CSFR, as well as reviewed the policy with each county prior to the onsite review. The CFSR QA team has also observed that this Item is affected by a lack of assessment of children's mental health needs if there are no immediate and pronounced concerns, even when a history of childhood trauma is known to the agency, such as exposure to domestic violence, parentification of children, maltreatment in childhood, and changes in caregiver. CYFD does not consistently engage children in informal assessments of mental health needs, such as through intensive interviewing, during visits with children.

Additionally, there are limited resources in the state for children's mental health, particularly for infant mental health, and there are few options for nontraditional therapies, such as equine therapy, art therapy, music therapy, or "e-therapy," which has caused these options to be explored less frequently and less diligently by field staff than traditional therapeutic interventions, such as psychotherapy and psychotropic medication.

SYSTEMIC FACTOR FUNCTIONALITY

Information System

- **Item 19:** *How well is the statewide information system functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care?*

Current SACWIS/FACTS: New Mexico can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is or has been in foster care for the preceding 12 months. Quantitative and qualitative data was reviewed from the SM0904 extract report, an internal IT Production report which shows all children in custody and additional data elements. This report extracts the data directly from the Children, Youth and Families Department statewide information system known as the Family Automated Client Tracking System (FACTS). FACTS is New Mexico's federally approved Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) and is the source of data for federal National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting requirements.

One of the limitations identified for this methodology is the accuracy of the data entered into the statewide information system, FACTS. If the information being entered into FACTS is not accurate, then the data SM0904 reports will subsequently also not be accurate. Another limitation identified is the management reporting software, Result Oriented Management (ROM) may oversimplify the complexity of individuals ethnic background by only reporting one ethnicity when multiple have been selected, Hispanic taking priority over other ethnicities, potentially overlooking the nuanced intersectionality of identities and experiences.

Although FACTS has data validation methods, such as not being able to enter a future date for something that has occurred, it does have its limitations. During the review, it was discovered that FACTS allows workers to place adults into CYFD custody, and entering a permanency hearing after a dismissal order has been entered will reflect the child as in CYFD custody when they are not.

CCWIS/Impact Project Summary: The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) is pursuing a new comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS) to help workers provide effective services and to meet federal requirements. The system will replace the 25-year-old legacy Family Automated Client Tracking System (FACTS) and service CYFD's Protective Services and Children's Behavioral Health programs. In 2016, the federal Administration on Children and Families (ACF) announced new rules for states to replace their legacy IT systems, offering a federal funding match for development and operations. The new CCWIS rule aimed to improve the quality of data collected, emphasizing the need for modernization and integration across programs and systems. To meet these requirements, CYFD is pursuing a new modular, integrated system to provide enhanced tools to improve outcomes, increase confidence and data integrity, provide more accurate real-time program reports, and improve efficiencies and productivity at the agency. The system includes functions for data collection, case management, compliance, reporting, and analytics by integrating with other data systems and providing web-based access for caseworkers, service providers, and other stakeholders in the field to update and manage child welfare case information in real time.

The project is part of the Health and Human Services 2020 (HHS2020) initiative, which includes 13 assistance programs serving 1.7 million individuals. HHS2020 aims to establish an integrated, customer-centric health and human services structure to more effectively deliver services. The partner agencies must submit updates to federal partners for project budgets and contracts. The total project cost is still to be determined pending completion of the agency's procurements. Project and agency leadership changes have since resulted in recent improvements to the project, including the adoption of a competitive procurement strategy to meet federal requirements and a simplified cost allocation that improves project risk. In 2023, the project stakeholders renamed the effort the New Mexico Impact Project to reflect this new trajectory.

In January 2022, after 20 months of pending approvals for non-Medicaid portions of the system, New Mexico was the first in the nation to receive approval from four federal agencies for its inter-agency project. The federal approvals will allow CYFD to realize more federal revenues. So far, the total state investment includes \$16.5 million in historic funds and \$18.4 million in new funds appropriated for FY24.

Expected Benefits: As noted, the system will allow for data collection and reporting, analytics, and can act as a case management system. It further allows for compliance with new rules and regulations as they change by implementing a modular design, which allows CYFD to alter individual components of the system—or modules—without affecting the entire system. The new CCWIS will provide timely and accurate information and reporting to facilitate informed decision-making and promote improved access to information for caseworkers. Additionally, the system will accommodate state and federal reporting requirements.

Other key outcomes of this project include:

- Providing a more flexible and mobile workforce using cloud-based technology,
- Promoting improved access to information using mobile, web-based, real-time information resources that allow for increased continuity of care among the families served by the agency,
- Providing the ability to share appropriate data across project partners, federal agencies, the courts, and other external stakeholders, including child abuse data, foster care, and adoption data, etc.
- Improving operational policies and procedures, conducting data clean-up, and updating the network and security.
- Improving access to key data points to help inform progress in reaching set targets and goals.

CYFD will track the outcomes of the project using measures, such as time spent in the referral process, time to permanency, the percentage of children eligible for federal assistance, and other qualitative measures such as confidence in program reports, staff productivity, and informed clientele.

By implementing a CCWIS, states can ensure compliance with federal regulations and standards set by the ACF, which includes meeting specific requirements for data collection, reporting, security, privacy, and interoperability, which are essential for receiving federal funding and maintaining program eligibility. A CCWIS can also help improve efficiency at the agency and, ideally, outcomes for children and families. Until New Mexico can implement a fully functional CCWIS system, the agency will continue relying on its legacy system, FACTS, to provide services and do case management.

New Mexico is one of 20 states developing a CCWIS compliant system, while only one state has implemented a fully operational system. According to the federal Administration on Children and Families (ACF), as of January 2023, Idaho is the only state to implement a fully operational CCWIS-compliant system: the Ensuring Safety and Permanency in Idaho (ESPI) system. The vendor Deloitte reports the new system resulted in a

- 30 percent increase in child welfare staff capacity,
- 82 percent decrease in safety decision backlog,
- 77 percent decrease in time-to- safety decisions (from 57 to 13 days), and
- 10 percent decrease in time to permanency.

Case Review System

- **Item 20:** *How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions?*

CYFD Protective Services Permanency Planning Procedure, PR 13 – Case Planning informs workers to meet with each parent, guardian, or custodian prior to the dispositional hearing to develop the case plan. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity to review the initial assessment plan and develop a case plan for each child, parent, guardian, and custodian. The case plan identifies the on-going services needed by the child and the parent, guardian or custodian to achieve the child's permanency plan and mitigate safety threats. The case plan is reviewed and revised as needed prior to any court hearing. The case plan includes:

1. Identification of the permanency plan for the child, including any changes to the permanency plan;
2. specific steps to address needed changes in behavior by the parent, guardian or custodian related to identified safety threats, steps to strengthen protective capacities, and on-going assessment of how identified steps are being met;
3. on-going evaluation of child's needs and placement supports;
4. identification of and on-going evaluation of the child's medical, dental, behavioral/mental health, and educational needs;
5. identification and on-going evaluation of the parent, guardian or custodian's needs to strengthen protective capacities and ability to maintain a safe relationship with the child;
6. identification of responsible parties for case plan steps; and
7. a visitation schedule for parents, siblings, and other important connections in the child's life.

Currently there is not an effective review that easily confirms all case plans are developed jointly with parents and guardians. In preparation for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review, CYFD has been interviewing a randomly selected number of parents who were involved with CYFD. While the interviews are still occurring at the writing of this plan, some of the preliminary feedback is that case plans feel very canned, repetitive, or some parents are not sure what is in their case plan. There have been a few parents that have commented that their worker was very good at talking about the case plan with them during the case. Preliminary conclusions may be that CYFD needs to support better functioning of item 20 through better case planning process and improved data collection.

- **Item 21:** *How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?*

CYFD Protective Services Permanency Planning Procedure, PR 15 – Initial Judicial Review, First Permanency Hearing and Subsequent Hearings, paragraph 9 states:

The court holds a review hearing every six months when a child is in PSD custody. The PPW provides the court report to the court which includes:

1. the current case plan for the child and parent, guardian or custodian;
2. the child's updated safety and risk reassessment results;
3. reasonable efforts made to finalize the permanency goal;
4. efforts made to identify and locate all grandparents and other relatives;
5. efforts made to conduct home studies on any appropriate relatives expressing an interest in providing permanency for the child;
6. efforts made to place siblings together;
7. if siblings not placed together, identify visitation schedule, or reasons why visitation would contrary to the safety or wellbeing of the siblings;
8. steps taken to ensure that the foster parent or childcare institution is following the reasonable and prudent parent standard;
9. steps taken to ensure that the child has regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities, including any age-appropriate consultation with the child about the child's opportunities to participate in activities; and
10. if the child has a plan of PPLA:
 - a. efforts made to return the child home or secure a placement for the child with a relative (including adult siblings), a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent, including efforts (e.g. social media, relative search form) to locate biological family members for the child;
 - b. the child's desired permanency outcome;
 - c. reason or reasons why it continues to not be in the best interest of the child to return home, be placed for adoption, be placed with a legal guardian or be placed with a relative.

If the child has not been transitioned back home within 90 days of the initial permanency hearing, the CCA requests a permanency review hearing prior to the 90 days expiration.

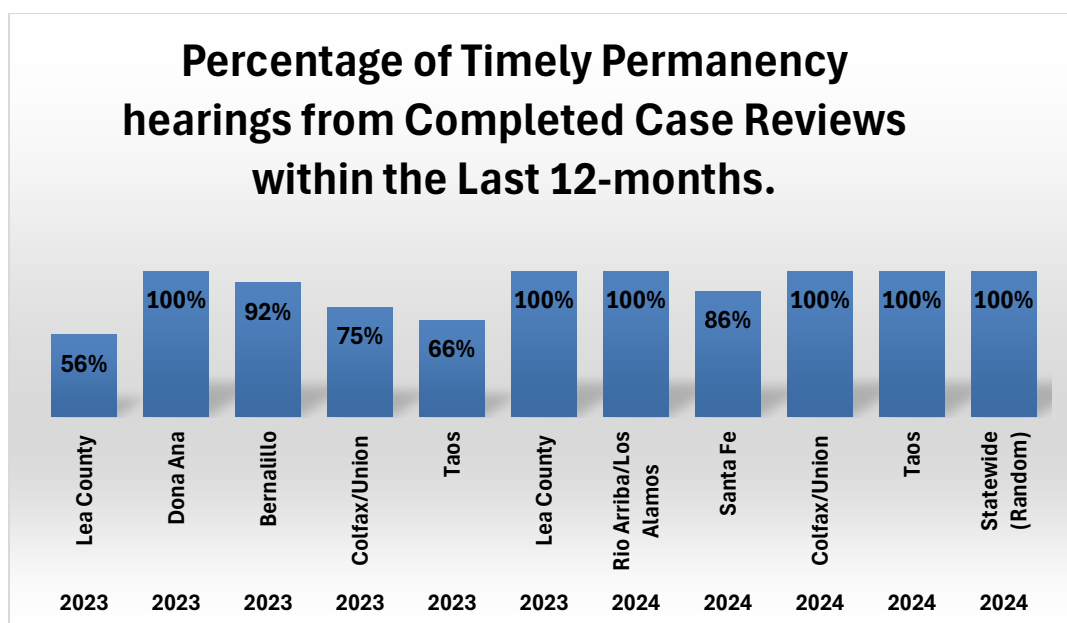
Over the last year, the Title IV-E/Medicaid unit in tandem with Children's Court Managing Attorneys and Children's Court Attorneys have been conducting legal reviews following the same schedule and using the same case sample list (omitting In-Home Services cases) as the CFSR QA case review. This data is currently being analyzed for use in the New Mexico's Statewide Assessment in preparation for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review. Although CYFD has seen consistent hearing happening every 6 months, there could be improved documentation of these hearings. There has also been a trend of hearings not happening in a timely manner due to court delays and the need for more docket time.

- **Item 22:** *How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?*

Item 22 is reviewed as part of the Legal Review that happens in tandem with the monthly CFSR QA reviews. The legal review follows the same schedule and uses the same case sample list (omitting In-Home Services cases) as the CFSR QA case review.

The case review system is functioning statewide as a Strength and is ensuring that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

Permanency hearings are documented in FACTS and a copy of the court orders located in the hard file. As shown in the table below, 88.6 % of children had timely permanency hearings. Specific reasons as to why some permanency hearings were not held in a timely manner are unknown, identification of these will require further, qualitative analysis.



Strengths and Challenges: Overall most of the cases reviewed are held on a timely basis within the 12-month period. Some challenges identified include staff shortage and their ability to maintain adequate coverage for other counties outside their jurisdiction. Additional challenges include systematic issues within the court system, i.e. docket issues and client legal representation.

- **Item 23:** *How well is the case review system functioning to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?*

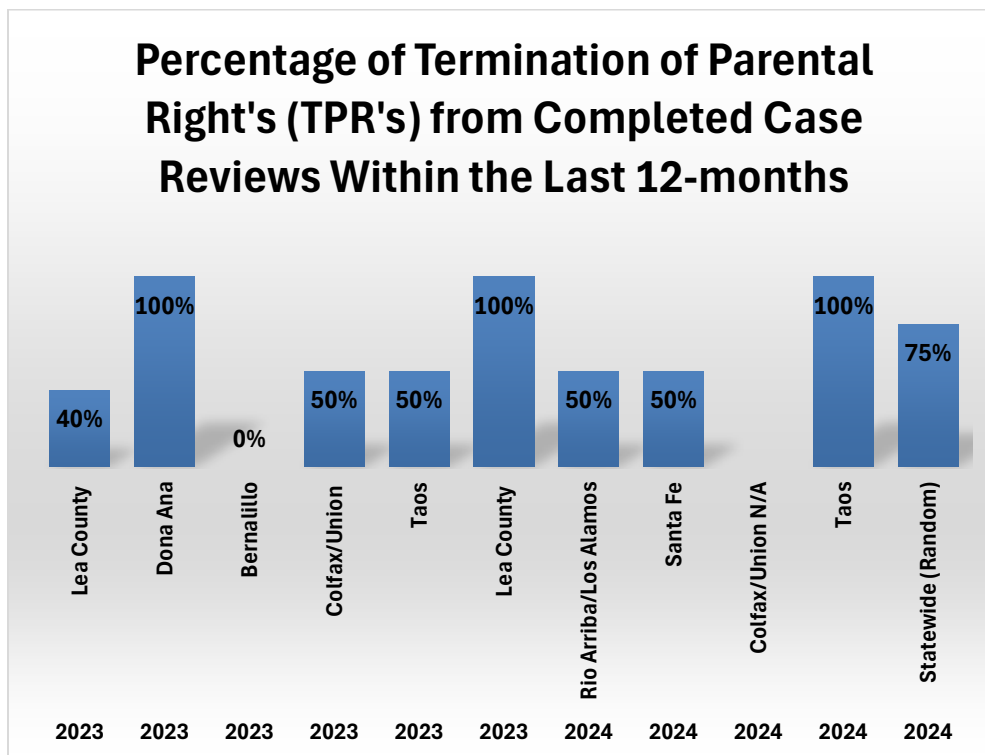
Item 23, Filing of TPR, is functioning statewide as a Strength for ensuring that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions; however, data reflects an area needing improvement for the average. As shown in the below table, 62% of termination of parental rights were completed timely on average.

Termination of Parental Rights are to be filed at 15 of the most recent 22 months period from the date the child entered foster care.

New Mexico Policy for Termination of Parental Rights:

8.10.7.21 **TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS:**
A. The children's court attorney shall attend the change of plan staffing when PSD is considering recommending to the court that a child's plan be changed to adoption. PSD shall pursue a motion to terminate parental rights within 45 days of the PSD staffing establishing a plan of adoption for the child, or when it is clinically indicated.
B. In the case of a child who has been in foster care 15 of the most recent 22 months, PSD shall pursue a motion to terminate parental rights by the end of the fifteenth (15th) month in foster care, unless the child is being cared for by a relative or fictive kin, or PSD has documented compelling reason(s) for not filing, or PSD has not provided to the family those services deemed necessary for the safe return of the child within the time period in the case plan. PSD calculates the 15 of the most recent 22 month period from the date the child entered foster care, uses a cumulative method of calculation when a child experiences multiple exits from and entries into foster care during the 22 month period, and excludes trial home visits and runaway episodes in calculating the 15 months. If there are compelling reasons for not seeking to terminate parental rights, those reasons shall be documented in the case plan.
[8.10.7.21 NMAC - Rp, 8.10.7.22 NMAC, 3/31/2010; A, 5/25/2021]

CHANGE OF PLAN STAFFING (COP): A change of plan staffing is scheduled at any time in a case when a change in the child's permanency plan is indicated. The change of plan staffing may coincide with other staffing or meetings or may be held as a separate event. A change of plan staffing is held within 10 days of any permanency hearing if the court orders a plan different than the one recommended by Protective Services.



Strengths and Challenges: New Mexico had three counties at 100% and the Statewide review at 75%, the remaining counties were at or below 50%. Some challenges identified is lack of documentation for change of plan staffing to determine timeliness of the filing of the termination of parental rights and systematic issues within the court system, i.e. docket issues and client legal representation.

- **Item 24:** How well is the case review system functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child?

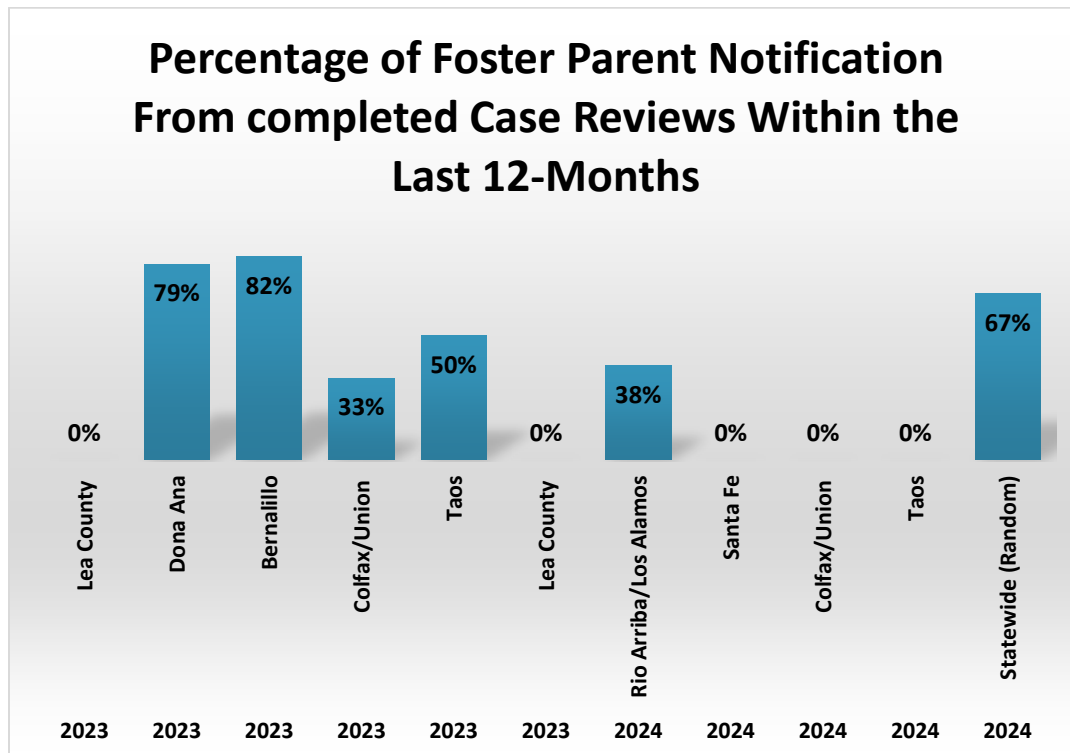
Item 24, Notice to Foster Parent, Pre-Adoptive Parents, and Relative Caregivers, is an Area Needing Improvement to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers

of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

Currently, there is no data tracking for this process. The legal admin and/or case worker prints and mails a copy of the notice to the caregiver. In the table below, data reflects that 32 % of the resource parents received notification of hearings held in respect to the child as documented in the file. This is an area needing improvement.

New Mexico Policy for Notification to foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers:

8.10.7.18 PERMANENCY HEARING REQUIREMENTS:
A. A permanency hearing shall be commenced within six months of the initial judicial review of a child's dispositional order or within 12 months from the date a child enters foster care, whichever occurs first.
B. If the court adopts a permanency plan of reunification at the permanency hearing, the court shall adopt a transition home plan for the child, and schedule a permanency review hearing within three months. If a child is reunified, the subsequent hearing may be vacated.
C. If the court adopts a permanency plan other than reunification at the permanency hearing, the court shall determine whether or not PSD has made reasonable efforts to identify and notify all grandparents, other relatives or fictive kin. The court shall also determine whether or not the department has made reasonable efforts to conduct home studies on any appropriate relatives or fictive kin interested in providing permanency for the child. If the court finds reasonable efforts have not been made to identify and locate relatives or fictive kin or to conduct home studies on relatives or fictive kin, the court shall schedule a permanency review hearing within 60 days to determine whether an appropriate relative or fictive kin placement has been made. If a relative or fictive kin placement is made, the subsequent hearing may be vacated.
D. The court shall hold permanency hearings every 12 months when a child is in the legal custody of PSD.
E. PSD shall provide the resource family of a child and any pre-adoptive parent(s), relative(s) or fictive kin providing care for the child with timely notice of permanency hearings and notice of their right to be heard in permanency hearings and permanency review hearings. The right to be heard does not confer the right to standing as a party to the case.
F. The children's court attorney shall ensure that PSD's report to the court for the permanency hearing documents that PSD has considered out-of-state, as well as in-state permanent placements for the child.
G. If the child is in an out-of-state placement at the time of the permanency hearing, the children's court attorney shall request a finding that the out-of-state foster care placement continues to be appropriate and in the child's best interests.
[8.10.7.18 NMAC - Rp, 8.10.7.30 NMAC, 3/31/2010; A, 5/25/2021]



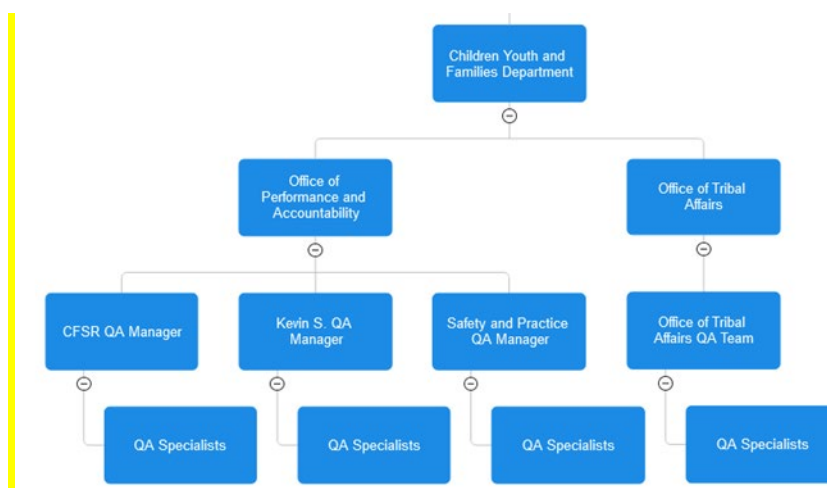
Strengths and Challenges: Some counties in New Mexico have established a process to verify notifications were sent to resource parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers, in the case file. The challenge continues to be that not all counties provide verification of notices being sent and there is not a consistent process throughout the state.

Quality Assurance System

- **Item 25:** *How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it is:*
 1. *operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided,*
 2. *has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety),*
 3. *identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system,*
 4. *provides relevant reports, and*
 5. *evaluates implemented program improvement measures.*

New Mexico has continuously been conducting Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) case reviews since Round 1 starting in 2000 as a pilot project. These reviews have been ongoing, non-stop, occurring monthly through QA traveling onsite to the identified counties being reviewed. The QA team has utilized the Round 4 Federal On-Site Review Instrument and Instructions (OSRI) tool to assess safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes in cases since April of 2023.

New Mexico has 4 specialized QA Teams evaluating different criteria for a comprehensive assessment of performance. They include the CFSR QA Team, Safety and Practice QA Team, Kevin S. QA Team, and Office of Tribal Affairs QA Team. Although each team is separate and specialized, they work collaboratively to assess cases to the highest standards, ensuring compliance with state policies, procedures, laws and regulations as well as federal rules, laws and regulations. See the organizational structure below for the QA system.



Jurisdictional Operation: New Mexico is organized into 13 judicial districts covering the 33 counties within the state. The Quality Assurance System is operating and functioning statewide to ensure all

jurisdictional districts covered by the Child and Families Services Plan are being reviewed to evaluate the quality of services being provided.

Evaluation Standards: New Mexico utilizes the federal evaluation standards set forth by Children and Families Services Review On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI). Prior to the State-led assessment, 50% of cases being reviewed were also being reviewed by the Children's Bureau after the QA unit reviewed the cases. The Children's Bureau was then providing their feedback on the review, enhancing the skills and confidence of the QA unit leading up to the State-led assessment.

When conducting the CFSR reviews, the QA team utilizes peer reviewers which they pair with for the purpose of reviewing. Peer reviewers are often other state employees from the many services of protective services division but have also included contracted service providers, in-home service workers and others. Prior to participating in an on-site review, all QA staff and identified peer reviewers will complete required training, including training modules offered through the Children's Bureau Online E-Training Platform and group learning sessions, lasting approximately seven hours. QA staff have additional training requirements including supplementary mock case review, presenting case ratings, and completing a post-training multiple choice assessment.

Evaluation standards within the OSRI include elements of child safety, permanency, and child and family wellbeing, as well as an assessment of services and whether the services being provided to the family meet their identified needs.

In addition to using the OSRI to assess the safety and permanency of children in New Mexico, the CFSR Statewide Data Indicators are used as methods of evaluation within the child welfare system upon their publication each six months in February and August. New Mexico began evaluating the targeted counties exactly one year out from the state-led assessment. This allowed New Mexico to get a base line data profile with the round 4 OSRI tool, strengthening the assessment of strengths and area's needing improvement.

Operation and Evaluation: CYFD's Child and Family Services Review Quality Assurance (QA) Unit conducts monthly reviews in a different county each month as the primary component of the QA process. Each year the QA Manager works with the Director of the Office of Performance and Accountability to publish a QA schedule of counties to be reviewed for the year. The schedule includes counties where services identified in the Child and Family Services Plan are occurring. Larger metro counties such as Bernalillo and Dona Ana are consistently chosen, alternating smaller rural counties every other year to ensure every county is being reviewed every two years. Counties with smaller caseloads may be combined to produce a more robust sample, while counties with a higher number of ICWA cases are also included annually when determining the schedule.

A month prior to the scheduled county review, a random sample of In-Home Services and Permanency Planning cases are pulled. Managers and supervisors are provided a case sample list well before the beginning of the review week with the purpose of county staff pulling those case files prior to the CFSR QA Review arriving on site. Preparation meetings known as "What to Expect" meetings occur with county office staff prior to the commencement of the review week. With the help of the QA staff, the county office managers and supervisor put together an entrance meeting presentation on the first day of the county's QA week; and exit presentation is held on the last day of the QA week in which the QA Manager reviews preliminary findings with county office staff, supervisors, and managers. County Office staff are highly encouraged to invite their stakeholders and child welfare partners to both meetings.

Identification of Strengths and Needs and Reporting: To engage managers, supervisors, and staff in Continuous Quality Improvement and promote transparency of the review process, the QA Team has opened all review related meetings to county management, supervisors, and staff. County staff are

invited to attend and participate in the planning meetings for the case staffing's during review week, debriefings, and the post review meeting with the second level consultant reviewer. County staff have continued to provide positive feedback about this change to process and have identified these meetings as important learning opportunities for staff. After the cases have gone through the primary and secondary review process, items are identified as a strength or an area needing improvement based on supporting evidence.

To promote CQI and the transparency of the review process, the QA Team has opened all review related meetings to county management, supervisors, and staff. County staff are invited to attend and participate in the planning meetings for the case staffing's during review week, debriefings, the QA roll-up meeting, the exit conference, and the post review meeting with the second level consultant reviewer. County staff have continued to provide positive feedback about this change to process and have identified these meetings as important learning opportunities for staff.

On Tuesday-Thursday, the reviewers meet as a team to present brief case presentation and the outcome ratings upon completion of the case review process. At minimum the participants in the debriefing are the On-Site Team Lead, the reviewers, and county management. Other agency staff and contracted providers may be invited to the debriefings at the discretion of county management and the site lead. Reviewers may be excused from attendance in order to complete case-related interviews if no other alternative exists. The case debriefings are limited to 1 hour followed by a brief question and answer period. The purpose of this process is to promote consistency in the case review, build staff capacity, and provide case related feedback to the county. This will not be a time for additional information gathering for purposes of the review, as the review is complete by the time the team attends the staffing.

On Friday morning of the review week, the On-Site Team Lead facilitates the Roll-up Meeting. The reviewers and the county office manager or designee are required to participate in this meeting. Other agency staff and stakeholders may attend at the discretion of the site lead and county office manager. The purpose of this meeting is to review the item and outcome ratings to compile preliminary data, identify trends including areas of practice strength and areas needing improvement, and prepare for the exit meeting.

Reporting: The QA Team has committed to sending finalized reports to the county office staff, supervisors, and managers within six weeks of the review. Finalized reports are also shared with CYFD executive management team, and other service areas such as Family Services and Behavioral Health Services. In the last year, these final reports have been sent within three weeks of the review. The county is provided with the data from each review as well as the individual review instruments.

After each monthly county CFSR review is completed OMS (Online Monitoring System) reports are provided to the CYFD County Office Manager, Regional Manager and Field Deputy Director. The reports provided include completed individual case On-Site Review Instruments, Case Rating Summaries, State Rating Summaries (for all cases, foster care cases, and in-home services), and Practice Performance Reports. The expectation is for each county to utilize these reports and assist in creating an appropriate County Improvement Plan to address areas needing improvement or areas found to be of concern during the QA review. Item Specific Reports in the OMS can be requested by Regional Managers and County Office Managers and are also utilized during QALA (Quality Assurance Loop Around) meetings with individual counties to analyze case review results to better understand practice strengths and areas needing improvement. State Rating Summaries are pulled at the end of the calendar year to assess how the state did overall in all the QA reviews that had been completed throughout the year. Reports and data collected from the monthly CFSR case reviews were used in determining goals and strategies for the Section 3 – Plan for Enacting the State's Vision.

Program Improvements:

Open Meetings: To promote CQI and the transparency of the review process, the QA Team has opened all review related meetings to county management, supervisors, and staff. County staff are invited to attend and participate in the planning meetings for the case staffing's during review week, debriefings, the QA roll-up meeting, the exit conference, and the post review meeting with the second level consultant reviewer. County staff have continued to provide positive feedback about this change to process and have identified these meetings as important learning opportunities for staff.

Timely Reports: The QA Team has committed to sending finalized reports to the county within six weeks of the review. In the last year, these final reports have been sent within three weeks of the review. The county is provided with the data from each review as well as the individual review instruments.

The final report includes quantitative and qualitative data from the review. The Report includes the following sections:

1. A summary of the review process and the sample
2. A summary of the information presented at the entrance meeting.
3. An overview of the strengths and challenges that were identified during the review, including promising practices and practice initiatives.
4. A summary of stakeholder involvement and service array if available.
5. The case rating data for foster care cases
6. The case rating data for the In-Home Services cases
7. The case rating data for prior county reviews
8. The annual case rating data
9. The case rating data from prior federal reviews
10. Any supplemental review data gathered during the review.

In addition to CFSR QA Reports, routine management reports are sent out statewide on a monthly and quarterly basis with performance data indicators to provide a continuous evaluation method on CFSR related items along with general operating data. These reports detail statewide outcomes and county specific outcomes. All executive leadership, managerial staff and supervisors have access to the Results Oriented Management (ROM) system which contains data dashboards on federal performance measures, and county specific data that is routinely up to date. This allows for leadership to stay up to date on performance measures related to their service areas and track progress on program improvements.

Post Review CQI/Quality Assurance Loop Around: Following each Quality Assurance review, the county will work on developing a County Improvement Plan. Each QA team member is assigned a region, and that worker will reach out to their managers to be a support throughout the implementation of their County Improvement Plan. Each QA team member offers ongoing consultations that can help support the implementation of their individual plans and can offer guidance on best practices, policy and procedures, and overall answer any question regarding Federal Requirements for better outcomes for children and families served.

As the result of the CYFD organizational restructuring, the Federal Reporting Bureau and the CFSR QA unit have merged to provide more support to the QALA process. The Federal Reporting Bureau with support from the CFSR QA team will lead the facilitation of the County Improvement Plan Meeting(s), use root cause analysis, and discuss the continuous quality improvement (CQI) framework offered by the Children's Bureau. The Federal Reporting Bureau and the Quality Assurance Unit are working with

the Data Manager and Director of the Office of Performance and Accountability to roll out the updated QALA process beginning October 1, 2024.

Staff and Provider Training

Evaluation of this systemic factor as part of the New Mexico's Statewide Assessment has resulted in New Mexico not being in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. Initial and on-going staff training and foster and adoptive training will be reassessed and addressed over the next year. CYFD has contracted with a training subject matter expert in rebuilding CYFD's training academy. Updates on progress to creating child welfare curriculums and training, as well as work with community partners and state universities will be updated in the FY 2026 Annual Progress and Services Report.

- ***Item 26:** How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions?*

Staff Training: Currently, Protective Services Department (PSD) has a training and staff development program that supports the goals and objectives of the Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP). Because our training program is responsive to the CFSP, we utilize a continuous quality improvement model, thus utilizing state data to inform necessary practice change, which often includes training. The training program is based on a continuum of professional development strategies, including self-paced learning, training, coaching, culture shift, and development through supervision. Training activities are designed to support safety, permanency, and well-being of children and PSD's CFSP Plan for Improvement goals. The workforce is led through individual and group development that is role-specific and focused on trauma responsiveness. Individual training requirements and completion are tracked through CYFD's learning management system, Cornerstone.

Initial Staff Professional Development: All new CYFD employees, including PSD staff, attend New Employee Onboarding within their first 2 weeks of employment. The week-long program provides staff with the information they need to start their CYFD careers successfully as well as an introduction to key concepts and skills that will be reinforced as the staff moves into their division-specific training programs. Those concepts include Cultural Humility, Child Welfare History and Values, Engagement, ICWA/IFPA, and working with the unique cultures of New Mexico. New employees of PSD are sent within their first 30 days of hire to the New Employee Training (NET). NET was launched in January 2020. This year the program was revamped and launched to be more interactive and adult-learning-based. In addition, the program has migrated from a virtual format back to an in-person format and re-introduced the simulation lab that provides new hires the opportunity to practice new skills and receive real-time coaching and feedback. The NET training emphasizes seven foundational areas of knowledge for entry-level workers: Cultural Humility, Child Welfare History and Values, Engagement, Interviewing, Assessment, Ethics, and Organization. The seven foundational areas were determined via an assessment of training. Focus groups with PSD leadership, regional-based Coaches, and supervisors provided feedback used to guide the curriculum development. Regular summative

evaluations are administered to determine the lasting quality and effectiveness of the training. Findings are used to make needed updates to content and delivery methodologies.

Employees complete five weeks of classroom and experiential training with corresponding on-the-job training, followed by a comprehensive self- and supervisor-driven assessment of skills facilitated and evaluated by their regional-based coach. An Individualized Development Plan results from the assessment. The new hire, supervisor, and coach work together to develop job proficiency during the new hires' first six months. The new hire also participates in role-specific Peer Learning Networks regularly. These sessions provide an opportunity for new hires to learn from each other with the guidance of a regional coach.

NET is designed for the new hire to receive the fundamental skills and knowledge needed to achieve safety, healing, permanency, and well-being for all New Mexico children. In NET, employees learn through e-learning, classroom training, experiential learning opportunities and on-the-job training. NET is module-based, so that employees who do not meet the baseline of knowledge, according to their supervisor, can return to take modules where they need support. Modules included are:

Child Welfare Values and Laws	Overview of Mental Health, Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse and Connection with Child Welfare
ICWA/IFPA Requirements	Family Engagement
Protective Services Best Practices	Adolescent Engagement
Cultural Humility	Child Maltreatment
Safety Organized Practice and Structured Decision Making	Genograms
Ethics	Trauma and Trauma-Informed Practice
Motivational Interviewing	Managing a Caseload
Documentation	Protective Services Legal 101
Emotional Intelligence	

The on-the-job training is a combination of self-paced learning and intentional engagement between the new employee, supervisor, and Senior Worker. Each week is guided by an on-the-job manual that provides learning activities via online training, shadowing, observing, case review, guided interviews with co-workers, and other activities. Activity sequence correspondence with the NET modules sequencing.

Employees meet with a Regional Based Coach during their on-the-job training weeks. Utilizing an assessment tool, the Coach guides the new employee to determine the learning needs of the employee post-completion of NET and how to best build those needed competencies. The assessment was developed in collaboration with the Center for States and mirrors the seven foundational areas of knowledge for Caseworkers on a continuum from Novice to Advanced to Master. The self-assessment results, input from the supervisor, and guidance from their regional coach are used to create an Individualized Development Plan for the new hire. This provides a concrete plan of ongoing training, coaching, and group involvement to continue building their understanding of and ability to implement child welfare best practices for safety, permanency,

and well-being over the following six months. The employee has the opportunity to continue working with the Coach individually and is required to attend the Peer Learning Networks for the first six months of their employment. They may utilize their Coach and attend Peer Learning Networks throughout their CYFD career. Ongoing participation is highly encouraged.

The Coach serves as the new employee's professional development partner, thus setting and supporting goals for their professional development to build knowledge, skills and abilities aligned with an array of child welfare models. The Coach works with the employee to develop vital job knowledge, system knowledge and best practice skills.

- **Item 27:** *How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?*

On-going Workforce Development: (WDB) provides multiple opportunities for ongoing professional development of the PSD Workforce. Training is set up to meet the core competencies of each PSD role; ensuring staff have the skills and knowledge needed to carry out service duties included in the CFSP.

Professional development needs are determined by division leadership. This is done by reviewing the data to align professional development with the progress on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. Other strategies for determining professional development needs include reviewing promising best practices literature and seeking out feedback from external partners and consultants. Identified topic areas for professional development are provided by the WDB or external nationally or locally recognized experts. WDB works closely with workgroups and leadership to determine which roles of the workforce need each training, how often and at what level training should be provided, and what practical implementation support should be included to support the transfer of learning into practice change.

Professional development can be self-driven for individual employee needs or supervisors can determine additional development needed. There is a catalog of over 70 training opportunities available to staff, either online or in the classroom. Employees also work with Regional Coaches using a self-reflective model to identify needed areas of improvement. Employees can self-refer to the Coach if or when they feel they are having difficulty with a specific competency or want to work on building their skill with a particular tool. A supervisor can also refer an employee to the Coaching program if they have assessed a need for additional learning support. Coaches increase the ability of the employee to provide support to families, resource families and children/youth improving outcomes and interactions with the PSD.

In February 2021, PSD launched the new Supervisory Practice Framework. This knowledge and skills framework trains Supervisors to develop a holistic approach to managing employees, including Administration, Support, Education and Trauma Responsive. New Supervisors are required to complete training within 90 days of their hire. Employees who see themselves as Supervisors in the future are encouraged to take the training to prepare them for the role. The framework builds up our supervisors to manage their teams with child welfare-specific approaches and builds accountability for the ongoing professional development of their staff in their role. The Supervisory Practice Framework continues to be held regularly. Starting in FY23, new leaders completing the training are invited to participate in a Supervisor Peer Learning Network (PLN) group that will focus on support and problem-solving challenges new leaders

face. Attendance has steadily increased with upwards of 30 leaders attending each monthly PLN session.

In May 2023 a Leadership Mentorship Program was launched. New supervisors are paired with existing experienced high-performing leaders. The pairs meet bi-weekly for a 4-month period. The new leader sets clear objectives and goals. The Mentor provides support toward reaching those goals. While we are in the process of piloting the program, we believe the program will increase the competency and retention of new leaders.

PSD continues to look closely at ways that consistent fidelity to models can improve outcomes to support safety, permanency, and well-being for children. We have selected multiple models of practice that can increase the effectiveness of our workforce. We remain grounded in the Safety Organized Practice and Structured Decision-Making safety and risk assessments as the core foundation of practice. Ongoing training and coaching with Evident Change for the workforce. In addition, we have implemented the following to build our workforce's core competencies and effectiveness:

- **Safe and Together:** The Safe & Together™ Model is an internationally recognized suite of tools and interventions designed to help child welfare professionals become domestic violence informed.
- **Quality Parenting Initiative:** QPI, the Quality Parenting Initiative, is a national movement for foster care change, made up of a network of states, counties and private agencies committed to ensuring that all children in care have excellent parenting and lasting relationships so they can thrive and grow.
- **Individualized Planning Process:** The Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group offer assistance to agencies and organizations seeking to improve their ability to protect children from harm, making team-based decisions work for children and families. The Individualized Planning Process is currently being trained and implemented throughout the state.

Pipeline Professional Development: CYFD works to increase our effectiveness by building up our workforce with professionals who have specialized educational backgrounds to understand the complex nature of children and families involved with the child welfare system. PSD is partnering with New Mexico's university's Social Work Programs on a pipeline program. Students complete their social work practicum within our agency and commit to continuing their careers with CYFD after graduation. This partnership allows us to increase the number of entry-level employees with specialized child welfare training. Practicum experiences include completing a specially designed orientation to CYFD, ongoing professional development training opportunities and sessions with the Regional Coach in the location they are completing their field experiences.

Evaluation of Professional Development: WDB takes responsibility for increasing the effectiveness of the PSD workforce. Continuous quality improvement of our work is essential to ensure this. WDB uses a 5-level evaluation model that extends beyond the Kirkpatrick Learning Evaluation method to better assess employee gains and retention of skills. All facilitated training programs utilize a summative assessment to determine the learning of participants. Self-paced learning activities incorporate summative assessment checks throughout modules and post-completion. WDB team members are committed to building their skills to meet our workforce's needs best. The WDB undergoes quarterly quality assurance reviews to improve facilitation, training, and coaching skills. WDB is currently working with the Center for States to build the efficacy of the Coaching program by creating a Coaching Evaluation. In addition, WDB regularly

participates in training opportunities to build knowledge and skills relevant to child welfare and the field of professional training and coaching.

Staff Training and the Next Five Years: In FY2024-2025 we will focus on building a comprehensive training plan. The plan will map the core competencies of each role to the necessary professional development activities to build that role-specific knowledge, skills, and abilities. The plan will include training provided by contractors and purchased curriculum as well as specialized modules specific to how the caseworker should implement the learning into their role and how it connects with other existing models. A centralized training plan will address existing challenges and:

- Connect CYFD staff to the right training at the right time.
- Reduce duplication and streamline training.
- Enhance on-the-job training and the onboarding process.
- Ensure every training is connected to a Core Competency Model for CYFD employees.
- Ensure rollouts are systematically followed with opportunities for professional development across the board.
- Develop strategic curricula with internal and external partners.
- Reduce siloes between divisions by creating a centralized supportive structure for professional development needs.
- Support supervisors as they work to meet the professional development needs of their staff.
- Ensure coaches and trainers approach identified needs in a consultative manner.

In FY 2022, WDB divided its training into specialized units of workforce training, resource parent training, leadership training, and coaching unit. This restructuring is based on an assessment of our training practices that determined ways we could shift our structure to capitalize on our key strengths. Each team works closely to ensure that all audiences, staff, resource parents and leaders, needs are addressed and met. Workgroups contain representation from each unit and act in the best interest of their specific audience in the design process. In addition, others such as PSD staff, tribal representatives, resource parents, youth and others are invited to participate in workgroups, steering committees, and review panels.

This year the New Employee Orientation was developed and rolled out in January 2023. This week-long program starts every CYFD new hire with the tools needed to understand and perform their job function before they move into the more role-specific and PSD Focus New Employee Training (NET) or JJS-focused Foundations of Practice (FOP) training. The design includes a focus on Trauma-informed Care and being a Trauma Responsive System of Care, Cultural Humility, Resilience, and ICWA and IFPA as it relates to the worker's specific role in the agency.

After completing NEO, PSD workers begin a 5-week journey. The new hires participate in general and targeted training that connects to and informs guided on-the-job training in the worker's home office and field. As a result, the amount of time in training decreases over time, while the amount of time in the field increases during the 5-week program. The graduated caseload plan, which is competency-driven, will begin during week four and continue for 12 weeks. Changes are driven by summative evaluation data collected over the past 18 months and feedback from supervisors and other leaders. Collecting regular data to assess need and effectiveness will continue throughout the program's lifespan.

- **Item 28:** *How well is the staff and provider training system functioning to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (who receive title IV-E funds to care for children) so that:*
 1. *current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff receive training pursuant to the established annual/biannual hourly/continuing education requirement and timeframes for the provision of initial and ongoing training, and*
 2. *the system demonstrates how well the initial and on-going training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.*

Provider Training: The READi NM curriculum is focused on providing kinship or community members, beginning the process to become Resource Parents, a strong foundational knowledge of their role in supporting a child or youth during a time of separation from their biological family. The READi NM curriculum clearly describes the expectations and roles of a resource parent and has a focus on self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-reflective practices. These skills and awareness support establishing a solid, safe adult foundation for children/youth in care. The activities and assessments provide an opportunity for resource parents to practice multiple skills including building relationships, active listening, curiosity, developing a support network, resilience, documentation, confidentiality, being trauma-responsive, structure and routine, and setting boundaries.

The importance of reunification and sibling/family relationship helps provide the community support and strengthens relationships that are important for the children/youth. Through the use of self-assessments, prospective resource parents and kinship learn to empathize with children and explore what it really means to support children and families with the experiences that come along with the protective service system. This is especially important for relative resource parents who are in the trenches of healing generational trauma. It is that parallel process of learning their role while being able to look at their own background to create important awareness that matters in developing new skills, habits, and attitudes for the wider role.

READi NM also provides resource parents practice in supporting a child/youth through grief and loss, trauma triggers, and transitions. The curriculum sets the expectations of consistency, advocacy, role-modeling, and collaboration with CYFD and the biological family. READi NM is offered around the state in all CYFD offices, and every Placement Worker is a trained facilitator to meet the ongoing needs of new clients (i.e. one-on-one or in a group setting).

READi NM Pre-service Training: 726 community and relative/kinship clients have been trained in the pre-service training, READi NM, in their pursuit to attain a foster care license from January to December 2023. The training is provided in Spanish and English statewide. To deliver the training consistently throughout the year and support Resource Foster Parents in the utilization of the skills and knowledge after the training, 201 Protective Service workers have been trained as trainers in English and 12 in Spanish. READi Modules include:

- READi Module: Welcome
- READi Module 1: Who are our Children and Families?
- READi Module 2: Reunification as the Role of the Resource Foster Parent

- READi Module 3: Foundational Beliefs and Values of Foster Care
- READi Module 4: Child and Youth Identity and Family Connection
- READi Module 5: Care from a Place of Wholeness
- READi Module 6: Navigating Services for Children and Youth
- READi Module 7: Resource Foster Parent Resilience and Self-Care
- READi Module 8: Supporting Transitions
- READi Module 9: Providing Unconditional Care
- READi Module 10: Trauma Informed Support
- READi Module 11: Trauma Responsive Discipline
- READi Module 12: Closing

The Resource Parent Training Unit will be developing two self-paced e-learning modules, Cultural Humility and ICWA/IFPA, to complete the full curriculum development. The delay in having these two e-learning modules completed at the launch of READi NM was due to the capacity of the training unit and the need to hire another trainer.

The Resource Parent Training Unit surveyed clients who have taken the READi NM training to learn how well they felt the training provided the skills and knowledge needed to begin their role as a Resource Foster Parent. 96.89% English and 100% Spanish READi NM training clients who responded felt they grew in their skills and knowledge to begin their role.

Ongoing Training and Retention Support:

A. 2023 Resource Family Conference: The CYFD Resource Family Conference took place as an online event April 1 through 30, 2023. The Conference featured four live, webinar sessions (the Virtual Webinar Series) each Thursday during April, and included live keynote presentations, question and answer periods, and community panel discussions. The event app Whova was used as an engagement and team builder tool. In addition to providing the platform for event registration, live streams and recordings of the sessions, and session evaluation tools, Whova provided attendees with opportunities to network, create discussion groups, ask questions of the presenter and about the presentation topics, and more, all within the app.

The Conference invitation was offered through email, in-person, and mailed flier to all licensed Relative Foster Parent. 318 clients registered to attend, and the live sessions were attended by an average of 73 registered individual attendees. It is important to note though that since this was a fully virtual event, more than one resource family member per household may have attended the live sessions. 65% of the registered attendees downloaded the Whova app for a device (the remaining registrants accessed Whova from a laptop/computer rather than a phone or tablet device). Session attendees also had the opportunity to complete online feedback forms following each session, as well as request Certificates of Completion for each session that they attended.

Overall, the CYFD Resource Family Conference was well-received with 95% of attendee's agreement or strongly agreeing that the live sessions gave them tangible skills and knowledge. In addition, 90% indicated that attending the trainings, there will be a positive impact on their role as a resource parent, and 89% were satisfied with the sessions. Approximately 88% of attendees responded favorably to using the Whova app. Further, the comments received were overwhelmingly positive and expressed gratitude for the learning opportunity provided by CYFD.

A few feedback quotes collected from the surveys:

- “Testimony on the perspective of a child feeling rejected was something resource providers need to be mindful of related to the children behavior.”
- “I really enjoyed hearing the experiences from an adoptee and the insight that provided.”
- “We thought the information presented was useful, and the practice portion at the end of becoming self-regulated and taking time for self was good.”

The 2023 CYFD Resource Family Conference included four live webinar sessions. The sessions were:

- **Thursday, April 6, 2023**

How to Help Children Thrive, presented by Simon Benn.

Overview: This talk explored unconditional love, trauma, identity, hope, change and healing to give resource parents strategies and models for: helping kids and teens be comfortable in their own skin; Creating the change they want in your family.

Cultivating Seeds of Resilience: Tools for Self-Resourcing, presented by Ayesha Sundram

Overview: In this session, resource parents learned strategies for self-resourcing through guided experiential practice. The facilitator discussed the impact of self-resourcing on resilience and capacity in parenting and shared hands-on strategies for resourcing in the moment. Participants were guided through creating a mini toolkit for self-resourcing.

- **Thursday, April 13, 2023**

What I Wish I Knew Then: Understanding the Brain Behavior Connection, presented by Adrien Lawyer

Overview: Participants can identify an appropriate definition of transgender; differentiate between an individual’s gender and their sexual orientation; and know three services provided by the Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico.

CYFD Introduces Individualized Planning Process (IPP) Approach, presented by Joy Weathers

Overview: Participants become familiar with the Individualized Planning Process and learn the importance of child and family teaming.

- **Thursday, April 20, 2023**

Going the Extra Mile as a Resource Parent, presented Marcy Baker-Hinds

Overview: If you are feeling like you do it all, it is probably because you do! As a resource parent, going the extra mile tends to be a norm. You are charged with a great yet rewarding responsibility! Let’s come together to discuss how we can not only take steps to make sure our children’s needs are being met but also take the time to invest in ourselves too.

Quality Parenting Initiative: Resilience through Relationships, moderated by Terry Harrak

Overview: In this session, we hear from a resource parent and a young person who has experienced foster care, sharing their journey together and how positive relationships fostered resilience and positive outcomes. We begin by discussing the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI), a framework that aims to ensure the well-being of children in foster care by prioritizing excellent parenting for every child. We then dive into the power of

relationships in parenting and how it can make a significant impact on a child's development and well-being.

- **Thursday, April 27, 2023**

Get Up to Speed on IFPA/ICWA, presented by Janessa Garay

Overview: Native American Historical Trauma, including understanding policy changes that are necessary to restore and preserve Native American families and culture.

IFPA/ICWA Round Table, presented by Cynthia Aragon and Shelly Begay

Overview: This session includes reviewing legislative changes for IFPA/ICWA, Managed Care Organizations and traditional benefits coverage.

- B. Individual Recruitment and Retention Plans:** During 2023 all Resource Foster Parent's participated in a one-on-one meeting to draft an Individual Recruitment and Retention Plan (IRTP) with agency staff to discuss and plan out additional learning and skills needed to meet the demands of the role. Due to the unique needs of each client, the IRTPs include requested training needs and state mandates. Current state mandated courses are Cultural Humility and ICWA/IFPA which were offered in-person for regions 5, 4, and 1 with regions 3 and 2 begin given the option to attend training offered in the three regions. Some major challenges of Resource Foster Parents face in attending in-person training are travel and taking time off from work. To support clients and reduce their stress levels, the agency pivoted to create both mandated courses and e-learnings. The training courses will be offered in 2024 through the agency's learning management system.
- C. Community Partnerships: NM Fiesta Project:** The NM Fiesta Project provides free training and support groups for resource, kinship, and adoptive families in New Mexico. Fiesta Project training was coordinated throughout the state. Trainings are offered in Spanish and English to focus on topics such as trauma, mental health, and special needs of children and families. Some titles of trainings offered to Resource Foster Parents are: Care and Connect: Success in the summertime, Care and Connect: Managing Burnout, Care and Connect: Grief and loss in Foster Care and adoption, Circles of support, Que es eso de Crianza terapeutica?, TBRI empowering strategies, Care and Connect: Parenting teens, Care and Connect: Importance of caring for yourself and teens, How stress and trauma impact learning and the brain.

Service Array

- **Item 29:** How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)?
 1. Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs,
 2. Services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment,
 3. Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and
 4. Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

CYFD offers Home-Based Prevention Services to children who are considered at risk for maltreatment or entering foster care. At the completion of an investigation, the investigation worker assesses the child's risk and safety in the home. If the risk is high and the assessment is safe, the investigation worker refers the In-Home Services or Intensive Family Support Services. Case management is provided to the family and child either through a contracted provider with CYFD or by CYFD directly.

The purpose of Home-Based Prevention Services is to promote the safety of children, reduce the risk and reduce the recurrence of maltreatment of children by their parent and/or guardian without the intervention of the courts. These prevention services are:

1. An integrated, trauma informed, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing problems in family functioning; and
2. A service provided to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment.

Home-Based Prevention Services include In-Home Services, Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS), Family Support Services (FSS) and Community-based Intervention, Prevention and Reunification (CBIPR) services.

A transfer staffing occurs at any time that a case is being transferred from one unit to another. The purpose of the staffing is to facilitate a smooth transition and minimize disruption of services for the child and family. A transfer staffing is appropriate when a case moves from investigation to permanency planning or in-home services. At least one supervisor from either unit attends the transfer staffing; however, best practice is to include both supervisors. The worker transferring the case documents the staffing in FACTS prior to the transfer.

When a newborn in New Mexico has been identified with substance exposure, as evidenced by toxicology results of the newborn or mother, or when a caregiver discloses substance use during the pregnancy, a plan of care (POC) shall be created in accordance with the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery (CARA) Act of 2016. The purpose of the POC is to establish guidelines for protective services division (PSD) staff, managed care organizations (MCOs), care coordinators, and other professionals who come into contact, or who are working with substance exposed infants, and their caregivers to provide comprehensive support and services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the family.

Assess the Strengths and Needs of Children and Families and Determine Other Service Needs

When an allegation of child abuse or neglect is screened by Statewide Central Intake (SCI), the report is assigned to one of the 33 county offices across the state depending on the location of the allegation. Once the county office receives the report from SCI, depending on the prioritization, an investigator is assigned and initiates the investigation. CYFD Protective Services Division (PSD) assesses the strengths and needs, to include service's needs, of families throughout the investigation process.

Families who are screened out at the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department's (CYFD) Statewide Central Intake (SCI) may still have needs. These families may not know how to access services and may not see CYFD itself as a resource. To bridge this gap, CYFD partnered with community providers to create the Family Outreach (FO) community response program. Combined with community engagement, CYFD hopes that FO will meet family needs through access to and provision of services, leading in the long term to diversion from child protective services (CPS) and improved well-being for families and children. In 2024, Family Outreach was reorganized into the new Family Services Division. Family Outreach now serves 25 of the 33 counties statewide, connecting families with services and resources in their area to address their needs. Family Outreach sees a high volume of referrals for assistance with basic needs, such as food, utility and housing insecurity.

In-Home Services has been re-organized into the Family Services Division and operates statewide, however not every county has contracts with external service providers, so the number of available services varies statewide.

Family Services Division (FSD) is a new division born out of the recent organizational restructuring. Family Services offers prevention services, family outreach/differential response, In-Home Services and Intensive Family Support Services, and the CARA plan of safe care program. These services are designed to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment, create stability within the home and develop healthy and supportive ongoing community relationships. Family Services is an integrated, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing struggles in family functioning. In-Home Services does not have a waitlist.

When youth must enter foster care, they deserve a holistic relational-based approach to engagement that provides an effective safety net and a developmentally appropriate/identity affirming support system as they transition into adulthood. Through Fostering Connections (FC), New Mexico provides a continuum of services for eligible youth and young adults between the ages of 14 and 26 years old, including:

- Transition planning services for youth in foster care ages 14 to 18;
- Extended Foster Care (EFC) services for young adults who aged out of foster care between the ages of 18 and 21;
- Services for youth and young adults who were adopted from the foster care system or achieved permanency through guardianship at sixteen years of age or older; and
- Aftercare Services for young adults ages 21 to 26 years old.

Fostering Connections (FC) is committed to the creation and implementation of a child welfare system that meets the needs of youth and young adults by ensuring staff and stakeholder understanding of adolescent development, the impact of trauma, authentic youth-adult partnerships, and by identifying exposure gaps and providing access to opportunities that address these gaps and support young people to thrive into adulthood. Fostering Connections staff believes young people and their families are not simply clients but are powerful catalysts for change in their own lives and are partners in changing the systems that impact their lives. Fostering Connections is available in every county of New Mexico.

Address the Needs of Families in Addition to Individual Children in Order to Create a Safe Home Environment

The Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) model provides families (including adoptive, foster, and extended family relationships) who are in crisis, and intensive, wraparound support is needed in order to prevent child abuse/neglect and maintain the child(ren) safely with their family of origin. Referrals may be accepted from CYFD Protective Services or internal case transfers from the Family Support Service model. Families that have unsubstantiated cases of abuse or neglect must have CYFD Prevention & Initiatives Bureau approval prior to enrolling the family into this level of service.

Services and programs geared towards serving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault were administered, monitored and/or supported through the CYFD Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Domestic Violence (DV) Unit, but under the CYFD structural reorganizations the DV unit is now under the umbrella of the Family Services Division. The DV Unit continues to provide the same level of oversight, support, and service coordination that it did under the BHS.

CYFD BHS provides funding, program support, oversight, and standards for immediate shelter and supportive services for survivors of domestic and dating violence and their dependents including specialized services for abused parents and their children. Accounting for approximately 55% of all public and private domestic violence funding in New Mexico, CYFD-funded service providers served 10,800 survivors and their dependents in FY21. Supplementary funding supports the Children's Capacity Building Project, which is an ongoing effort to enhance the quality and depth of responses to children in domestic violence programs throughout New Mexico. CYFD also provides oversight and funding for DV offender treatment programs, to reduce future incidents of domestic and dating violence and will be developing concentrated coordinated community response efforts in select communities in the coming years. One innovative project is the implementation of the Safe & Together Model in New Mexico, which focuses on culture change withing protective services to focus on the perpetrator pattern of abuse and partnering with protective parents.

A pilot project in Doña Ana County dramatically increased communication and collaboration between the domestic violence service provider and CYFD Protective Services and has the overarching goals of reducing removals and increasing safety of children in families experiencing domestic violence.

Services that Enable Children to Remain Safely with their Parents when Reasonable

The **Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)** is the stand-alone agency that administers programs and services for children aged 0 to 5. CYFD Family Services Division continues to partner with ECECD in supplementing their services with home-based and evidence-based prevention services to families with children through the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs. There are several collaborative efforts underway to address children ages 0-5:

- **Family Support Services:** Target services will be prioritized for parents and secondary caregivers who have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect. May or may not be a referral from CYFD, self-referrals, community referrals.
- **Infant Mental Health Teams:** CYFD Behavioral Health Services is partnering with ECECD providers for the provision of infant mental health services.
- **Families FIRST:** A perinatal case management program which assists clients in gaining access to medical, social, and educational services that are necessary to foster positive pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infants and children.
- **Home Visiting Including the Neonatal Intensive Care Home Visiting Services:** A prevention program for families to receive support prenatally through their child's third/fifth birthday. The provider visits the family in their home (or setting of comfort) to share resources, support the caregivers, partner with the family to complete screenings, and develop goals for the child and family to guide services.

CYFD is the behavioral health authority for all children in New Mexico. BHS is the lead on children's behavioral health policy in collaboration with other State Agencies to include the Human Services Department (HSD), Department of Health (DOH), Public Education Department (PED), Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), and the Behavioral Health Collaborative (BHC). BHS staff provide technical assistance and consultation with providers and other CYFD colleagues serving children and youth who are:

- At-risk of CYFD custody
- Involved with CYFD
- Post-CYFD involvement

- Never involved with CYFD

CYFD BHS oversees the development, implementation, and expansion of the **NM High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) model**. “Wraparound is an intensive holistic method of engaging with individuals with complex needs so that they can live in their homes and communities and realize their hopes and dreams.”

In SFY’23, NM High Fidelity Wraparound continued in ten (10) sites; Guidance Center of Lea County (Lea County), Mental Health Resources (Roosevelt County), New Day (Bernalillo County), All Faiths (Bernalillo and Valencia Counties), Desert View (San Juan and McKinley Counties), La Casa (Chaves County), and UNM Behavioral Health (Sandoval County). Outcomes of HFW include reduced costs of care for community-based care versus out-of-home placements and less out of state placements; access to more community-based services, improved school attendance and performance; increased behavioral and emotional strengths; improved clinical and functional outcomes; reduced suicide attempts; and decreased contacts with law enforcement. High Fidelity Wraparound was approved for inclusion on the Medicaid Fee Schedule beginning July 1, 2023.

Services to Help Children in Foster and Adoptive Placements Achieve Permanency

Permanency planning services include services needed to support the parent, guardian, or custodian to manage the safety and risk factors identified during removal of the child. PSD establishes a permanency plan for every child in PSD custody and their caregivers. Reunification is the initial plan each child but may change depending on the case. Other acceptable plans are adoption, permanent guardianship, placement with a fit and willing relative, and other planned permanent living arrangement.

Children’s needs are assessed upon entry into foster care to determine an appropriate level of care. The child’s level of care determines the maintenance payment amount the resource family receives, identifies the needs of the child, the skill level of the resource family and provides an initial assessment of the needs of the resource family. All children enter foster care as a level 1 placement. Children who have a higher level of need than the general population of children in out of home care and who also require a higher level of supervision and skill by the resource family are eligible for level 2 foster care. Level 3 foster care are for those children with significant medical or behavioral needs who require a significantly and consistently higher level of care from a highly trained caregiver. These are children who would otherwise require hospitalization or institutional placement.

CYFD Prevention and Initiative Bureau consolidated the contracted services supported through CBCAP and PSSF funding into the Community Based Prevention, Intervention and Reunification (CBPIR) contracts. Throughout the state except for two counties. The PSSF Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS) funded component of the CBPIR contracts serve families who are in crisis and need intensive, wraparound support to prevent child maltreatment while maintaining the child or children safely with their family of origin. The Family Reunification and Time Limited Reunification Services components of the CBPIR contracts focus on supporting successful reunification of children with their families. Family Reunification Services (FRS) provides parents, relatives, fictive kin, or families pursuing guardianship with supports that assist them in reunifying their child or children from an out of home placement such as foster care. Time Limited Reunification (TLR) Services are intensive, home-based programs that support families in reunifying with their child or children who are in CYFD custody. TLR includes assisting parents with their court ordered case plans to assist families reunify in an expedited timeframe.

Data

Currently the agency does not have a systematic process for tracking services needed or requested by a family or worker when there is an absence of available services. This makes it difficult to identify the current need for services throughout the state of New Mexico. Additionally, New Mexico has several rural counties with sparse population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, New Mexico has 12 of 33 counties with a population density less than or equal to four (≤ 4) residents per square mile. This is a continued challenge for the agency to provide quality services to these communities within the fiscal restraints of the appropriated budget.

The following is statewide performance data from CFSR QA cases reviewed during April 2023 to July 2024 that relate to the service array in the state of New Mexico.

Safety Outcome 2	Strength	Area Needing Improvement
Item 2: Services to family to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	44.83%	55.17%
Well-Being Outcome 1		
Item 12A: Needs assessment and Services to Children	68.42%	31.58%
Item 12B: Needs assessment and Services to Parents	42%	58%
Item 12C: Needs assessment and Services to Foster Parents	63.53%	36.47%

CYFD has shown a higher capacity to appropriately assess the needs and provide services to children and foster parents than parents from April 2023 to July 2024.

A challenge for the agency has been appropriately assessing the needs and services to parents at the same rate as children and foster parents. In preparation for the Statewide assessment, interviews were conducted with lived experts with experience in the child welfare system. Attempts were made to survey 203 parents, guardians, or caregivers statewide who received services by the agency during the period under review (April 1, 2023 – April 1, 2024), a total of 30 parents, guardians, or caregivers participated in the interview. Of the 30 respondents, 19 were mothers, 10 were fathers, and 1 was a stepmother.

Overall participants reported mixed feedback as it related to services. Some participants shared how helpful it was to have all their services in one location, that there were not waitlists or issues accessing the services, and that treatment was comprehensive. While other participants shared there were waitlists, and that services were not helpful. Currently, waitlists are tracked at the provider level and may fluctuate frequently, making it difficult for the agency to monitor waitlists in real-time.

Were services to address safety and risk concerns offered to your family? (N=30)		
Yes	19	63.33%
No	11	36.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Interviewees were asked their feedback about the services; the following are some of the responses provided.

- The parent was referred to recovery center for methadone which also offered parenting program, anger management, and parenting classes. The parent had input where she wanted to attend services as very convenient to receive services at one location. "Super convenient to get services at one location". The parent had conversations about worker about progress and satisfaction with services. Services were helpful.
- Treatment was very comprehensive. Program involvement was very extensive for 3 days per week plus 5 meetings, individual counseling, and parent working full time job. Parent had a lot of input with the service agency and was very helpful to the parent.
- The parent reports having graduated from several programs but then agency adds other programs for her to attend. Mom has been telling worker that she is doing everything that is asking her to do but worker has not acknowledged the services that mom has completed. As parent has completed all that has been asked of her, she does not understand why agency won't return children.
- The worker has not helped the parent regarding housing application. Parent independently applied for Section 8 housing, is on 3 different wait lists and recently started attending therapy at an Intensive Outpatient Program. Parent says this is for extra support. Parent also works full time as opened own cleaning business.
- The parent found the service providers as the workers were taking too long and the agencies had waitlists. The parent talks to worker about the services. The parent stated that the services are helpful.
- The father engaged in services on his own. Services were helpful to him. Now he is working on setting up childcare as child will be returned home on THV next week and dad is employed. Worker gave him a packet of day care resources and told him to tell them what day care center will provide for the child. Little assistance from the worker in setting up services and day care.

Foster parents were asked if they received needed services and support related to the target child placed in their home, the figure below shows their responses.

Did CYFD provide you needed services and support related to the target child placed in your home? (This could include specific training, payments, clothing and other supplies, family support, transportation, etc.) (N=30)		
Yes	19	63.33%
No	8	26.67%
Not Applicable: No needs during the review period.	3	10%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Interviewees were asked their feedback about the services; the following are some of the responses provided.

- Services in place have been medical, dental, educational, and mental health with no issues. Regarding other prompts, none of those services have occurred. Resource parents receive monthly stipend now but there was no payment received for about the first 6 months of placement prior to PUR. Resource parents have never received any other reimbursement for the child. Resource parents have not pushed the issues but there have been no offers for transportation, clothing, vacations, or anything out of ordinary. Resource parents may receive a month payment but maybe not another payment for a few months.

- Resource parent purchases clothing on his own and monthly payment comes regularly. Resource parent doesn't get food stamps as he makes too much money as reimbursement is considered earned income.
- Only issue is the payment rate. It is not enough to feed and clothe teens. I have been a resource parent for 15 years and the only reason I would quit is because of this. We applied for food stamps but were over the limit. We had to get a credit card to just get food for the kids.
- Resource parent has received payments, clothing resources, no need for transportation, and respite has been provided. Received all services needed.

Children placed in New Mexico's Children Youth and Family Department (CYFD) custody, Children in State Custody (CISC), are required to receive an Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) screening upon removal and ongoing/annually as needed. EPSDT services ensure that children receive early detection and care, so that health problems can be diagnosed, and treatment be provided as early as possible. The EPSDT exam is required to be completed within 30 days of entering CYFD custody.

The data provided below states that on average, when a child enters state custody, 51.5% of EPSDT's are completed timely within the first 30 days; 22.6% are completed between 30<60 days, and 8.4% are completed 60 plus days from the date of first entry into foster care. On average 17.4% % of EPSDT's are not being completed. One of the barriers identified is not having enough providers to see the child quick enough to meet the timeframes.

Month	Visits within 30 days	Visits 30<60 days	Total Visits Completed	Total
July	23	16	48	53
August	51	29	94	99
September	59	23	88	94
October	43	7	54	59
November	38	29	69	77
December	19	10	40	44
January	26	19	53	62
February	42	16	60	72
March	40	6	48	66
April	21	4	26	76
Total	362	159	580	702

CYFD EPSDT Review Data 2023-2024

Qualitative Data

There were three community events held specifically for CFSR – Dona Ana, McKinley, and Bernalillo. Feedback from Dona Ana County identified that some behavioral health providers have long waitlists, such as MST and ABA. McKinley's participants shared barriers in services such as limited substance abuse services and lack of inpatient services, in addition, there are long housing lists. It was further reported that access to transportation has a cost and is not available statewide. There are a few private behavioral service providers in the community.

Substance abuse treatment, inpatient is expensive, and Medicaid does not cover 100% of the costs, parents are often having to incur costs, such as copays that they cannot afford. Outpatient is not as invasive.

Overview

New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department newly created Family Services Division is less than a year old. They have assumed multiple programs and initiatives from other departments to be the comprehensive division when it comes to primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. They have taken foundational pieces, such as in-home services, community-based prevention, intervention and

reunification (CBPIR) contractors, differential response programs, extended foster care services, and more, under their umbrella. They are in the process of examining how these programs interact with each other, how contracted providers can interact with the agency to accept referrals and report services received by families, how internal CYFD staff from other divisions are able to interact with this new division, and importantly, how best to track utilization and outcomes as the new case management system is being built.

New Mexico is the 5th largest state by area and has several rural counties with a sparse population. According to the US Census County Population Estimates as of July 1, 2023, New Mexico has twelve counties where there are ≤ 4 residents per square mile (calculated by total county area and total county population). Some families in these communities would benefit from additional services in their area but providing those services to address the unique needs of a family that may come to the agency's attention is a complex and difficult challenge for the agency to reasonably resolve. Transportation services or the ability to provide transportation to services in their case plan or court ordered services could be beneficial to help serve these populations.

Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicates a foundation of a service array, but it is not functioning statewide to provide services to meet the needs of children, families and foster parents. New Mexico continues to have a high demand for mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and housing waitlists have been reported to be as long as two years. CYFD has made concerted efforts to reorganize services provided to families into the Family Services Division, create systems to track the provision and quality of services being provided, identify gaps in services, and track data related to services that allow the child to safely remain in the home or facilitate permanency for children in state custody.

- *Item 30: How well is the service array and resource development system functioning statewide to ensure that the services in item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency?*

Permanency Planning Services

CYFD utilizes permanency planning services is to systematically carry out, within a time-limited period, a set of goal-directed activities designed to help children live in families that offer the continuity of relationships with nurturing parents or guardians and the opportunity to establish lifetime relationships. Protective Services Division (PSD) provides permanency planning services to children or youth who come into the custody of PSD.

Icebreaker meetings are scheduled by the primary PSD caseworker immediately upon the entry of the child into foster care (after the affidavit is filed) or with every new placement. The Icebreaker meeting must be completed as soon as possible, but no later than seven business days after placement of a child in a new resource family home. An Icebreaker meeting provides an opportunity for resource families and the child's family to meet each other and talk about the needs of the child while they are in care. The child's family and resource parents exchange information about themselves and their family routines and traditions. The primary PSD caseworker's supervisor ensures at the next supervisory meeting that the Icebreaker has occurred or there is a plan to conduct an Icebreaker. The PSD supervisor documents in the supervisory note that they discussed Icebreakers in the supervisory staffing with the PSD caseworker.

Every child or youth in out-of-home care will be in a licensed foster homes placement unless a current finding of medical necessity requires otherwise, or an Individualized Planning Process (IPP) meeting determines that a non-clinical setting is in the child's best interest. IPP meetings occur when a child has been placed in congregate care setting either due to medical necessity or it has been determined that placement in a congregate care setting is in the best interest of the child or youth.

These meetings are documented using the Joint Clinical Review Audit Tool (JCRAT) to improve communication, planning, and support amongst members of the team. The IPP Meeting and the JCRAT identifies steps necessary to promote discharge and ensures the team reviews available community-based mental health services and supports that have already been provided or could be provided. The PPW is responsible for coordinating IPP Meetings. The PPW must invite the following individuals to the IPP/teaming Meetings: the child or youth; the child or youth's PPW or primary assigned worker; the PPW or primary assigned worker supervisor; a Community Behavioral Health Clinician (CBHC); the child or youth's Managed Care Organization Care Coordinator or other Care Coordinator representative (if MCO exempt/Fee for Service or private insurance); the child or youth's GAL or Youth Attorney. The PPW may also include the following individuals to the IPP/Teaming Meeting (if applicable): the child or youth's parent or other family members; the Case Manager at the RTC Agency or Group Home; the child or youth's Tribe/Pueblo Representative (when child/youth is an Indian child/youth); a representative from the Office of Tribal Affairs, (when child/youth is an Indian child/youth) and the Mental Health Professional or therapist assigned to the youth. The completed Joint Clinical Review audit tool is uploaded into FACTS under the administrative icon using the appropriate drop down for the type of meeting.

Children are placed in the least restrictive setting consistent with the assessment of their individual needs. When possible, the child is placed in close proximity to his or her home or school of origin. When it may not be possible, or not in the best interest of the child, to be placed in close proximity to the child's home or school the PPW documents the reasons for not placing a child in close proximity to his or

her home or school of origin are documented in FACTS. When a child is not placed in close proximity to his or her home of origin, the PPW maintains or arranges for, bi-weekly contact with the parent, guardian or custodian.

When a child enters the custody of PSD, the PPW or placement worker arranges for or conducts a level of care assessment in FACTS to determine the level of care the child will require. The worker completes the assessment within 30 days of the child entering foster care. The assessment includes, but is not limited to:

1. a physical examination by a medical doctor;
2. a review of any available educational records; and
3. a review of information provided by other professionals currently working with the child or family, such as counselors, therapists, physical therapists, and juvenile probation officers.

The worker re-assesses the child at least once every six months, but reassessment may happen at any time depending on the child's needs. The levels of care are as follows:

1. Level 1: All children entering care enter Level 1 unless the child is determined appropriate for a higher level of eligibility.
2. Level 2: This level of care is for children requiring a higher level of care, structure, or supervision than would be required for a child of similar age or development in foster care. An example of a level 2 child would be a child that requires specialized foster care, treatment foster care or needing to be placed temporarily in a Residential Treatment Center.
3. Level 3: This level of care is for children with significantly high needs and is generally, an alternative to institutional care. An example of a level 3 child would be a child that has a significant disability that requires twenty-four-hour physical and medical care.

Community and Cultural Services

Services available in the communities of New Mexico vary widely from one county to the next, and don't always meet the needs of each family or child who seek services. In particular, rural or frontier areas of the state may have deficient services to address substance abuse, domestic violence, or mental health concerns. Some populations may be underserved due to waitlists, transportation issues, or language barriers. Finally, incarcerated parents often face significant difficulty obtaining appropriate services and supports while they remain in the corrections system.

The Office of Tribal Affairs was created in 2020 and since then it has grown from one person to a staff of 13 to support staff statewide. The objective is to ensure the Department is in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (Federal Law 1978) that mandated changes to address disproportionality. NM as a state adopted a state law that is more robust than ICWA. The State Law is Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA) was passed into law in 2022. This legislation corrects harms to Indian Families by the state. The Office of Tribal Affairs provides case consultation for all cases involving Native American children. Every case is closely monitored to ensure the child is placed in the highest preferred setting, when a child is even in the second-tier placement, monthly meetings are held to identify the unique circumstances contributing to the barriers and challenges of moving the child into a first-tier placement. The whole team works to problem solve to remove those barriers, often times before they occur, to promote the preferred placement.

New Mexico has multiple cultures that are deeply rooted in promoting family and cultural traditions of "supporting our own" to grow as a people. Kinship care helps to preserve children's cultural identity and relationship with their community. New Mexico is committed to ensuring that children who are being

cared for by kinship families have the supports they need. Many of the benefits for children who stay with their kin include better medical outcomes, the severity of childhood trauma is limited, and fewer children end up separated from their siblings. CYFD recognizes the long standing and well-documented need for kinship caregivers when children and youth cannot stay with their biological parents, to prevent removal, during foster care placements, and through guardianships or adoption.

CYFD currently implements contracts that provide a coordinated and comprehensive array of resources for relative and kinship caregivers of children to increase stability in the family setting, allow children to remain connected to their families and culture, and reduce long term effects of childhood trauma. These services are available for any individual who is a relative(s), godparent(s), member(s) of a child's tribe or clan, or an adult with significant bond (fictive kin) who are raising child(ren) or youth, because the biological parent(s) are not able or unwilling to do so. The individual does not have to have legal standing of the child(ren) to qualify for services.

Partnership with SHARE New Mexico provides members of our community with statewide listings of resources for grandparents and other relatives caring for children. All direct and supplemental services are available in English and Spanish. Language Access Services are available as well to ensure information is available in any language. Stakeholders provided feedback the multi-lingual pay differential of \$.10 cents an hour is not competitive enough to recruit Spanish speaking staff. Some staff reported they are multi-lingual but have refused the multi-lingual differential pay citing the minimal compensation as inadequate for the increased responsibilities it entails.

The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) funds several programs to provide immediate shelter and a wide range of supportive services for victims/survivors of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence and their dependents. Though not every provider offers every service, they form a network of services, and advocates within each program will work to get every survivor the services and supports they need to find safety and hope in the future. Through stakeholder interviews, additional resources for domestic violence offenders are needed throughout the state to reduce the occurrence of repeated offenses. Domestic violence services providers are struggling with chronically under-funded services that have resulted in depressed wages, minimal or no benefits, and high staff turnover, which was exacerbated by the pandemic and recent inflation. Many clinically licensed behavioral health personnel have moved to higher paying positions within health care systems.

Safety Outcome 2	Strength	Area Needing Improvement
Item 2: Services to family to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	44.83%	55.17%
Well-Being Outcome 1		
Item 12A: Needs assessment and Services to Children	68.42%	31.58%
Item 12B: Needs assessment and Services to Parents	42%	58%
Item 12C: Needs assessment and Services to Foster Parents	63.53%	36.47%

Feedback from People with Lived Experiences

Youth: Youth were surveyed about their experiences while in state custody, the following were questions relating to the individualization of services.

Thinking about case planning with CYFD, were you able to provide input into your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	20	66.67%
No	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Overall, how would you rate your involvement in case planning? (N=30)		
0: CYFD did not engage me in case planning in any way and I do not have a copy of my case plan	7	23.33%
1	1	3.33%
2	6	20%
3	3	10%
4	6	20%
5: CYFD consistently engaged me in discussions about my case plan and listened to my input about case planning.	7	23.33%

- Youth stated she provided input but felt stressed as there was not a lot of time to process the information when in certain meetings and discussions were occurring. Youth was able to talk about services and progress with the worker.
- Despite prompts and examples of possible items on case plan, youth was not familiar with concept of case plan and had no input as a result.
- Youth had input into case plan, but agency staff were poor at putting services in place. i.e., family therapy was court ordered 1.5 years, but CYFD did not set it up and youth found a therapist in early 2024. Youth talked to worker about strengths/needs, services, and about progress.

Parents: Parents were surveyed about their experiences while their children were in state custody, the following were questions related to the individualization of services.

Overall, how would you rate your involvement in case planning? (N=30)		
0: CYFD did not engage me in case planning in any way and I do not have a copy of my case plan	19	63.33%
1	2	6.66%
2	3	10%
3	2	6.66%

4	0	0%
5: CYFD consistently engaged me in discussions about my case plan and listened to my input about case planning.	4	13.33%

The average of all 30 parent responses was 1.

Currently, the state does not have the ability to track services the agency wants to refer a family to when those services are not available. This lack of data makes it difficult to know where services are lacking in the state and where the additional support is needed on the macro level. CYFD is currently working with Redmane, the selected contractor working on the CCWIS solution, to address the ability to track services to families, and in particular parents.

Overview

New Mexico has a framework for individualizing services for families to address their unique needs after an assessment but through stakeholder feedback and lack of quality data to support that framework, it does not appear to be working as intended. The agency does have translation services available statewide for families who speak languages other than English which addresses one of the reasons this item was previously rated as an area needing improvement.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

- **Item 31:** *How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and developing related Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?*

State Plans: To view CYFD's current Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP - Five Year Plan) or the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) please visit:

<https://www.cyfd.nm.gov/resources/publications-reports/>.

For more information about the CFSP or APSR, please contact Milissa Soto, CYFD Federal Reporting Bureau Chief at milissa.soto@cyfd.nm.gov or (505) 257-8759 or Noah Brooks, CYFD Federal Reporting Coordinator at Noah.Brooks@cyfd.nm.gov or (505) 934-6918. The Office of Tribal Affairs will work with the Federal Reporting Coordinator to ensure the Child and Family Services Plan is available to all New Mexico tribal partners during our in-person gatherings and via the CYFD external website.

Access to Information/Public Website: CYFD has updated its external facing website to be more proactive in providing information to stakeholders and the community at large. This includes the access to CYFD policy and procedures and finalized and approved federal reports. The new website is: <https://www.cyfd.nm.gov/>.

Over the next five years, CYFD will utilize its communication office to provide updates on the five-year Child and Family Services Plan and brainstorm ideas in engaging the stakeholders (courts, community providers, resource parents, Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos, and people with lived experience) and the public in providing input toward progress of goals withing the Child

and Family Services Plan and in meeting Safety, Permanency, and Well-being targets in addition to being in conformity with Systemic Factors.

- **Item 32:** *How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?*

Consultation with Medical Assistance Division (MAD) of Health Care Authority (HCA): The Health Care Authority is the New Mexico's designated Medicaid agency. CYFD collaborates with HCA in the following ways:

- **Biweekly Meetings:** The Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit meets with MAD Quality Bureau and other MAD staff to discuss tracking needs and services for Children in State Custody (CISC) as part of the Kevin S Settlement Agreement. These meetings also provide for discussion and preparation of the roll out of the new Medicaid Turquoise Care program beginning July 1, 2024. As part of this transition, all CISC will be assigned to one Managed Care Organization instead of being spread across three different Managed Care organizations.
- **Quarterly Meetings:** The Title IV-E/Medicaid unit and Fostering Connection have quarterly meetings with the MAD Eligibility staff to discuss issues around eligibility and maintenance of Medicaid for Children in State Custody (CISC) and youth that age of foster care at age 26, or youth that come to New Mexico who have aged out of foster care from another state.
 - **Weekly Meetings with HCA Tribal Liaison:** The Office of Tribal Affairs, Protective Services Federal Reporting Bureau and the Office of General counsel meet with HSD's Tribal liaison (weekly) and the Medicaid Assurance Department (biweekly) to discuss, collaborate and problem solve regarding the development and expansion of access to culturally relevant services, treatments, interventions and supports, including traditional and customary healing, through Medicaid, for children in state custody.

Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD): The Early Childhood Education and Care Department is the stand-alone agency that administers programs and services for children aged 0 to 5. CYFD Family Services Division continues to partner with ECECD in supplementing their services with home-based and evidence-based prevention services to families with children ages 0 to 5 through the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs. There are several collaborative efforts underway to address children ages 0-5:

- **Family Support Services:** Target services will be prioritized for parents and secondary caregivers who have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Infant Mental Health Teams:** CYFD Behavioral Health Services is partnering with ECECD providers for the provision of infant mental health services.
- **Families FIRST:** A perinatal case management program which assists clients in gaining access to medical, social, and educational services that are necessary to foster positive pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infants and children.
- **Home Visiting Including the Neonatal Intensive Care Home Visiting Services:** A prevention program for families to receive support prenatally through their child's third/fifth birthday. The provider visits the family in their home (or setting of comfort) to share resources,

support the caregivers, partner with the family to complete screenings, and develop goals for the child and family to guide services.

- **Early Intervention:** Intervention that serves families of infants and toddlers with, or at-risk of, developmental delays. Children under the age of 3 who are the subject of a substantiated report of child maltreatment are referred to the state's early intervention program, Family Infant Toddler (FIT), for an assessment.
- **Child and Family Nutrition Programs:** Nutrition programs that contribute to the healthy growth, development, and wellness of young children and adults through nutrition support services in New Mexico. The Summer Food Service Program serves children ages 1-18; the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serves all ages.
- **Childcare Assistance:** New Mexico subsidizes the cost of childcare for eligible families/children ages 6 weeks to 13 years (up to 18 if special supervision is required).
- **NM PreK:** The NM PreK program prepares three and four-year-old children for school readiness.

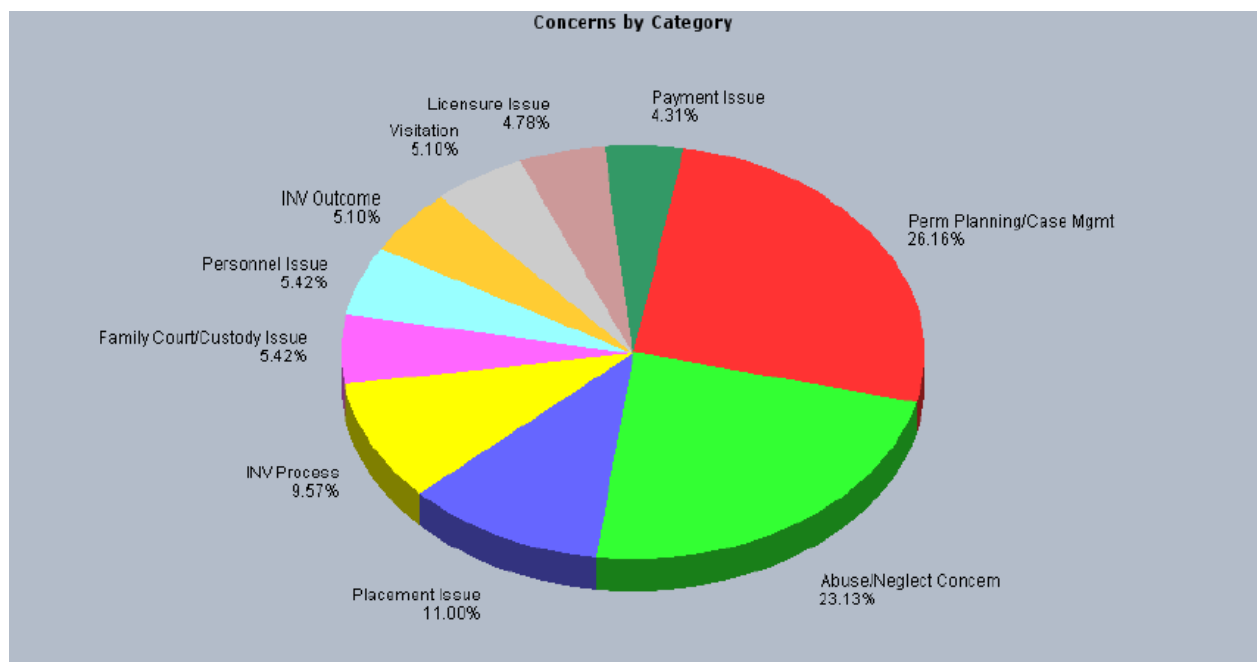
Social Security Administration: CYFD has one Youth Disability Specialist that works with older youth under Fostering Connections, and one Social Security Liaison within the Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit that works with children aged 0 to 15. As part of the CYFD organizational restructuring, the Office of Children's Rights has become the Office of Advocacy. This office is currently building capacity to assist with applying for and assisting the Permanency Planning Pillar and Fostering Connections staff navigating sometime very complex process with the goal of obtaining disability and social security benefits for those children and youth who are in need. CYFD also has a contract with New Mexico Legal Aid, whose attorneys assist CYFD staff in applying for and navigating the Social Security Administration's processes and programs.

- **Youth Disability Specialist:** This position ensures that older youth with disabilities receive the services needed to successfully transition into adulthood in a developmentally appropriate and identity affirming way. Supports with Development and Disabled (DD) waiver and Supplemental Security (SSI) applications, partners with New Mexico Legal Aid to refer clients for assistance with obtaining SSI and DD waiver benefits, assists with guardianship paperwork, scheduling Neuropsychic appointments and locating safe and appropriate housing options for disabled youth. Serves as an advocate and support person to youth with disabilities in internal and external staffing's and meetings and with community-based partners for opportunities to participate in normative activities that build life skills needed for successful adulthood.
- **Social Security Liaison:** The Social Security Liaison (SSL) manages both RSDI and SSI benefits for children and youth in foster care until age 17. The SSL works with CYFD Administrative Services Division in becoming Representative Payee for children and youth receiving SSI and RSDI. As of 2023, CYFD is no longer using RSDI benefits toward the child or youth's foster care maintenance payment. Separate accounts have been established to hold this money for children and youth and is paid out directly to them or their parent or guardian when that child or youth exits foster care. The SSL work with all the Social Security Office around the state in ensuring on going appointments are attended, paperwork is completed, and that benefits are distributed and utilized correctly.

Constituent Affairs: CYFD responds to concerns from the community by utilizing a constituent management process within the Office of Constituent Affairs that ensures CYFD management responds to questions and concerns in a timely manner. The Office of Office of Constituent Affairs

(OCA) fields all incoming calls Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. On average OCA currently fields 15 calls per day on a slow day and 40 calls on a busy day. OCA oversees the grievance process for resource parents regarding their bill of rights and responds with advocacy and problem-solving to support and meet the needs of our resource parents. From July 1, 2023, through June 10, 2024, OCA has received 820 complaints with 260 of those coming from the Governor's Office:

- 26% of complaints were regarding permanency planning and case management-related issues.
- 23% of complaints were regarding child abuse/neglect reports.
- 9.6% of complaints were regarding the investigation's process.
- 11% of complaints were related to placement issues.
- 5.4% of complaints were about personnel issues with specific employees.
- 5.1% of complaints were regarding the disposition of investigations.
- 5.4% of the complaints were regarding civil family court/custody issues.
- 4.8% of complaints were regarding licensure issues.
- 4.3% of complaints were about payment issues.
- 5.1% of the complaints were regarding visitation.



Notable complaint increases over the past year include:

1. Parents, resource parents, and relatives of children in custody call to report discrimination and violations of their rights by the assigned field staff.
2. Abuse/Neglect reports called in, the outcomes of those reports and the impact on custodial matters continue to be at the top of the concerns reported to OCA. Many of the constituents calling will report that they needed CYFD to do more and find more so they can

show the Judge why they should have full custody. PSD is required to pour a huge amount of time, energy, and resources into repeated referrals between parents, often unfounded. CYFD is not allowed to refuse reports and there is nothing we can do to hold false reporters accountable. CYFD is viewed as a tool for parents to use against each other to gain the upper hand in custody cases.

3. Statewide there was an increase in complaints from our constituents reporting the employees assigned to their case had a conflict of interest and needed to be conflicted out to a different team. The message is being sent to managers, associate field deputies, and deputy directors to remind their teams of the importance of this issue. To protect the validity of an investigation, we are to avoid even the perception of a conflict of interest.
4. School officials continue to call in concerns that do not meet the criteria for abuse/neglect and/or disagree with CYFD regarding the outcome of the screening decisions.
5. Investigations complaints continue to be on the rise. Many parents who were the subject of an investigation did not receive notice of the disposition of the investigation, to close out the case and therefore did not have an opportunity to appeal the decision. Another area of concern was if a parent did receive the dispositional letter, they could not get a response from the case staff within the allotted 10 days to be able to appeal a substantiated case. Our field managers, associate deputies and deputy directors have all been reminded of this crucial component of investigations. The disposition of an investigation must be sent out to parents within 14 days of closing a case and must be complete with the correct contact information for the manager responsible for responding to the request for an administrative review.
6. There are some outlier issues that have been identified:
 - a. Placement decisions regarding relatives are on the rise. There are numerous cases statewide where CYFD is removing children from one relative to another relative after a significant period of time has passed (greater than 6 months in all cases) but the move is not for safety reasons. There are no best interest placement staffing's being held and siblings are separated from day one with no plan to place them back together until a year or so after coming into care. When CYFD fails to follow policy/procedure from early on in the case and is not transparent with resource parents about the plans for the children, and when our staff do not go through the necessary steps like a best interest placement staffing, a hasty move puts CYFD in a more likely position of violating a licensed resource parents' bill of rights and/or a child/youth's bill of rights.
 - b. Lea County has had an increase in complaints from parents sharing negative experiences they are having with their assigned worker and supervisor being unresponsive, failing to make the proper referrals to services and then reporting to the courts the lack of progress by the parents. Accurate court reporting is essential.
 - c. There was an increase in relative requests for information on kinship guardianship.

How the Department is Utilizing the Feedback: Activities/problem-solving techniques used to resolve issues include but are not limited to:

- OCA has been requesting meetings with field teams statewide, to get the pillars to communicate about major issues going on in cases. The lack of communication across pillars is detrimental to the case plan and decisions being made for the families in our care. Creating a communication plan such as group texts and group emails to include the parents, workers, supervisors, and managers to keep everyone on the same page and accountable is

one key component found to be of some benefit. OCA has recommended weekly, biweekly, or monthly scheduled check-ins for teams where communication has been identified as a primary issue. OCA has also recommended and requested monthly team meetings particularly when there are transitions and movements being made in cases.

- OCA makes every attempt and effort to advocate for our constituents and bring their voices to the team assigned. The hope is that advocating clearly and effectively will prevent staff from forgetting the proper steps to decision making laid out in our policy and procedure and will ensure the most appropriate decisions are being made for our children and families.
- A shift and focus on implementing the Individualized Planning Process (IPP), a collaborative decision-making framework that is trauma-informed and culturally responsive.
- Offering more trainings with local school districts to discuss topics like community resources, poverty vs. abuse/neglect, and mandated reporting to create a culture of community services and supports intended to strengthen families and promote the safety and well-being of children in their own homes.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

- **Item 33:** *How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?*

Throughout the remainder of 2023 CYFD updated the Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing Standards in collaboration with Nations, Pueblo, and Tribal partners. In January 2024, the new licensing standards were published and in effect. The new licensing standards aim to provide an easier path to licensure for relatives and fictive kin. Because of the collaborative process with our Nations, Pueblo, and Tribal partners CYFD eliminated the need for an initial relative assessment and an initial home study for relatives and fictive kin. The process now includes a comprehensive relative assessment that does not duplicate questions and efforts as was the case in the previous process.

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing standards are used statewide and are codified in the New Mexico Administrative Code: <https://www.srca.nm.gov/nmac-home/nmac-titles/title-8-social-services/chapter-26-foster-care-and-adoption/>

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing apply to CYFD Protective Services statewide, and Child Placement Agencies statewide.

- **Item 34:** *How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements, and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children?*

The Protective Service Placement Pillar has streamlined the criminal background check (CRC) and child abuse and neglect check process. CRC applications are updated, and CRC 101 training will be part of an ongoing PAR Bureau training to the field and community providers as necessary. The Placement and Adoption Resource (PAR) Bureau under the Placement Pillar processes relative

resource parents to get fingerprinted within 24 hours of completing a fingerprint registration. Results are available within 48 hours. Providing CRC results earlier in the process helps staff make better placement decisions for foster children.

- *Item 35: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide?*

CYFD Protective Services Division Placement Pillar is responsible for creating and carrying out a statewide plan to recruit foster care providers to develop a pool of potential foster and adoptive homes. The plan is developed based on data regarding the number of children in care, where they are located, ethnicity, gender and other pertinent demographic factors. Protective Services Placement Pillar utilizes public information campaigns utilizing written media, radio, television, and other recognized marketing strategies to best target efforts to maximize the return on the expenditure of resources.

CYFD recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining diverse, culturally reflective homes. Plans to improve performance on these efforts are embedded in the Kevin S Settlement Agreement, although it has not been reported routinely at this time. New Mexico CYFD's recruitment priority currently is focused on families who are willing and able to take placement of older, higher-needs youth who comprise the vast majority of office stays, shelter placements, and acute congregate placements.

Recruitment efforts in 2023 began with the County Based Recruitment and Retention Team (CBRRT). The placement supervisors compiled data based on current children in custody within each county and the current foster parents within each county. This data included race, ethnicity, ages foster parents accepted, beds available, how the family became aware of fostering, and characteristics of the homes. Data also included information about children characteristics currently in custody in the county. Goals were developed by the CBRRT within the county that consists of Permanency, placement and investigative staff. They identify events and/or create events to recruit new families to become foster parents. These goals also include retention items like resource parent quarterly meetings.

In late 2023, department wide reorganization occurred to include combining the statewide navigators into one unit and joining to facilitate and ensure recruitment events occur within each county. There was also a pilot project within 5 counties to begin supporting the recruitment efforts; Santa Fe, San Juan, Eddy/Chavez, Dona Ana and Bernalillo counties. There was additional support and other community meetings in San Juan and Dona Ana counties to discuss how to gain info on supporting recruitment in these areas with community stakeholders, such as school events, local community health and wellness fairs, and community events to target recruitment within the community.

CYFD has since identified opportunities for improvement, such as requesting a budget for recruitment to purchase promotional swag, paying for booth fees, advertising, and presentational set-ups. There is no PR team or professional team to help call community members to get into events or create events to spark community interest in becoming foster parents. The navigation team has no experience in these areas, pilot teams have recommended they want more support and resources to be put into recruitment projects and efforts.

One bright spot in efforts to recruit more culturally diverse resource foster families pertains to the Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA) and the diligent recruitment that has occurred for tribal youth in custody in order to improve outcomes related to preferred placements. Concerted efforts to train staff in the state's Indian child welfare law; improved collaboration with the state's Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes; and consistent, family-centered staffings have improved placement opportunities for Native children which affirm and support their individual culture.

Because the need for non-relative homes willing to take placement of higher-needs youth has reached a level of urgency in the last few years, New Mexico has focused most of its recruitment efforts there, in addition to a variety of more generalized recruitment activities. Apart from improved collaboration with tribal partners in recruiting and retaining placements for Native children and youth, consideration of racial and ethnic diversity in the state's recruitment efforts requires further development and planning.

- *Item 36: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide?*

CYFD's Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) Coordinator is responsible for duties and processes relates to general requirements as well as the recent passing of the 2023 legislation passing of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children. Responsibilities include:

- Performing the role of ICPC Coordinator for all matters related to ICPC in the State of New Mexico consistent with applicable federal and state laws and regulations; to include processing of outgoing and incoming ICPC requests, inquiries, updates, and reports.
- Developing partnerships and working relationships with ICPC Coordinators and ICAMA Specialists across the nation.
- Developing and providing training related to ICPC for field staff.
- Attending meetings related to ICPC matters, such as placement staffings, disruption staffings, and team meetings.
- Working closely with internal partners regarding policies and procedures related to ICPC.
- Assisting in the development of the contract that covers the scope of work related to New Mexico ICPC's use of NEICE.
- Leading meetings with various counties across the state regarding pending home study requests to ensure deadlines are met for Safe and Timely Interstate Reports.
- Coordinating ICAMA referrals for all existing and active ICPC cases.
- Ensuring NEICE and AAICPC membership dues and subscription dues are paid in a timely manner.

The ICPC Coordinator was also integral in providing the agency with information specific to the Revised ICPC passing during the 2023 Legislative Session such as:

- Provided informational sessions and presentations for leadership regarding what the Revises ICPC is.
- Facilitated coordination and meetings between CYFD policy staff, CYFD leadership, and the AAICPC national office to discuss specifics of the Revised ICPC language.

- Ran reports in NEICE to gather data points regarding ICPC requests, types of requests, and placements.
- Attended legislative hearings in person and virtually to be able to answer questions regarding the Revised ICPC in real time.

Continuous Quality Improvement and Achievement of Goals, Strategies, Target Outcomes, and Substantial Compliance with Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Systemic Factor

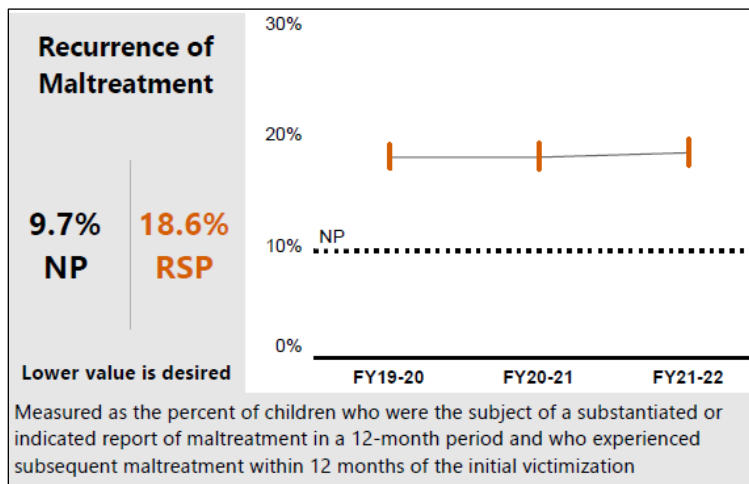
CYFD will begin Placement reviews in October 2024. The placement reviews will occur in tandem with the CFSR Quality Assurance monthly schedule and will review the same randomly selected foster care cases. CYFD has developed a tool that will review state and federal licensing requirements, state and federal licensing requirements, and will utilize stakeholder input and feedback during the review process. Stakeholders will also be invited to participate in Continuous Quality Improvement activities that will address the goals, strategies, and target outcome contained within the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan.

SECTION 3: PLAN FOR ENACTING THE STATE'S VISION

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

1. **REDUCE OCCURRENCE OF REPEAT MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

REASON FOR GOAL SELECTION: A review of the CFSR Round 4 Data Profile for February 2024 shows that New Mexico's performance (Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) of 18.6%) is statistically worse than the national performance (NP) of 9.7%. Over three reporting periods (FY19-20, FY20-21, and FY 21-22), New Mexico has remained flat with a slight increase. This has been a stubborn metric for the state and has remained undesirably stable despite temporal and geographical fluctuations in adjacent metrics such as foster care entry rates, re-referral rates, and substantiation rates.



Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile AFCARS and NCANDS submissions as of 2-20-24

STRATEGIES TO REACHING GOAL:

- 1a. Utilize root cause analysis to examine assumed deficits in accurately using risk and safety assessments and in making informed decisions that reduce the likelihood of future child maltreatment by June 30, 2025.
- 1b. Utilize root cause analysis to examine assumed deficits in recognizing safety and risk factors associated with a parent's behavior and actions toward child(ren) by June 30, 2025.
- 1c. Utilize root cause analysis to examine current processes, practices, and case examples of successful engagement of parents in case planning and working toward successful reunification with their children by June 30, 2025.

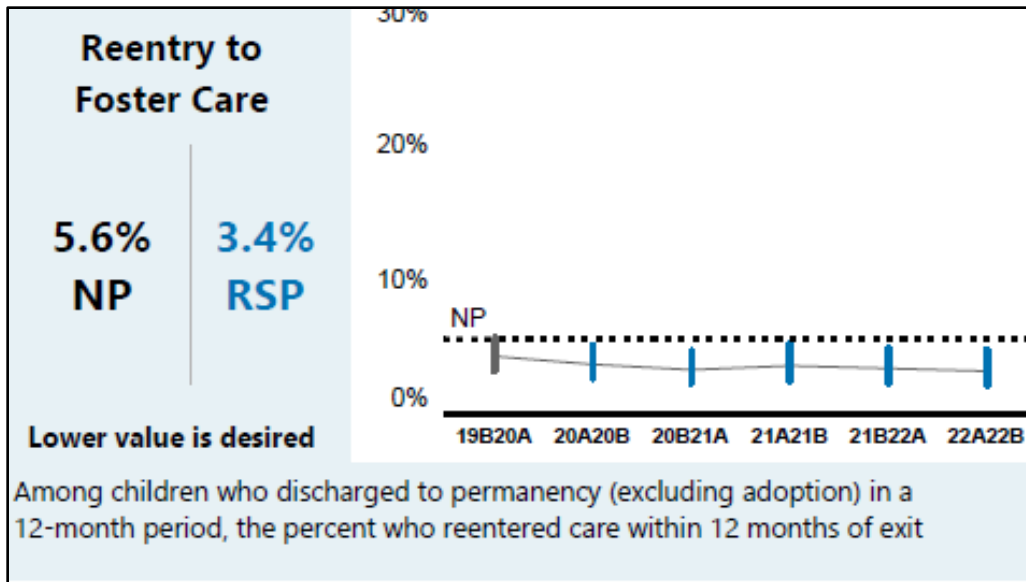
- 1d. Once root cause completed in 1a, 1b, and 1 c, work with select county office staff, the CYFD Safety Practice QA team, and select CYFD program to analyze needs and deficits to develop measurable actions steps for 1a, 1b, and 1 c by September 30, 2025

2. **INCREASE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE AT RISK OF ENTERING FOSTER CARE OR ARE AT RISK OF RE-ENTERING FOSTER CARE.**

REASON FOR GOAL SELECTION: In support of the Title IV-E Prevention plan to decrease the number of children unnecessarily entering foster care or reentering foster care after reunification, adoption, or guardianship has been achieved, CYFD will focus on increasing access to internal and community-based services and work with service providers to increase positive engagement with those families. CYFD will also continue to work toward reducing the number of children aged 0-5 years old from unnecessarily entering foster care if the appropriate services can be put in the home to mitigate risk of future maltreatment.

Population, Entries, and Entry Rates per 1,000																% of Total Child Pop.	% of Total Entries
	Child Population					Entries					Entry Rates per 1,000					2022	23A23B
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	19A19B	20A20B	21A21B	22A22B	23A23B	19A19B	20A20B	21A21B	22A22B	23A23B		
Age at Entry																	
< 1 yr.	23,036	22,138	21,177	20,830	20,830	176	171	140	158	173	7.64	7.72	6.61	7.59	8.31	4.5%	18.0%
1-5 yrs.	124,114	120,684	116,867	113,084	113,084	303	298	229	198	304	2.44	2.47	1.96	1.75	2.69	24.6%	31.6%
6-10 yrs.	134,655	132,550	130,005	127,994	127,994	205	185	145	144	221	1.52	1.40	1.12	1.13	1.73	27.9%	23.0%
11-16 yrs.	167,716	172,580	170,974	169,154	169,154	170	186	138	169	239	1.01	1.08	0.81	1.00	1.41	36.8%	24.8%
17 yrs.	27,688	28,423	28,432	28,451	28,451	15	13	13	9	25	0.54	0.46	0.46	0.32	0.88	6.2%	2.6%
Total	477,209	476,375	467,455	459,513	459,513	869	853	665	678	962	1.82	1.79	1.42	1.48	2.09	100%	100%
Race/Ethnicity																	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	46,844	46,596	45,741	44,880	44,880	44	63	44	43	63	0.94	1.35	0.96	0.96	1.40	9.8%	6.5%
Asian	5,758	5,864	5,802	6,004	6,004	0	0	0	1	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.33	1.3%	0.2%
African American	8,465	8,602	8,559	8,626	8,626	37	34	17	18	42	4.37	3.95	1.99	2.09	4.87	1.9%	4.4%
Hispanic	294,236	293,441	288,284	283,225	283,225	557	557	414	449	531	1.89	1.90	1.44	1.59	1.87	61.6%	55.2%
Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	252	248	237	221	221	1	1	0	0	1	3.97	4.03	0.00	0.00	4.52	0.0%	0.1%
White	109,278	108,939	106,119	103,704	103,704	205	164	175	139	186	1.88	1.51	1.65	1.34	1.79	22.6%	19.3%
Two or More	12,376	12,685	12,713	12,853	12,853	14	25	15	13	25	1.13	1.97	1.18	1.01	1.95	2.8%	2.6%
Unknown						7	8	0	15	112	0	0	0	0	0	0%	11.6%
Missing Data						4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile AFCARS and NCANDS submissions as of 2-20-24



Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile AFCARS and NCANDS submissions as of 2-20-24

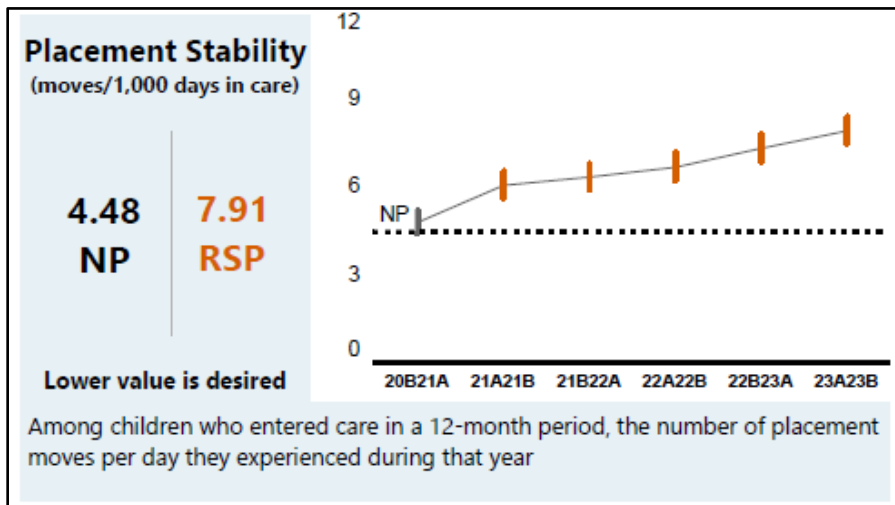
STRATEGIES TO REACHING GOAL:

- 2a. Utilize root cause analysis to review assumed deficits in current processes, practices, and contracted services in family engagement and utilization of secondary prevention services, In-Home Services, and Intensive Family Support Services by June 30, 2025.
- 2b. Review successful case examples of engagement of parents in case planning, on-going communication, visitations, and reunification effort to identify positive trends or patterns by June 30, 2025
- 2c. Once root cause and review completed in 2a, and 2b, work with select county office staff, the CYFD Safety Practice QA team, and select CYFD program to analyze needs and deficits to develop measurable actions steps for 2a and 2b by September 30, 2025.
- 2d. Train all contracted services providers and CYFD In-Home Services Workers in the Family Connections curriculum, to provide consistency across the state for assessing and implementing plans, individualized to each family's needs by June 30, 2026.
- 2e. All contracted services providers will identify and implement an evidence-based parenting curriculum over the next three years by June 30, 2027.
- 2f. Improve tracking of the number of children and families served, number of referrals made to services, number of children and families engaged in services, and outcomes for families and children as the result of services and intervention by June 30, 2025.

3. INCREASE PLACEMENT STABILITY AND CHILD WELL-BEING BY MAKING APPROPRIATE PLACEMENTS THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE.

REASON FOR GOAL SELECTION: Placement stability is a significant contributor to better outcomes for children in foster care. Placement stability leads to timelier permanency; better educational outcomes;

more meaningful attachments and connections; and more continuity for children’s medical and behavioral healthcare. Currently, the state has insufficient resource families to meet the needs of certain populations, such as older children and youth and children with significant needs. Although the state has made great strides in utilizing relative and fictive kin resources, those who do not have an identified kinship placement have a high likelihood of placement moves and frequent congregate care placements.



Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile AFCARS and NCANDS submissions as of 2-20-24

STRATEGIES TO REACHING GOAL:

- 3a. Utilize root cause analysis to review assumed deficient in achieving placement stability for older youth by June 30, 2025
- 3b. Review successful case examples of successful and stable placements for older youth to identify positive trends or patterns by June 30, 2025.
- 3c. Once root cause and review completed in 3a, and 3b, work with select county office staff, the Office of Performance and Accountability, the Office of Tribal Affairs, and select CYFD program to analyze needs and deficits to develop measurable actions steps for 3a and 3b by September 30, 2025.
- 3d. Meet with CYFD Behavioral Health Services and the State Health Care Authority (New Mexico’s designated Medicaid Agency) to identify pathways to support and wrap around services to children and youth needed a higher level of intervention and care. Discuss possibility of statewide placement summit and draft next steps to include key stakeholders from the Behavioral Health and Community Services Providers by June 30, 2025.
- 3e. Roll out Pilot of Foster Care Plus and recruitment of relative, fictive kin, and non-relative resource parent to participate in the pilot. Identify measures to be monitored during the pilot to demonstrate progress and achievement of pilot goals by June 30, 2025.
- 3f. Begin Placement and Licensing Reviews starting November 2024. The Placement and Licensing tool will evaluate foster care cases to measure compliance with state and federal laws, including Title IV-E licensing and placement requirements and the Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Systemic Factor. Report out findings in Annual Progress and Services Reports during this five-year Child and Family Services Plan reporting cycle by June 30, 2025.

4. ESTABLISH APPROPRIATE PERMANENCY GOALS, AND WORK TO ACHIEVE TIMELY PERMANENCY SO CHILDREN AND YOUTH DO NOT LINGER IN FOSTER CARE.

REASON FOR GOAL SELECTION: Many factors impact how quickly children can achieve permanency, including factors external to the agency such as service availability and delays in the court and legal system. CYFD acknowledges slow progress on CFSR items 4 and 5 and the unmet target set for item 6 in the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan. CYFD will work with the State's court and legal system in moving permanency cases along in improving timely permanency for children, especially when parents engage in their case plan late in the case. This often occurs when parents who struggle with substance abuse disorder need more time due to delays in accessing treatment or relapse resulting in more time in treatment programs. CYFD will also work internally to ensure Protective Services staff have the skills and knowledge in establishing appropriate permanency goals that put the child's needs first. Additionally, CYFD will build more frequent meaningful engagement with parents and resource parents in its future practice.

STRATEGIES TO REACHING GOAL:

- 4a. Develop a task force jointly with the court and legal system to target cases in which children remain in custody beyond 20 months. The task force to include Administrative Office of the Courts, Judges, Office of Family Representation and Advocacy, attorneys CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs, CYFD Permanency Planning Pillar, CYFD Office of Performance and Accountability, Community Providers, Resource Parents, Parents, Youth with lived experience, and Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos by March 30, 2025.
- 4b. Once task force is in place, utilize root cause analysis and review of current data trends (including barriers in pending adoption and guardianship for children who have been in custody 20 months or longer) to examine possible barriers to timely permanency by June 30, 2025.
- 4c. Once root cause analysis and review are completed in 4a and 4b, develop measurable actions steps and goals and monitor progress by September 30, 2025.

ACTION STEPS AND MEASUREMENT OF PROGRESS

1. Reduce occurrence of repeat maltreatment of children and youth

- a. Utilization Root Cause Analysis and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process for strategies 1a, 1b, and 1c.
 - i. Identify members to participate in root cause analysis and CQI, include members of the Office of Performance Safety Practice QA team, Protective Services Placement Pillar, Family Services In Home Services Program, Contracted In Home Services (IHS) and Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS) providers, CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs, Nations, Tribes and Pueblos,

- Judges, attorneys, and people with lived experience including relative and non-relative resource parents by March 30, 2025.
- ii. Examine current trends and data related to safety and risk to children and protective capacities of parents and or caregivers by June 30, 2025.
- iii. Examine tools, policy, procedures, training, manuals, or practice aides by June 30, 2025.
- iv. Examine cases that demonstrate successful engagement of parents and caregivers in case planning and working toward successful reunification by June 30, 2025.
- b. Work with selected CFSR counties in developing goals, measures, and achievable actions steps as a result of Root Cause Analysis and CQI work by September 30, 2025.
 - i. Monitor progress using identified measures toward goal attainment using identified actions steps. Revisit progress every three months starting October 1, 2025.
 - ii. Work with CYFD Training and Coaching Unit and Safety Quality Assurance Unit to provide ongoing training and supports to new staff, counties where staff turnover is high, and staff who need refresher training starting October 1, 2025
- c. Reconvene members identified in **1.a.i** by June 30, 2026, to discuss progress over a year and to examine changes in data and trends by July 31, 2026.

2. *Increase family engagement WITHIN prevention and intervention services for children who are at risk of entering foster care or are at risk of re-entering foster care.*

- a. Utilization Root Cause Analysis and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process for strategies 2a and 2b.
 - i. Identify members to participate in root cause analysis and CQI, include members of the Office of Performance and Accountability, Protective Services Investigation and Permanency Pillars, Family Services Prevention and Intervention, Contracted In Home Services (IHS) and Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS) providers, CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs, Nations, Tribes and Pueblos, Judges, attorneys, and people with lived experience including relative and non-relative resource parents by March 30, 2025.
 - ii. Examine tools, policy, procedures, training, manuals, or practice aides by April 30, 2025.
 - iii. Identify what constitutes a child at risk for entering foster care. Identify trends in protective capacities of parents and caregivers for a child determined at risk for entering foster care. Examine current trends and data related to safety and intervention services and strategies provided to children and their families when a child is at risk of entering foster care by May 30, 2025.
 - iv. Examine cases that demonstrate successful engagement of parents and caregivers in case planning and working toward successful reunification by June 30, 2025.
- b. Work with selected CFSR counties in developing goals, measures, and achievable actions steps as a result of Root Cause Analysis and CQI work by September 30, 2025.
 - i. Monitor progress using identified measures toward goal attainment using identified actions steps. Revisit progress every three months starting October 1, 2025.
 - ii. Work with CYFD Training and Coaching Unit and Safety Quality Assurance Unit to provide ongoing training and supports to new staff, counties where staff turnover is high, and staff who need refresher training starting October 1, 2025

- c. Reconvene members identified in **2.a.i** by June 30, 2026, to discuss progress over a year and to examine changes in data and trends buy July 31, 2026.
- b. The CYFD Family Services Division will work with contracted Community Based Intervention, Prevention and Reunification (CBPIR) providers to ensure all contracted In Home Services workers are trained in the Family Connections Model by June 30, 2027.
- c. The CYFD Family Services Division will work with contracted Community Based Intervention, Prevention and Reunification (CBPIR) providers to ensure all each CBPIR provider had identified and implemented an evidence-based parenting curriculum and program by June 30, 2028.
- d. The Office of Performance and Accountability will work with the Family Services Division to improve tracking of number of children and families served, number of referrals made to services, number of children and families engaged in services, and outcomes for families and children as the result of services and intervention by June 30, 2025.

3. *Increase placement stability and child well-being by making appropriate placements that meet the needs of the children and youth in foster care.*

- a. Utilization Root Cause Analysis and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process for strategies 3a and 3b.
 - a. Identify members to participate in root cause analysis and CQI, include members of the Office of Performance and Accountability, Protective Services Investigation and Permanency Pillars, CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs, Nations, Tribes and Pueblos, Judges, attorneys, and people with lived experience including relative and non-relative resource parents by March 30, 2025.
 - b. Examine tools, policy, procedures, training, manuals, or practice aides by April 30, 2025.
 - c. Identify what constitutes a child at risk for entering foster care. Identify trends in protective capacities of parents and caregivers for a child determined at risk for entering foster care. Examine current trends and data related to safety and intervention services and strategies provided to children and their families when a child is at risk of entering foster care by May 30, 2025.
 - d. Examine cases that demonstrate successful and stable placement of older youth by June 30, 2025.
 - e. Identify members of CYFD Behavioral Health Services and the State Health Care Authority (New Mexico's designated Medicaid Agency) to participate in root cause and CQI processes to identify pathways to support and wrap around services to children and youth needed a higher level of intervention and care by June 30, 2025.
- b. Work with selected CFSR counties in developing goals, measures, and achievable actions steps as a result of Root Cause Analysis and CQI work by September 30, 2025.
 - i. Monitor progress using identified measures toward goal attainment using identified actions steps. Revisit progress every three months starting October 1, 2025.
 - ii. Work with CYFD Training and Coaching Unit and Safety Quality Assurance Unit to provide ongoing training and supports to new staff, counites where staff turnover is high, and staff who need refresher training starting October 1, 2025
- c. Reconvene members identified in **3.a.i** by June 30, 2026, to discuss progress over a year and to examine changes in data and trends buy July 31, 2026.

- d. Placement Pillar will develop mechanisms for monitoring and measuring progress on Foster Care Plus pilot program by June 30, 2025.
- e. Finalize Placement and Licensing Review Tool by October 30, 2024.
 - i. Start Placement and Licensing Review in November of 2024.
 - ii. Report out finding in Annual Progress and Services Report during the 2025-2029 CFSP reporting cycle starting June 30, 2025.

4. Establish appropriate permanency goals, and work to achieve timely permanency so children and youth do not linger in foster care.

- a. Identify and invite member to task force described in strategy 4a by March 30, 2025.
 - i. Create task force members and charter by May 30, 2026.
 - ii. Present proposal for possible Permanency Summit for Spring 2026.
- b. Utilization Root Cause Analysis and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process for strategy 4a. Members of task force to use root cause analysis and CQI by June 30, 2025.
 - i. Examine tools, policy, procedures, training, manuals, or practice aides by April 30, 2025.
 - ii. Identify number of children and youth who have been in foster care for 20 month or longer. Identify trends permanency plans for each foster child in care 20 months or longer. Examine current trends and data and barriers to timely permanency.
 - iii. Examine data and/or cases that demonstrate successful and timely permanency.
- c. Work with selected CFSR counties in developing goals, measures, and achievable actions steps as a result of Root Cause Analysis and CQI work by September 30, 2025.
 - i. Monitor progress using identified measures toward goal attainment using identified actions steps. Revisit progress every three months starting October 1, 2025.
 - ii. Work with CYFD Training and Coaching Unit and Safety Quality Assurance Unit to provide ongoing training and supports to new staff, counties where staff turnover is high, and staff who need refresher training starting October 1, 2025.
- d. Reconvene members identified in 4.a. by June 30, 2026, to discuss progress over a year and to examine changes in data and trends by July 31, 2026.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORTS

At this time CYFD will request technical assistance from the Capacity Building Center for States on building and utilizing a Continuous Quality Improvement Process. CYFD will also utilize the Capacity Building Center for States or Casey Family Program to assist in training Root Cause Analysis. This will be provided statewide to the 33 county offices across the state and provided by the Office of Performance and Accountability.

As CYFD works through this plan over the next five years, training and technical support will be identified to complete outlined strategies and accomplish goals. This support will most likely come from within CYFD, but will also be in partnership with contracted services providers, New Mexico's Court Improvement Project (CIP), and New Mexico's Tribes, Nations and Pueblos.

The CYFD Training and Coaching Unit is located throughout the state and will participate in county CQI processes after the county has completed their scheduled CFSR QA week. The Training and Coaching Unit can assist in providing hand on, in person refresher training to assist in improved goals and strategies outlined in this five-year plan.

Beginning in August 2025, CYFD has begun a complete revision and restructure of their Training Academy and Workforce Development Bureau. This revision and work being put into the revision and restructure is being supported through Casey Families. Currently there is not a training plan complete as the revision is now taking place. Over the next several months CYFD will identify trainings and incorporate topics and goals within the Child and Family Services Plan into New Employee Training for all CYFD employees statewide. CYFD will also cross walk new and on-going training available through CYFD training platform, Cornerstone, to provide support in achievement of the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan Goals.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

CYFD and the New Mexico Health Care Authority (HCA) are currently working through the Kevin S settlement agreement and corrective action plan that address four appendices that have set implementation targets and target outcomes with the goal of improving the lives of children and youth that enter foster care. Those appendices are:

1. Development of a Trauma Responsive System of Care (**Appendix A**)
2. Ensuring children and youth experience Least Restrictive and Appropriate Placements (**Appendix B**)
3. Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and New Mexico's State Indian Family Protection Act (**Appendix C**)
4. Ensuring child and youth have access to Behavioral Health Services (**Appendix D**)

As part of the commitment to the settlement agreement, CYFD has submitted a Data Validation Plan submitted and approved by the Plaintiffs and Co-Neutrals. The Data Validation Plan sets forth process for methodology and data sources for validating CYFD and HCA's progress toward achieving the implementation targets and target outcomes. The Co-Neutrals will evaluate the progress toward the Data Validation Plan in consultation with CYFD and HCA.

In March, April, and May of 2023 mediation was conducted with CYFD and HCA by the Co-Neutrals to work toward resolving disputes regarding progress toward achieving the implementation targets and target outcomes of the initial settlement agreement. In addition, all parties to Kevin S participated in a facilitated listening session with Nations, Pueblos and Tribes on May 10, 2023, and attended a mediation conducted by the Co-Neutrals on May 12, 2023.

As a result of mediation, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) was developed in June 2023. The CAP identifies and describes the strategies that the Parties agree are necessary to implement the Agreement. The CAP, Appendices, and targets of Kevin S align with the four goals in the Vision for Improvement under the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan. There is work already in place with defined targets and measurements that will support the goals of the 2025-2029 CFSP.

1. **Reduce occurrence of repeat maltreatment of children and youth**
Appendices C and D

2. *Increase family engagement WITHIN prevention and intervention services for children who are at risk of entering foster care or are at risk of re-entering foster care.*

Appendices A, C, and D

3. *Increase placement stability and child well-being by making appropriate placements that meet the needs of the children and youth in foster care.*

Appendices A, B, C, and D

4. *Establish appropriate permanency goals, and work to achieve timely permanency so children and youth do not linger in foster care.*

Appendices A, B, C, and D

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

In order to enact CYFD's Vision, CYFD will need to allot time and people to work on the four goals and strategies within the Child and Family Services Plan. Collaboration will need to occur between key stakeholders, such as the court and legal system, resource parents, Nations, Tribes and Pueblos, CYFD field and program staff, and people with lived experience. Collaboration will need to occur with coaching and training staff and the CYFD Policy Office for the duration of the five-year Child and Family Services Plan.

Teaming and task forces will require time commitment for the duration of the five-year Child and Family Services Plan reporting period. Time and people. Additionally, the four goals and strategies should support CYFD's strategic plan and the Kevin S settlement agreements appendices and validation plan. There will also be need for computer and virtual meeting support, note and attendance taking, and meeting space for instances when meetings and presentations are to occur in person.

SECTION 4: SERVICES

CONTINUUM OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES IN NEW MEXICO

PRIMARY PREVENTION SERVICES

Primary prevention services, provided by contracted community services providers, are designed to increase the community's general knowledge about child abuse and neglect and increase awareness of child abuse prevention services. Contracted prevention services providers' activities are to be available to the community at large, including all families regardless of level of risk, for the purpose of increasing knowledge and awareness of child maltreatment and the promotion of healthy parenting and family interaction.

The types of activities may include but are not limited to:

- Media campaigns
- Health fairs
- Child-find events
- Transition fairs
- Educational presentations
- Participation in community-wide events
- Public awareness campaigns associated with child abuse prevention month.

Contracted services providers, also known as Community Based Prevention, Intervention and Reunification (CBPIR) providers, are required to develop a network of community members and interagency collaboration with other types of services providers in order to strengthen connections and streamline referrals between families and community partners. Providers are required to ensure that all staff members working with families in the CBPIR program are kept abreast of local resources to which they may refer families for additional support.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INTAKE

The Children, Youth and Families Department provides a centralized reporting mechanism available toll free to all 33 counties in the State. All New Mexican citizens are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect per state statute. All reports of alleged child abuse and neglect are received and screened by the Protective Services Department Statewide Central Intake unit (SCI). Any person can make a report of alleged child abuse and neglect by calling the statewide toll-free number or dialing #SAFE (#7233) from a cell phone. The toll-free line has the capacity for callers in both English and Spanish, as well as separated lines for law enforcement and the Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) staff. SCI intake workers and supervisors receive calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The intake worker utilizes a Structured Decision Making (SDM) screening tool, response priority tool and report staffing to determine prioritization of each call that SCI receives. The use of these tools helps intake workers to determine if the call should be screened in for an investigation or if the call should be screened out.

If a report is accepted and determined an investigation is warranted, the intake worker sends the PS report to the appropriate county office for investigation. The intake worker also assigns a prioritization: Emergency (E), Priority 1 (P1) or Priority 2 (P2).

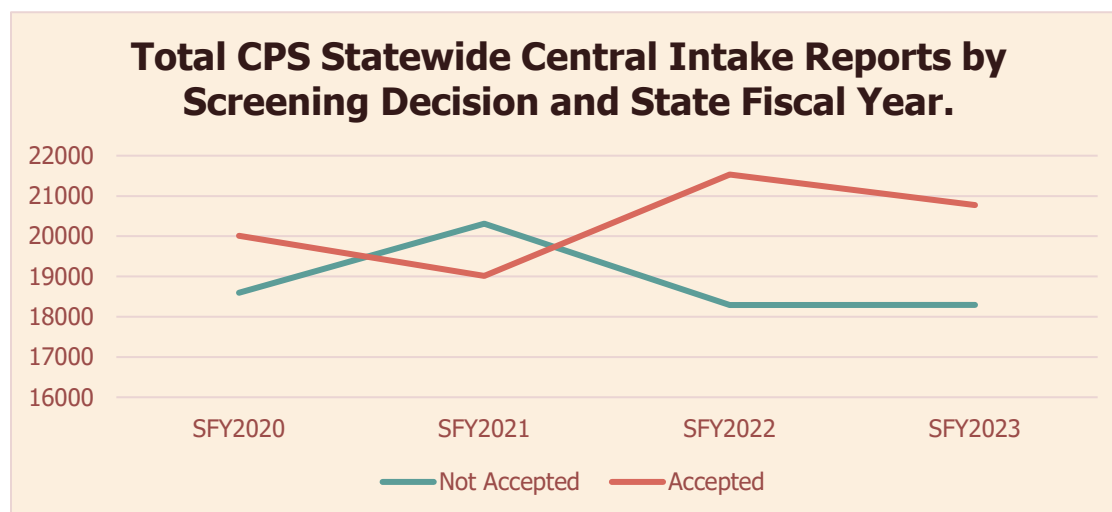
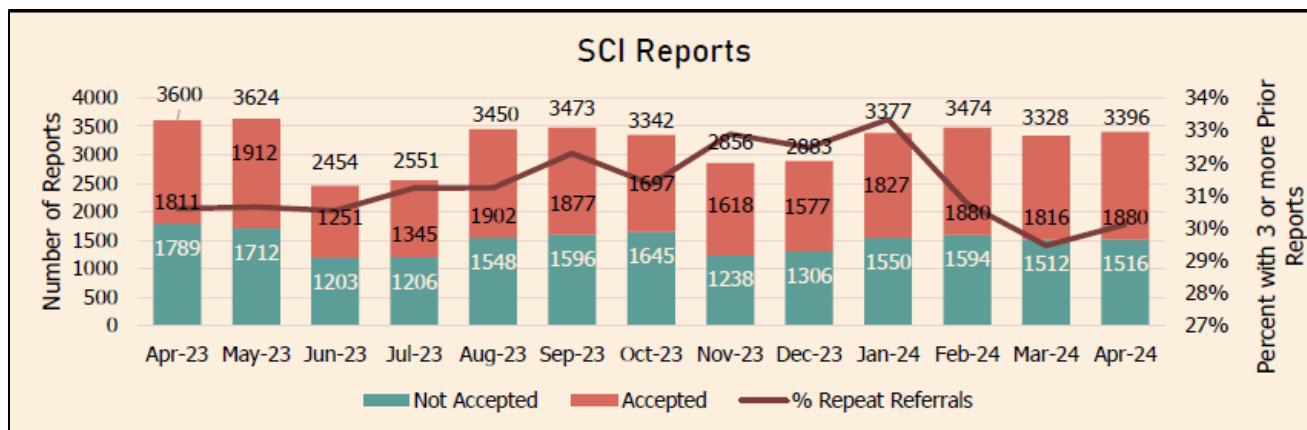
All reports regardless of their screening decision are cross reported to the law enforcement agency or agencies, who have jurisdiction.

REACH NEW MEXICO

REACH NM is CYFD program that is available to children and youth twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. The program is a safe, confidential, judgment-free text line primarily for youths who can talk to a REACH worker about their struggles. REACH workers provide community resources and can take reports of suspected child abuse and neglect as an extension of SCI. REACH workers are real people who respond in real time via text to help families and youth in need. Currently CYFD REACH has 12 full-time employees.

REACH NM has been active since December 28, 2020 and continues to be the first in the nation to take a live chat and simultaneously create a report of alleged abuse or neglect. REACH NM began advertising with Tik Tok and Snapchat to reach more youth via social media. Since using those platforms, REACH NM has received 30+ chats a day. Youth can swipe up from each platform and automatically connect with a REACH advocate.

STATEWIDE CENTRAL INTAKE (SCI) DATA AND TRENDS PER CYFD ROM DATA



Total CPS Statewide Central Intake Reports per State Fiscal Year by County					
Region & County	SFY2020	SFY2021	SFY2022	SFY2023	Grand Total
San Juan	2305	2265	2334	2308	9212
Cibola	493	525	437	370	1825
Sandoval	2097	2209	2106	2098	8510
Valencia	1401	1461	1487	1560	5909
Torrance	290	351	242	338	1221
McKinley	836	912	1088	879	3715
Region 1	7422	7723	7694	7553	30392
Taos	606	561	728	663	2558
Colfax	260	311	226	313	1110
Santa Fe	2070	1899	1842	1728	7539
Union	81	100	82	69	332
Rio Arriba	673	881	743	807	3104
San Miguel	546	593	530	565	2234
Mora	80	95	76	55	306
Los Alamos	112	137	140	143	532
Guadalupe	99	103	91	89	382
Region 2	4527	4680	4458	4432	18097
Bernalillo	13188	13083	13391	12764	52426
Region 3	13188	13083	13391	12764	52426
Roosevelt	258	470	277	345	1350
Lea	1041	1026	1118	1132	4317
Eddy	1099	1026	1047	1193	4365
Chaves	1229	1251	1306	1145	4931
Quay	193	198	169	187	747
Curry	862	990	885	897	3634
De Baca	28	24	46	33	131
Harding	5	1	6	8	20
Region 4	4715	4986	4854	4940	19495
Dona Ana	4734	4638	5360	5473	20205
Grant	727	765	627	563	2682
Lincoln	371	401	376	352	1500
Otero	1108	1271	1287	1321	4987
Sierra	295	209	208	207	919
Luna	578	446	509	490	2023
Socorro	392	466	395	369	1622
Hidalgo	132	145	143	95	515
Catron	15	17	38	19	89
Region 5	8352	8358	8943	8889	34542
Unknown	464	544	538	499	2045
REGION 6	464	544	538	499	2045
Grand Total	38668	39374	39878	39077	156997
Source: sm01a10 production report					

<i>Total CPS Statewide Central Intake Reports for the last four full State Fiscal Years by Screening Decision and County</i>			
Region & County	Accepted	Not Accepted	Grand Total
San Juan	4790	4413	9203
Cibola	851	973	1824
Sandoval	4434	4069	8503
Valencia	3250	2656	5906
Torrance	640	581	1221
McKinley	1588	2126	3714
Region 1	15553	14818	30371
Taos	1342	1211	2553
Colfax	557	553	1110
Santa Fe	3716	3821	7537
Union	166	166	332
Rio Arriba	1512	1592	3104
San Miguel	1178	1054	2232
Mora	154	152	306
Los Alamos	272	260	532
Guadalupe	216	166	382
Region 2	9113	8975	18088
Bernalillo	27104	25281	52385
Region 3	27104	25281	52385
Roosevelt	731	615	1346
Lea	2605	1707	4312
Eddy	2502	1861	4363
Chaves	2818	2112	4930
Quay	443	304	747
Curry	1877	1757	3634
De Baca	67	64	131
Harding	10	10	20
Region 4	11053	8430	19483
Dona Ana	10370	9827	20197
Grant	1392	1290	2682
Lincoln	797	703	1500
Otero	2648	2335	4983
Sierra	477	437	914
Luna	1172	850	2022
Socorro	899	723	1622
Hidalgo	268	247	515
Catron	50	39	89
Region 5	18073	16451	34524
Unknown	436	1535	1971
REGION 6	436	1535	1971
Grand Total	81332	75490	156822

Source: sm01a10 production report

FAMILY OUTREACH

In 2024, as part of the organizational restructuring, Family Outreach was placed under the new Family Services Division. Family Outreach connects families with services and resources in their area to address their need. The Family Outreach unit connects assigned families to community-based resources. Poverty is not a crime, nor is it automatically abuse or neglect, so when family outreach was created it was with the intent to have workers specialize in connecting families to the most basic needs of housing, food, clothing, Medicaid, WIC, counseling services, etc.

CYFD recognizes that families who are screened out at the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department's (CYFD) Statewide Central Intake (SCI) may still have needs. These families may not know how to access services and may not see CYFD itself as a resource. To bridge this gap, CYFD partnered with community providers to create the Family Outreach (FO) community response program. Combined with community engagement, CYFD hopes that FO will meet family needs through access to and provision of services, leading in the long term to diversion from child protective services (CPS) and improved well-being for families and children.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INVESTIGATIONS

When an allegation of child abuse or neglect is screened in by Statewide Central Intake (SCI), the report is assigned to one of the 33 county offices across the state depending on the location of the allegation. Once the county office receives the report from SCI, depending on the prioritization, an investigator is assigned and initiates the investigation. Emergency (E) reports are initiated within three hours from the acceptance of the report at SCI, Priority 1 (P1) reports within 24 hours, and Priority 2 (P2) reports within five calendar days. CYFD Protective Services Division (PSD) is responsible for conducting civil investigations of child maltreatment, while law enforcement is responsible for conducting criminal investigations. PSD county offices collaborate with local law enforcement when it is warranted.

The investigation decision, due within 45 days of the report, includes a determination of substantiation or un-substantiation of each allegation in the SCI report. Substantiation of an allegation in a child abuse or neglect investigation means the child is under the age of 18, a parent/guardian/custodian has been identified as the perpetrator or identified as failing to protect the child, and credible evidence supports the conclusion by the investigation worker that the child has been abused or neglected. Unsubstantiated means the information collected during the investigation does not support a finding that the child was abused or neglected as defined by state statute in the New Mexico Children's Code.

Collateral contacts, which may include other family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, or medical and behavioral health professions may be used, as appropriate, to assess the safety of the child and to determine the needs of the family. The investigation workers also utilize standardized safety and risk assessment tools to determine what actions, if any, should be taken by PSD. Children under the age of three who are subject of a substantiated report of child maltreatment, whether they enter PSD custody, are referred to the Early Childhood Education and Care Department Early Intervention program or Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program.

Figures 1 and 2: 2023-2024 Investigative Data and Trends per CYFD ROM Data

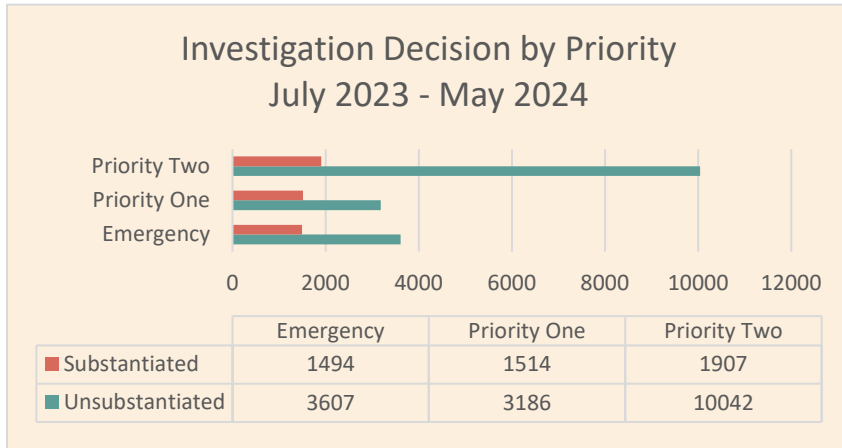


Figure 1

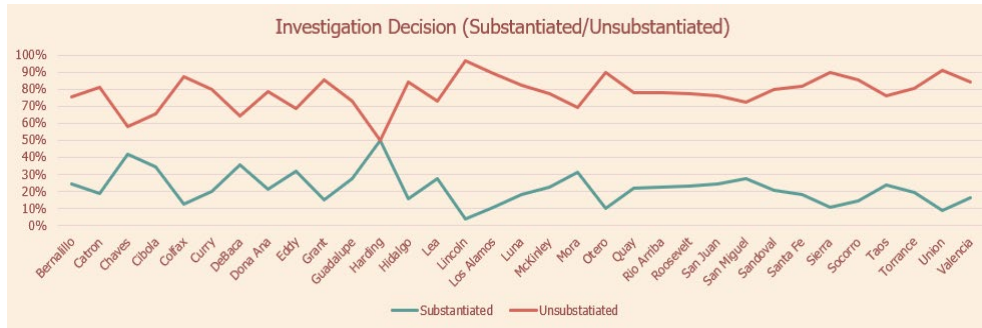


Figure 2

FIGURE 3: COMPLETED INVESTIGATIONS INCLUDING INVESTIGATIVE DECISION FOR 2023

Completed Investigations				
County	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Total Completed Investigations	County % of State Total Investigations
Bernalillo	1710	5261	6971	33.88%
Catron	3	13	16	0.08%
Chaves	249	348	597	2.90%
Cibola	61	117	178	0.87%
Colfax	17	118	135	0.66%
Curry	91	364	455	2.21%
DeBaca	5	9	14	0.07%
Dona Ana	562	2054	2616	12.72%
Eddy	193	418	611	2.97%
Grant	56	325	381	1.85%
Guadalupe	12	32	44	0.21%
Harding	1	1	2	0.01%
Hidalgo	9	48	57	0.28%
Lea	172	460	632	3.07%
Lincoln	6	163	169	0.82%
Los Alamos	6	51	57	0.28%
Luna	58	267	325	1.58%
McKinley	83	282	365	1.77%
Mora	13	29	42	0.20%
Otero	69	625	694	3.37%
Quay	23	82	105	0.51%
Rio Arriba	91	320	411	2.00%
Roosevelt	38	128	166	0.81%
San Juan	314	987	1301	6.32%
San Miguel	79	210	289	1.40%
Sandoval	252	988	1240	6.03%
Santa Fe	135	604	739	3.59%
Sierra	14	122	136	0.66%
Socorro	29	174	203	0.99%
Taos	89	282	371	1.80%
Torrance	40	165	205	1.00%
Union	3	31	34	0.17%
Valencia	162	851	1013	4.92%
New Mexico	4645	15929	20574	100.00%

IN-HOME SERVICES

Depending on the outcome of an investigation decision, an investigation worker may refer the family to CYFD's In-Home Services (I-HS) program. In-Home Services and Intensive Family Services are home based intervention programs used to prevent children coming into foster care when it is determined they can safely remain in their homes with services in place to mitigate risk of further maltreatment. The purpose of the In-Home Services program is to promote safety of children and reduce the risk of the recurrence of maltreatment by their parents, guardians, or custodians without the intervention of the court system. Services are designed to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment, create stability within the home and develop healthy and supportive ongoing community relationships. I-HS is an integrated, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing struggles in family functioning.

In 2019, CYFD collaborated with Capacity Building Center for States to develop a plan to adopt an evidenced-based I-HS program. Through the development of an I-HS Workgroup and collaboration with stakeholders, an evidenced-based model was selected in 2020 (Family Connections through Action 4 Child Protection). CYFD launched the pilot of Family Connections on July 1st, 2021, with intentions of statewide roll out. As of 2023, Family Connections continues to be the model used internally by CYFD, but contracted In Home Services providers are allowed to use a different evidence-based model. CYFD

As part of the organizational restructuring, the In-Home Services Program has been moved under the CYFD Family Services Division. The program continues to operate statewide; some county offices have internal In-Home Services and Intensive Family Support Services workers, however for those counties that do not, the services are contracted out to local community-based providers.

IN-HOME SERVICES DATA

Count of all children on I-HS caseload for CY23 by County			
Region & County		Count of all children on I-HS caseload	
Region 1: Northwest		33	11%
Cibola		18	6%
McKinley		4	1%
Sandoval		11	4%
Region 2: Northeast		31	10%
Colfax		3	1%
Santa Fe		3	1%
Taos		25	8%
Region 3: Bernalillo		168	56%
Bernalillo		168	56%
Region 4: Southeast		7	2%
Curry		7	2%
Region 5: Southwest		55	18%
Dona Ana		53	18%
Otero		2	1%
Unknown		6	2%
Grand Total		300	100%
Source: ROM; In-Home Intact Counts Report			

FOSTER CARE/PERMANENCY PLANNING SERVICES

Permanency planning services (also known as foster care services) are provided when legal intervention is required to protect a child's safety and wellbeing. Legal intervention involves a child in state custody. New Mexico's Children's Code contains the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and other relevant federal laws, to ensure that children and youth who enter foster care do not linger and that timely and appropriate permanency goals (reunification with parents/guardians, kinship guardianship, adoption, or planned permanent living arrangement) are actively pursued and achieved for all children and youth in foster care.

Entry into Custody: A child can enter CYFD custody through court ordered removal or an emergency removal by law enforcement. In the case of emergency removals by law enforcement an abuse/neglect petition must be filed with the district court within two business days of the removal, or the child will be returned to the parent or guardian. Protective Service with CYFD is responsible in making reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of a child from their home, however, the child's safety always takes precedence. When a child enters foster care, Protective Services must make reasonable efforts to prevent removal from their parent, guardian, or custodian; in the case of Indian children and ICWA case, Protective Services must notify the child's Nation, Tribe, or Pueblo and must make active efforts to prevent removal.

Establishing the Permanency Plan and Case Planning Services: Case planning services are provided parent or guardian to mitigate the safety and risk factors that brought the child or youth into custody. Case planning services are provided to children and youth in foster care to address their safety and wellbeing needs, including addressing trauma, mental/behavioral health needs, medical and dental needs, and educational needs. Case planning services also include maintaining the child or youth's family and community connections and helping the child or youth participate or continue to participate in normalizing activities within their schools or communities.

A permanency plan or goal is established for every child in custody. Permanency goals are established by CYFD and accepted by the court. Reunification is the initial plan for each child but may change depending on the progress the parent or guardian is making in their case. Other acceptable plans are adoption, permanent guardianship, placement with a fit and willing relative, and other planned permanent living arrangements.

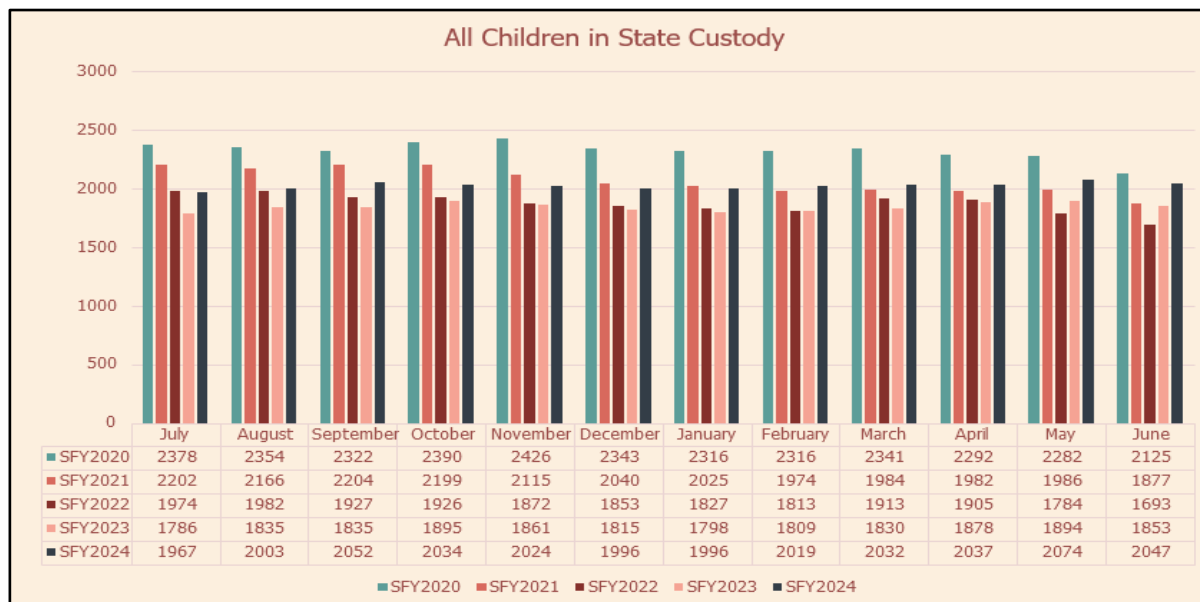
Level of Care: Children's needs are assessed upon entry into foster care to determine an appropriate level of care. The child's level of care determines the maintenance payment amount the resource family receives, identifies the needs of the child, the skill level of the resource family and provides an initial assessment of the needs of the resource family. All children enter foster care as a level 1 placement. Children who have a higher level of need than the general population of children in out of home care and who also require a higher level of supervision and skill by the resource family are eligible for level 2 foster care. Level 3 foster care are for those children with significant medical or behavioral needs who require a significantly and consistently higher level of care from a highly trained caregiver. These are children who would otherwise require hospitalization or institutional placement. Within the next year or two, PSD will be changing their needs assessments to utilize the CANS assessment. The CANS assessment will help determine the level of care of each child that enters the foster care system.

Health Care: Children who are legal residents of the United States in out-of-home care are eligible for Medicaid, either through Title IV-E eligibility, SSI, or state-funded care. Medical care is provided for children who are non-citizens through state funds. Children receive early periodic screening diagnostic and treatment (EPSDT) assessment within the first 30 days of placement; this begins the process to identify any needs they have and begin early intervention. Caseworkers record health care information

in FACTS, the state SACWIS system, and work with the resource family to maintain the child's traveling file to provide for continuity of health care information should the child change placement or exit foster care. Youth emancipating from foster care are provided copies of their health care records.

Resource Families: Protective Services Placement Pillar recruits, trains, licenses, and supports resource families for placement of children in foster care. There is an emphasis on placements with relatives with policy that directs relative placement options to be considered throughout the life of the case. Both relative and non-relative applicants are required to complete the same set of licensing criteria, including a criminal records check, training, a home safety check list, and a mutual assessment process to identify the strengths of the applicant and their appropriateness for caring for children in state custody. PSD policy and procedure detail the requirements for local, state and federal criminal record checks for applicants. Criminal background checks and abuse and neglect checks are also required for any adult residing in the home of the applicant. PSD provides foster care maintenance payments to resource families as financial reimbursement for the care of children placed in their home. Maintenance payments are supported by both general funds and Title IV-E funds.

FOSTER CARE DATA AND TRENDS PER CYFD ROM DATA

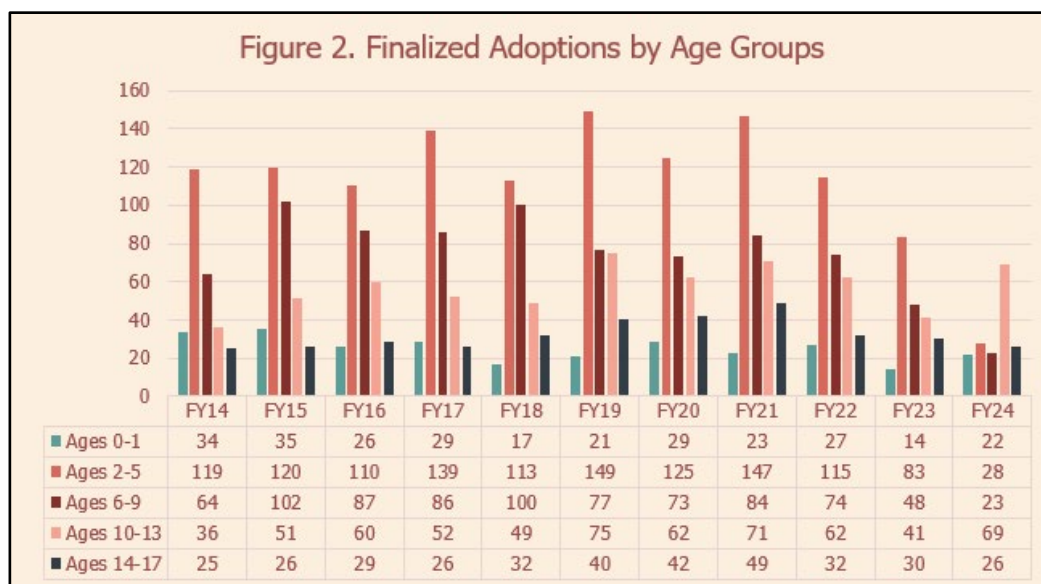
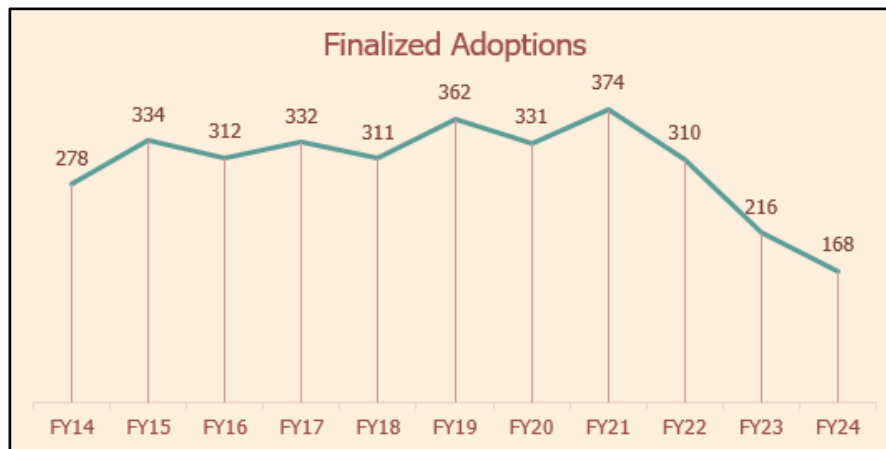


Placement Types of Children in Care at the End of State Fiscal Years					
	SFY2020	SFY2021	SFY2022	SFY2023	SFY2024
Pre-Adoptive Home	111	82	45	21	27
Foster Family Home (Relative)	649	669	704	826	864
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	1067	829	717	752	771
Group Home	48	72	50	68	89
Institution	87	72	51	36	33
Supervised Independent Living	7	4	3	9	9
Runaway	35	34	43	45	48
Trial Home Visit	107	109	64	82	91
Unknown	12	4	9	10	108
NULL	2	2	7	4	7
Total	2125	1877	1693	1853	2047

ADOPTION

When it is determined that a child cannot be safely reunited with their parent or guardian the Protective Services Permanency Coordinator works to identify an adoptive resource that will meet the child's unique needs and provide a nurturing, stable family environment. Protective Services policy is for primary placement and adoption by relatives first. The same licensing standards are applied to both relatives and non-relatives with some waivers put in place for relatives. It is the goal of the Protective Services Placement Pillar to minimize the trauma associated with changes in placement by implementing concurrent planning and encouraging adoption of children by their current resource families. Title IV-E adoption subsidies and State funded adoption subsidies are provided for children and youth who meet special needs criteria in an effort to promote stable adoptions and avoid adoption disruption and re-entry into foster care.

ADOPTION DATA AND TRENDS PER CYFD ROM DATA



GUARDIANSHIP

CYFD provides guardianship assistance payments to relatives and fictive kin who have assumed legal guardianship of children for whom they have previously cared for as Resource Parents. When reunification or adoption are not successful or viable, CYFD may establish a legal guardianship with a relative or fictive kin resource parent to provide a permanent home for a child. Since guardianships do not require termination of parental rights, the child continues to benefit from the relationship with their family while gaining the stability of a permanent home.

ICWA and Kinships Guardianships: If a child is an Indian child as defined by ICWA, CYFD immediately gives notice to the tribe or pueblo of the plan or intent to pursue kinship guardianship. CYFD follows the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) placement preferences, unless there is good cause to deviate. If the Indian Tribe or Pueblo placement preferences differ from ICWA, then CYFD will comply with the preferences of the Indian Tribe or Pueblo. Guardianship may be a preferred permanency option, instead of adoption, for Indian children.

Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) to Kinship Guardianship: If a child is in CYFD custody under a VPA, and cannot return home, CYFD may pursue kinship guardianship if the child has been placed with licensed relative or fictive kin for at least six months, the parent or legal guardian consents, and a guardianship is the appropriate permanency plan for the child.

FY 2024 GUARDIANSHIP DATA PER CYFD ROM DATA

County	Finalized Guardianships FY24
Bernalillo	15
Catron	0
Chaves	2
Cibola	6
Colfax	2
Curry	1
De Baca	0
Dona Ana	8
Eddy	8
Grant	0
Guadalupe	0
Harding	0
Hidalgo	0
Lea	8
Lincoln	1
Los Alamos	1
Luna	0
McKinley	2
Mora	0
Otero	3
Quay	0
Rio Arriba	0
Roosevelt	0
San Juan	2
San Miguel	2
Sandoval	9
Santa Fe	1
Sierra	0
Socorro	2
Taos	11
Torrance	0
Union	0
Valencia	7
ICPC	1
State	92

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

When an allegation of child abuse or neglect is received, Statewide Central Intake (SCI) uses a Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool to either screen in or screen out allegations of child abuse and/or neglect. Reports that are screened by a SCI intake worker is assigned a priority (Emergency, Priority 1, and Priority 2), the report is assigned to one the 33 county offices across the state depending on the location of the allegation. Once the county office receives the report from SCI, depending on the prioritization, an investigator is assigned and initiates the investigation. CYFD Protective Services Division (PSD) assesses the strengths of needs, to include service's needs, of families throughout the investigation process. When all reasonable efforts have been made to keep the child safely in their home have failed, CYFD petitions the court for removal from the child's home through an ex – parte custody order to remove the child from their home and place the child into a licensed resource home. In some circumstances, a parent or guardian can agree to sign a voluntary placement agreement and temporarily place the child into a licensed resource home while the parent or guardian works with CYFD to safely bring the child back into the home.

Home-Based Prevention Services (Children At Risk of Removal from their Homes)

CYFD offers Home-Based Prevention Services to children who are considered at risk for maltreatment or entering foster care. At the completion of an investigation, the investigation worker assesses the child's risk and safety in the home. If the risk is high and the assessment is safe, the investigation worker refers the In-Home Services or Intensive Family Support Services. Case management is provided to the family and child either through a contracted provided with CYFD or by CYFD directly.

The purpose of Home-Based Prevention Services is to promote the safety of children, reduce the risk and reduce the recurrence of maltreatment of children by their parent and/or guardian without the intervention of the courts. These prevention services are:

1. An integrated, trauma informed, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing problems in family functioning; and
2. A service provided to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment.

Home-Based Prevention Services include In-Home Services, Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS), Family Support Services (FSS) and Community-based Intervention, Prevention and Reunification (CBIPR) services.

A transfer staffing occurs at any time that a case is being transferred from one unit to another. The purpose of the staffing is to facilitate a smooth transition and minimize disruption of services for the child and family. A transfer staffing is appropriate when a case moves from investigation to permanency planning or in-home services. At least one supervisor from either unit attends the transfer staffing; however, best practice is to include both supervisors. The worker transferring the case documents the staffing in FACTS prior to the transfer.

The Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) model provides families (including adoptive, foster, and extended family relationships) who are in crisis, and intensive, wraparound support is needed in order to prevent child abuse/neglect and maintain the child(ren) safely with their family of origin. Referrals may be accepted from CYFD Protective Services or internal case transfers from the Family Support

Service model. Families that have unsubstantiated cases of abuse or neglect must have CYFD Prevention & Initiatives Bureau approval prior to enrolling the family into this level of service.

Families who are screened out at the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department's (CYFD) Statewide Central Intake (SCI) may still have needs. These families may not know how to access services and may not see CYFD itself as a resource. To bridge this gap, CYFD partnered with community providers to create the Family Outreach (FO) community response program. Combined with community engagement, CYFD hopes that FO will meet family needs through access to and provision of services, leading in the long term to diversion from child protective services (CPS) and improved well-being for families and children. In 2024, Family Outreach was reorganized into the new Family Services Division. Family Outreach now serves 25 of the 33 counties statewide, connecting families with services and resources in their area to address their needs. Family Outreach sees a high volume of referrals for assistance with basic needs, such as food, utility and housing insecurity.

Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention Services

Services and programs geared towards serving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault were administered, monitored and/or supported through the CYFD Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Domestic Violence (DV) Unit, but under the CYFD structural reorganizations the DV unit is now under the umbrella of the Family Services Division. The DV Unit continues to provide the same level of oversight, support, and service coordination that it did under the BHS. Domestic Violence prevention and intervention services are provided at all stages of an CYFD case.

CYFD BHS provides funding, program support, oversight, and standards for immediate shelter and supportive services for survivors of domestic and dating violence and their dependents including specialized services for abused parents and their children. Accounting for approximately 55% of all public and private domestic violence funding in New Mexico, CYFD-funded service providers served 10,800 survivors and their dependents in FY21. Supplementary funding supports the Children's Capacity Building Project, which is an ongoing effort to enhance the quality and depth of responses to children in domestic violence programs throughout New Mexico. CYFD also provides oversight and funding for DV offender treatment programs, to reduce future incidents of domestic and dating violence and will be developing concentrated coordinated community response efforts in select communities in the coming years. One innovative project is the implementation of the Safe & Together Model in New Mexico, which focuses on culture change withing protective services to focus on the perpetrator pattern of abuse and partnering with protective parents.

A pilot project in Doña Ana County dramatically increased communication and collaboration between the domestic violence service provider and CYFD Protective Services and has the overarching goals of reducing removals and increasing safety of children in families experiencing domestic violence.

Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) Plans of Care

When a newborn in New Mexico has been identified with substance exposure, as evidenced by toxicology results of the newborn or mother, or when a caregiver discloses substance use during the pregnancy, a plan of care (POC) shall be created in accordance with the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery (CARA) Act of 2016. The purpose of the POC is to establish guidelines for protective services division (PSD) staff, managed care organizations (MCOs), care coordinators, and other professionals who come into contact, or who are working with substance exposed infants, and their caregivers to provide comprehensive support and services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the family. CYFD works with the New Mexico Department of Health and the New Mexico Healthcare Authority in implementing the

creation of plans of care at New Mexico birthing hospitals across the state. Plans of Care are assigned to and followed up on by the state's Managed Care Organizations under contracts with the New Mexico Healthcare Authority. CARA Plans of Care can be developed and implemented at all stages of a CYFD case.

Assessment of Strengths and Needs and Determining Other Service Needs

Family Services Division (FSD) is a new division born out of the recent organizational restructuring. Family Services offers prevention services, family outreach/differential response, In-Home Services and Intensive Family Support Services, and the CARA plan of safe care program. These services are designed to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment, create stability within the home and develop healthy and supportive ongoing community relationships. Family Services is an integrated, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing struggles in family functioning. In-Home Services does not have a waitlist.

CYFD is the behavioral health authority for all children in New Mexico. CYFD Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is the lead on children's behavioral health policy in collaboration with other State Agencies to include the Human Services Department (HSD), Department of Health (DOH), Public Education Department (PED), Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), and the Behavioral Health Collaborative (BHC). BHS staff provide technical assistance and consultation with providers and other CYFD colleagues serving children and youth who are:

- At-risk of CYFD custody
- Involved with CYFD
- Post-CYFD involvement
- Never involved with CYFD

CYFD BHS oversees the development, implementation, and expansion of the **NM High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) model**. "Wraparound is an intensive holistic method of engaging with individuals with complex needs so that they can live in their homes and communities and realize their hopes and dreams."

In SFY'23, NM High Fidelity Wraparound continued in ten (10) sites; Guidance Center of Lea County (Lea County), Mental Health Resources (Roosevelt County), New Day (Bernalillo County), All Faiths (Bernalillo and Valencia Counties), Desert View (San Juan and McKinley Counties), La Casa (Chaves County), and UNM Behavioral Health (Sandoval County). Outcomes of HFW include reduced costs of care for community-based care versus out-of-home placements and less out of state placements; access to more community-based services; improved school attendance and performance; increased behavioral and emotional strengths; improved clinical and functional outcomes; reduced suicide attempts; and decreased contacts with law enforcement. High Fidelity Wraparound was approved for inclusion on the Medicaid Fee Schedule beginning July 1, 2023.

Youth Ages 14-26

When youth must enter foster care, they deserve a holistic relational-based approach to engagement that provides an effective safety net and a developmentally appropriate/identity affirming support system as they transition into adulthood. Through Fostering Connections (FC), New Mexico provides a continuum of services for eligible youth and young adults between the ages of 14 and 26 years old, including:

- Transition planning services for youth in foster care ages 14 to 18;

- Extended Foster Care (EFC) services for young adults who aged out of foster care between the ages of 18 and 21;
- Services for youth and young adults who were adopted from the foster care system or achieved permanency through guardianship at sixteen years of age or older; and
- Aftercare Services for young adults ages 21 to 26 years old.

Fostering Connections (FC) is committed to the creation and implementation of a child welfare system that meets the needs of youth and young adults by ensuring staff and stakeholder understanding of adolescent development, the impact of trauma, authentic youth-adult partnerships, and by identifying exposure gaps and providing access to opportunities that address these gaps and support young people to thrive into adulthood. Fostering Connections staff believes young people and their families are not simply clients but are powerful catalysts for change in their own lives and are partners in changing the systems that impact their lives. Fostering Connections is available in every county of New Mexico.

Work with Other State and Federal Agencies

- **Medical Assistance Division (MAD) of Health Care Authority (HCA):**
 - Biweekly Meetings: The Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit meets with MAD Quality Bureau and other MAD staff to discuss tracking needs and services for Children in State Custody (CISC) as part of the Kevin S Settlement Agreement. These meetings provide opportunities for discussion and preparation of the roll out of the new Medicaid Turquoise Care program beginning July 1, 2024. As part of this transition, all CISC will be assigned to one Managed Care Organization instead of assigned across three different Managed Care organizations.
 - Quarterly Meetings: The Title IV-E/Medicaid unit and Fostering Connection have quarterly meetings with the MAD Eligibility staff to discuss issues around eligibility and maintenance of Medicaid for Children in State Custody (CISC) and youth that age of foster care at age 26, or youth that come to New Mexico who have aged out of foster care from another state.
- **Department of Health (DOH):** In FY 2022, CYFD provided the New Mexico Department of Health \$200,000 in CBCAP and CAPTA America Rescue Plan Act funding to support a statewide Safe Sleep campaign. CYFD staff continue to participate in the statewide Safe Sleep Campaign which has included media awareness and advertising (social media, radio, billboards, pamphlets, bus ads, etc.). DOH, CYFD, and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department have collaborated to provide pack n' plays and baby boxes to hospitals across the state. CYFD plans to support DOH to expand distribution of safe sleep materials including pack n' plays and baby boxes to service providers across the state and to Protective Services county offices over the next five years. CYFD has members on three of the five panels of the New Mexico Death Review which was established in 1998 and re-compiled in 2001 to examine the circumstances that contribute to the deaths of infants, children, and youth in New Mexico. Each Death Review Panel brings together multidisciplinary teams of experts from professional and community agencies to systematically evaluate information on maternal and child death events as well as identify risk factors in these deaths. These panels focus on systems changes that lead to greater collaborative efforts and improvements in maternal health and safety and/or child health and safety. Cases are grouped by the type of death events and reviewed accordingly by the following panels: suicide, unintentional deaths, maternal mortality review (MMR), the fetal and infant mortality review (FIMR) and child fatality review (CFR). The NMCFR releases an annual report that is posted to the New Mexico Department of Health public website. Case identifying information surrounding maternal and child fatalities is confidential.

CYFD also collaborates with the Department of Health on the implementation and creation of CARA Plans of Care for newborns born substance exposed at birth. DOH provides support in training and providing technical assistance to birthing hospitals around the state in filling out plans of care and ensuring the plan of care is assigned to the correct Managed Care Organization. DOH's Family and Health Bureau provides support and direct services to women and newborns with a plan of care through the following programs: Children's Medical Services, Women Infants and Children (WIC), and Maternal and Child Health.

- **Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD):** The Early Childhood Education and Care Department is the stand-alone agency that administers programs and services for children aged 0 to 5. CYFD Family Services Division continues to partner with ECECD in supplementing their services with home-based and evidence-based prevention services to families with children ages 0 to 5 through the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs. Collaborative efforts include:
 - **Family Support Services:** Target services will be prioritized for parents and secondary caregivers who have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
 - **Infant Mental Health Teams:** CYFD Behavioral Health Services is partnering with ECECD providers for the provision of infant mental health services.
 - **Families FIRST:** A perinatal case management program which assists clients in gaining access to medical, social, and educational services that are necessary to foster positive pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infants and children.
 - **Home Visiting Including the Neonatal Intensive Care Home Visiting Services:** A prevention program for families to receive support prenatally through their child's third/fifth birthday. The provider visits the family in their home (or setting of comfort) to share resources, support the caregivers, partner with the family to complete screenings, and develop goals for the child and family to guide services.
 - **Early Intervention:** Intervention that serves families of infants and toddlers with, or at-risk of, developmental delays. Children under the age of 3 who are the subject of a substantiated report of child maltreatment are referred to the state's early intervention program, Family Infant Toddler (FIT), for an assessment.
 - **Child and Family Nutrition Programs:** Nutrition programs that contribute to the healthy growth, development, and wellness of young children and adults through nutrition support services in New Mexico. The Summer Food Service Program serves children ages 1-18; the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serves all ages.
 - **Childcare Assistance:** New Mexico subsidizes the cost of childcare for eligible families/children ages 6 weeks to 13 years (up to 18 if special supervision is required).
 - **NM PreK:** The NM PreK program prepares three and four-year-old children for school readiness.
- **Social Security Administration:** CYFD has one Youth Disability Specialist that works with older youth under Fostering Connections, and one Social Security Liaison within the Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit that works with children aged 0 to 15. As part of the CYFD organizational restructuring, the Office of Children's Rights has become the Office of Advocacy. This office is currently building capacity to assist with applying for and assisting the Permanency Planning Pillar and Fostering Connections staff navigating sometime very complex process with the goal of obtaining disability and social security benefits for those children and youth who are in need. CYFD also has a contract

with New Mexico Legal Aid, whose attorneys assist CYFD staff in applying for and navigating the Social Security Administration's processes and programs.

- **Youth Disability Specialist:** This position ensures that older youth with disabilities receive the services needed to successfully transition into adulthood in a developmentally appropriate and identity affirming way. Supports with Development and Disabled (DD) waiver and Supplemental Security (SSI) applications, partners with New Mexico Legal Aid to refer clients for assistance with obtaining SSI and DD waiver benefits, assists with guardianship paperwork, scheduling Neuropsychic appointments and locating safe and appropriate housing options for disabled youth. Serves as an advocate and support person to youth with disabilities in internal and external staffing's and meetings and with community-based partners for opportunities to participate in normative activities that build life skills needed for successful adulthood.
- **Social Security Liaison:** The Social Security Liaison (SSL) manages both RSDI and SSI benefits for children and youth in foster care until age 17. The SSL works with CYFD Administrative Services Division in becoming Representative Payee for children and youth receiving SSI and RSDI. As of 2023, CYFD is no longer using RSDI benefits toward the child or youth's foster care maintenance payment. Separate accounts have been established to hold this money for children and youth and is paid out directly to them or their parent or guardian when that child or youth exits foster care. The SSL work with all the Social Security Office around the state in ensuring on going appointments are attended, paperwork is completed, and that benefits are distributed and utilized correctly.

Services to Help Children in Foster and Adoptive Placement Achieve Permanency

Permanency planning services include services needed to support the parent, guardian, or custodian to manage the safety and risk factors identified during removal of the child. PSD establishes a permanency plan for every child in PSD custody and their caregivers. Reunification is the initial plan each child but may change depending on the case. Other acceptable plans are adoption, permanent guardianship, placement with a fit and willing relative, and other planned permanent living arrangement.

Children's needs are assessed upon entry into foster care to determine an appropriate level of care. The child's level of care determines the maintenance payment amount the resource family receives, identifies the needs of the child, the skill level of the resource family and provides an initial assessment of the needs of the resource family. All children enter foster care as a level 1 placement. Children who have a higher level of need than the general population of children in out of home care and who also require a higher level of supervision and skill by the resource family are eligible for level 2 foster care. Level 3 foster care are for those children with significant medical or behavioral needs who require a significantly and consistently higher level of care from a highly trained caregiver. These are children who would otherwise require hospitalization or institutional placement.

- **Reunification Services**

In 2015, CYFD consolidated the contracted services supported through CBCAP and PSSF funding into the Community Based Prevention, Intervention and Reunification (CBPIR) contracts. Throughout the state except for two counties. The PSSF Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS) funded component of the CBPIR contracts serve families who are in crisis and need intensive, wraparound support to prevent child maltreatment while maintaining the child or children safely with their family of origin. The Family Reunification and Time Limited Reunification Services components of the CBPIR contracts focus on supporting successful reunification of children with their families. Family Reunification Services (FRS) provides parents, relatives, fictive kin, or families pursuing guardianship with supports that assist them in reunifying their child or children from an

out of home placement such as foster care. Time Limited Reunification (TLR) Services are intensive, home-based programs that support families in reunifying with their child or children who are in CYFD custody. TLR includes assisting parents with their court ordered case plans to assist families reunify in an expedited timeframe.

- **Permanency Planning Services**

CYFD utilizes permanency planning services to systematically carry out, within a time-limited period, a set of goal-directed activities designed to help children live in families that offer the continuity of relationships with nurturing parents or guardians and the opportunity to establish lifetime relationships. Protective Services Division (PSD) provides permanency planning services to children or youth who come into the custody of PSD.

Icebreaker meetings are scheduled by the primary PSD caseworker immediately upon the entry of the child into foster care (after the affidavit is filed) or with every new placement. The Icebreaker meeting must be completed as soon as possible, but no later than seven business days after placement of a child in a new resource family home. An Icebreaker meeting provides an opportunity for resource families and the child's family to meet each other and talk about the needs of the child while they are in care. The child's family and resource parents exchange information about themselves and their family routines and traditions. The primary PSD caseworker's supervisor ensures at the next supervisory meeting that the Icebreaker has occurred or there is a plan to conduct an Icebreaker. The PSD supervisor documents in the supervisory note that they discussed Icebreakers in the supervisory staffing with the PSD caseworker.

Every child or youth in out-of-home care will be in a licensed foster homes placement unless a current finding of medical necessity requires otherwise, or an Individualized Planning Process (IPP) meeting determines that a non-clinical setting is in the child's best interest. IPP meetings occur when a child has been placed in congregate care setting either due to medical necessity or it has been determined that placement in a congregate care setting is in the best interest of the child or youth.

These meetings are documented using the Joint Clinical Review Audit Tool (JCRAT) to improve communication, planning, and support amongst members of the team. The IPP Meeting and the JCRAT identifies steps necessary to promote discharge and ensures the team reviews available community-based mental health services and supports that have already been provided or could be provided. The PPW is responsible for coordinating IPP Meetings. The PPW must invite the following individuals to the IPP/teaming Meetings: the child or youth; the child or youth's PPW or primary assigned worker; the PPW or primary assigned worker supervisor; a Community Behavioral Health Clinician (CBHC); the child or youth's Managed Care Organization Care Coordinator or other Care Coordinator representative (if MCO exempt/Fee for Service or private insurance); the child or youth's GAL or Youth Attorney. The PPW may also include the following individuals to the IPP/Teaming Meeting (if applicable): the child or youth's parent or other family members; the Case Manager at the RTC Agency or Group Home; the child or youth's Tribe/Pueblo Representative (when child/youth is an Indian child/youth); a representative from the Office of Tribal Affairs, (when child/youth is an Indian child/youth) and the Mental Health Professional or therapist assigned to the youth. The completed Joint Clinical Review audit tool is uploaded into FACTS under the administrative icon using the appropriate drop down for the type of meeting.

Children are placed in the least restrictive setting consistent with the assessment of their individual needs. When possible, the child is placed in close proximity to his or her home or school of origin. When it may not be possible, or not in the best interest of the child, to be placed in close proximity

to the child's home or school the PPW documents the reasons for not placing a child in close proximity to his or her home or school of origin are documented in FACTS. When a child is not placed in close proximity to his or her home of origin, the PPW maintains or arranges for, bi-weekly contact with the parent, guardian or custodian.

When a child enters the custody of PSD, the PPW or placement worker arranges for or conducts a level of care assessment in FACTS to determine the level of care the child will require. The worker completes the assessment within 30 days of the child entering foster care. The assessment includes, but is not limited to:

1. a physical examination by a medical doctor;
2. a review of any available educational records; and
3. a review of information provided by other professionals currently working with the child or family, such as counselors, therapists, physical therapists, and juvenile probation officers.

The worker re-assesses the child at least once every six months, but reassessment may happen at any time depending on the child's needs. The levels of care are as follows:

1. Level 1: All children entering care enter Level 1 unless the child is determined appropriate for a higher level of eligibility.
2. Level 2: This level of care is for children requiring a higher level of care, structure, or supervision than would be required for a child of similar age or development in foster care. An example of a level 2 child would be a child that requires specialized foster care, treatment foster care or needing to be placed temporarily in a Residential Treatment Center.
3. Level 3: This level of care is for children with significantly high needs and is generally, an alternative to institutional care. An example of a level 3 child would be a child that has a significant disability that requires twenty-four-hour physical and medical care.

- **Community and Cultural Services**

Services available in the communities of New Mexico vary widely from one county to the next, and don't always meet the needs of each family or child who seek services. In particular, rural or frontier areas of the state may have deficient services to address substance abuse, domestic violence, or mental health concerns. Some populations may be underserved due to waitlists, transportation issues, or language barriers. Finally, incarcerated parents often face significant difficulty obtaining appropriate services and supports while they remain in the corrections system.

The Office of Tribal Affairs was created in 2020 and since then it has grown from one person to a staff of 13 to support staff statewide. The objective is to ensure the Department is in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (Federal Law 1978) that mandated changes to address disproportionality. NM as a state adopted a state law that is more robust than ICWA. The State Law is Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA) was passed into law in 2022. This legislation corrects harms to Indian Families by the state. The Office of Tribal Affairs provides case consultation for all cases involving Native American children. Every case is closely monitored to ensure the child is placed in the highest preferred setting, when a child is even in the second-tier placement, monthly meetings are held to identify the unique circumstances contributing to the barriers and challenges of moving the child into a first-tier placement. The whole team works to problem solve to remove those barriers, often times before they occur, to promote the preferred placement.

New Mexico has multiple cultures that are deeply rooted in promoting family and cultural traditions of "supporting our own" to grow as a people. Kinship care helps to preserve children's cultural identity and relationship with their community. New Mexico is committed to ensuring that children

who are being cared for by kinship families have the supports they need. Many of the benefits for children who stay with their kin include better medical outcomes, the severity of childhood trauma is limited, and fewer children end up separated from their siblings. CYFD recognizes the long standing and well-documented need for kinship caregivers when children and youth cannot stay with their biological parents, to prevent removal, during foster care placements, and through guardianships or adoption.

CYFD currently implements contracts that provide a coordinated and comprehensive array of resources for relative and kinship caregivers of children to increase stability in the family setting, allow children to remain connected to their families and culture, and reduce long term effects of childhood trauma. These services are available for any individual who is a relative(s), godparent(s), member(s) of a child's tribe or clan, or an adult with significant bond (fictive kin) who are raising child(ren) or youth, because the biological parent(s) are not able or unwilling to do so. The individual does not have to have legal standing of the child(ren) to qualify for services.

Partnership with SHARE New Mexico provides members of our community with statewide listings of resources for grandparents and other relatives caring for children. All direct and supplemental services are available in English and Spanish. Language Access Services are available as well to ensure information is available in any language. Stakeholders provided feedback the multi-lingual pay differential of \$.10 cents an hour is not competitive enough to recruit Spanish speaking staff. Some staff reported they are multi-lingual but have refused the multi-lingual differential pay citing the minimal compensation as inadequate for the increased responsibilities it entails.

- **Services to Older Youth and Young Adults**

Throughout FY24, Fostering Connections remained focused on these six core areas and achieved continued progress in the expansion and deepening of interagency and community-based partnerships needed to better meet the needs of youth aging out of care:

1. **Implementation of Extended Foster Care:** FY23 was the final year of implementation of New Mexico's Extended Foster Care program. Beginning July 1, 2023, all youth who age out of foster care between the ages of 18 and 21 and meet the eligibility criteria for the program are supported by NM's EFC program through the application of Active Efforts to effectuate their transition plans. An unfortunate oversight in the state law created an eligibility gap for youth who age out of care on a Voluntary Placement Agreement or without having been adjudicated. CYFD attempted to close this eligibility gap during the 2023 legislative session. These efforts were unsuccessful, resulting in a creative solution to ensure access for all youth to the services and support needed for a successful transition to adulthood. To that end, in 2024, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed an executive order to allow all young people who were in foster care the day prior to their 18th birthday. Over the past 4 years of implementation, Fostering Connections has provided 359 individuals with extended foster care housing first, maintenance payments and 61 of 359 have been issued the parenting maintenance payment. As of May 1st, 2024, \$4,044,200 has been distributed for basic rate payments and \$1,258,413.01 has been distributed to young parents.
2. **Expansion and Refinement of the Housing Array for Youth/Young Adults:** Partnerships are solidified with multiple community-based providers to operate a variety of housing options for older youth and young adults. In FY24 Fostering Connections focused on supporting providers to iterate current programs where needed to better support the needs of participants, expanding programming where possible, and developing new partnerships to support the housing needs of specialized populations in the following areas:

- a. **Transitional Living for Young Adults (TYLA):** Two additional TYLA program were added, the first was to focus on the LGBTQ+ community to provide an elevated, supportive, and equipped environment for LGBTQ+ youth and emerging adults. The second programs is focused on primarily supporting young people who have complications of substance use or at increased risk of substance use. These programs provides safe and stable housing while allowing participants to focus on developing the skills and strategies needed for their transition to adulthood. With the addition of these programs, Fostering Connections now contracts with eight community-based agencies to provide supportive housing programs throughout New Mexico. Additionally, each community based agency has expanded their models to include on-site and off-site options to create more opportunities for participants to leverage their strengths to ensure their individual needs are met. In total, these programs provide 94 housing opportunities for our youth and young adults.
- b. **Transitions Supportive Housing Program (State Funded Vouchers):** Fostering Connections contracts with two community-based providers to provide housing-choice vouchers for young people and their identified family across the state. One program provides vouchers and services to young adults in the Albuquerque Metro area and the other provides vouchers and services to young adults residing in the balance of the state. The statewide program provides up to 35 housing vouchers and case management services for young people ages 18 to 21 with a mental health diagnosis. This program not only supports young people who experienced the foster care system but also young people who have experienced the Juvenile Justice system.
- c. **Expansion of HUD-Funded Vouchers:** CYFD has signed MOUs with local housing authorities to provide Fostering Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers for young adults in Torrance, Socorro, Valencia, Cibola, San Juan, Santa Fe, and Sandoval counties. Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers are utilized and available for young adults in Dona Ana and Bernalillo counties. CYFD and Fostering Connections hosted monthly collaborative meetings with the Housing Authority, HUD, and the office of the Secretary to discuss barriers with accessing vouchers and the process from FY21 through FY23. Fostering Connections has continued monthly collaborative meetings with the Housing Authority, HUD to discuss status of the current applications submitted.
- d. **Emergency Hotel Support:** Fostering Connections continues to issue emergency hotel vouchers through State General Funds and/or partnerships with New Day, Life Link, New Mexico Dream Center, First Nations, Strengthening Nations Domestic Violence, Haven House, and the Barrett House. This support ensures that no young adults experiences homelessness or a stay in an adult shelter while working to secure safe and stable housing. This is combined with a process to ensure that we are making efforts to partner with the young person to secure safe and stable housing with a plan to maintain during the time in a hotel.
- e. **Populations Needing Increased Support:** Fostering Connections continues to cultivate partnerships with local housing providers that serve special populations; including young families, young people who identify as LBGTQ+, victims of human trafficking, and rapid re-housing for young people with chronic mental health conditions and homelessness.
- f. **NM Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC):** Fostering Connections continues to partner with NM CVRC to provide emergency rent and relocation funding for youth aging out of foster care or who are victims of crime after the age of 18. These funds specifically support emergency housing (for victims of interpersonal violence), storage and/or moving

expenses, and deposit/rent for those eligible for this program. The Fostering Connections Compliance and Systems Manager serves as the liaison to this program.

- g. **Landlord Collaboration Program:** In FY24 Fostering Connections continued its implementation of the highly successful Landlord Collaboration Program. Currently, Fostering Connections contracts with three community-based agencies in Albuquerque, Taos, and Santa Fe to fund Landlord Liaison positions responsible for developing and deepening relationships with landlords to provide high-quality rental opportunities and stable tenancies for young people aging out of foster care. Additionally, through an intergovernmental agency agreement, CYFD provides funding to the Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) to operate a Risk Mitigation Fund. This fund provides reimbursement to landlords for lost revenue that occurs during tenancy, including property damages, improvements necessary to meet HUD standards, unexpected vacancy, and flex funds for utility payments. In FY23, key community stakeholders, including the Albuquerque Community Foundation, began exploring statewide expansion and recurring state funding for the program. This will program will continue through FY25 for ongoing support.
 - h. **Analysis of Housing Needs:** Lastly, in FY24 Fostering Connections contracted with two providers to conduct in-depth analyses of the housing needs of young people in New Mexico. One contract focused on the housing arrays provided by current providers and the second is conducting an in-depth needs assessment and count of the youth homeless population in southern New Mexico. The second contractor, University of New Mexico's Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) conducted a similar assessment and count in the Albuquerque Metro area that resulted in the City of Albuquerque funding a project to create a shelter for emerging adults ages 18 to 25 years old. Additionally, the County of Bernalillo is exploring the use of a tiny-house community for this same population. The results that were provided in the FY24 assessment will be utilized to further housing options for transition aged youth in regions 4 and 5. Fostering Connections will continue to work with community stakeholders to further ensure housing needs are met.
3. **Increasing Access to Community Based Medical and Behavioral Health Services:** In addition to efforts being made by CYFD's Behavioral Health Services Division and the Human Services Department to expand NM's behavioral health services for children in state custody, Fostering Connections has ensured that all TLYA contracts include deliverables around supporting access to medical and behavioral health services. Fostering Connections held a contract with a provider in the Albuquerque Metro area to provide Comprehensive Community Support Services, Wraparound services, and other therapeutic services for young people who aged out of foster care. This contract was executed during the pandemic to ensure increased support was available for young people exiting the foster care system. This contract ensured access to these services without lengthy waitlists. Fostering Connections continues its partnership with Children Medical Services to provide private flight services (angel flight) for undocumented youth to ensure access to life-saving medical care in Albuquerque without the barrier of traveling through immigration checkpoints outside of Las Cruces, NM. Lastly, Fostering Connections continues to deepen its partnership with home visiting programs for our first-time young parents to provide education around parenting infants and to provide additional resources needed (e.g., access to formula and other nutritional benefits, bassinets, and safe sleep education and options, etc.). In FY24, Fostering Connections deepened its partnerships with community providers by way of Baby Showers for expecting and young parents to support with warm handoffs and education of community services. In FY24 LUVYA also held statewide convenings where community providers were able to connect with young people about the

resources that are available. In FY24 CYFD worked in partnership with the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) to establish a single MCO to provide medical and behavioral health services that specializes in supporting young people impacted by the foster care system which successfully led to this program being rolled out in FY25.

4. ***Support and Opportunities to Reconnect with Siblings and Other Relatives:*** While CYFD continues to roll out kinship care and Individualized Planning Process (IPP) to ensure greater familial and cultural connections for children/youth in care, Fostering Connections utilizes social media searches and the Circle of Support tool with young people to support (re)connection with relatives. Using the Circle of Support tool, youth/young adults easily identify family and fictive kin they want to know more about or have lost connection with. With this information, Fostering Connections Specialists assist youth with building connections with those they identify. Fostering Connections regularly supports young people in accessing housing options that allow siblings to remain together or to reunite, including supporting young adults in becoming foster care placements for their younger siblings still in care. Additionally, CYFD accesses Embassies and Consulates to assist in contacting familial connections residing in other countries and to support the (re)development of these relationships.
5. ***Life skill Development Services:*** In FY24, Fostering Connections continued partnerships with community providers to coordinate holiday parties in several counties across the state with a focus on community building and pro-social peer interactions. “HotSpot for the Holidays” provided food, free Wi-Fi and tablets for those individuals that are enrolled in Medicaid. Cooking classes, financial literacy, housing research, expectations of being a tenant, costs of apartments, accessing other housing options and knowing about the shelters available in each area of the state, additional life skills courses like financial literacy, cooking classes, programs to obtain a GED, connecting with ECECD for childcare assistance, and skills for obtaining a job are hosted by HotSpot, Heart Gallery, LUVYA and Chavez County CASA. When possible, these courses are also provided through online platforms to increase access. Fostering Connections supports young people in acquiring technology to participate in these activities through its ongoing partnership with One Simple Wish. A New Day also provides a variety of monthly virtual life skills opportunities for young people. Fostering Connections requires life skills development in all TLYA contracts and holds contracts with providers in Las Cruces and Roswell to provide drop-in center services and life skills for youth/young adults residing in those communities. The Las Cruces program specializes in providing affirming support for young people who identify as LGBTQ+. There are two drop-in centers in the Albuquerque area currently. Fostering Connections has also made further efforts to shift the narrative around life skill development. This is done both by engaging one on one with young people or providing education to permanency coordinators and resource parents about engaging young people in navigating real life situations and identifying the skills present.
6. ***Expanded Supports and Service Coordination for Youth with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities:*** CYFD renewed its partnership and updated its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Aging and Long-Term Services Division, the Department of Health’s Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver program, the Office of Adult Guardianship, community-based housing providers including Intermediary Care Facilities and Community-Homes, and the Disabilities Right of New Mexico. This partnership and MOU ensure CYFD honors the agency of young people with disabilities by recommending and pursuing least-restrictive co-decision-making services necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our young people with disabilities.

CYFD currently holds a contract with New Mexico Legal Aid to ensure youth have access to needed Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. This program helps young people complete the

SSDI application and appeal denials when necessary. Fostering Connections Specialists and the Disability Specialist actively supports youth and young people through the application processes for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver. The Fostering Connections Disability Specialist collaborates closely with department attorneys, including the Office of Children's Rights, for guidance to file documentation, partners with external agencies to collect medical records, and facilitates case staffing's to ensure timely completion of tasks and critical deadlines. They also hold monthly meetings with the Department of Health (DOH) to discuss and address barriers to accessing the DD Waiver and services provided under this program. Other supportive services are offered in the areas of adult guardianship, representative payee services and other co-decision-making support services, and placement services for young people that require higher levels of support.

STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

CYFD has historically spent Title IV-B Subpart 1 funds on efforts to keep families together. Funding covers a preventive effort through the In-Home Services program so that, if possible, children will not have to be removed from their homes. When children cannot safely remain in their homes, removal from the home and placement in foster care may be warranted. CYFD case workers work toward reunification as the preferred permanency goal, but in some instances reunification may not be possible. CYFD case workers will explore guardianship or adoption as the second preferred permanency options and will actively seek out to place and case plan with relatives and fictive kin toward guardianship or adoption. Case planning and permanency planning services are available to children and their families without regard to income.

MARY LEE ALLEN PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES

Community Based Prevention, Intervention and Reunification (CBPIR) contractors are community providers familiar to CYFD staff, other community-based service providers, and the families who are or have received the services. As part of the organizational restructuring, the Prevention Unit moved under Family Services Division and continues to provide oversight and technical assistance to CBPIR contract providers. The Prevention Unit continues collects data to assist in identification what worked well overall and what areas are needing improvement regarding the primary and secondary prevention services supported through CBCAP and the FSS placement prevention services supported through PSSF. As a result, the Prevention Unit will be able to identify specific areas the contract providers need additional training, support and/or technical assistance.

CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

The continuum of services funded through the Title IV-B Subpart 2 Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program is complemented by other services provided to children, youth, and families by the Family Services Division through state general funds and other funding sources. The Family Services

Division allocates 20% of PSSF funds for each of the four allowable services: Family Support Services, Family Preservation Services, Time-Limited Reunification Services and Adoption Promotion and Support. In addition, 10% of PSSF funds are allocated for administrative costs which include the salaries and operating costs of program managers who are administering the delivery of these services statewide. The remaining 10%, are other service-related activities are allocated for program support costs which includes training, evaluation, CQI, CFSR and staff recruitment and retention. CBPIR contracts provide family support services, family preservation services, time limited reunification and primary and secondary prevention services. Community Based Child Abuse and Prevention (CBCAP) funded services within the CBPIR contracts include both primary and secondary prevention services

Primary Prevention Services: For the primary prevention component of CBPIR, the contract providers are expected to promote and increase child abuse prevention awareness in their local communities through activities such as active participation in community-wide public awareness events and campaigns, educational presentations, and coordinating at least three child abuse prevention awareness events each year with at least one occurring in April. Service contracts are available in rural areas and fit the different needs of families.

Secondary Prevention Services: The New Mexico Placement Prevention Service Models encompass the Family Preservation services and Family Support Services, which are designed to safely maintain children in the home, alleviate the need for removal and to prevent disruption from their home and families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families). Placement Prevention Service Models consist of Secondary Prevention Services (SPS), which are primarily supported by CBCAP funds, Family Support Services (FSS), and Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS). All services performed by providers must meet the linguistic needs of each family. All providers are given the required forms by CYFD, including versions in Spanish, allowing for Spanish-only speakers an easier time in reviewing their family file, should they wish to do so.

The Secondary Prevention Services (SPS) model is designed to provide individual, one-on-one support to improve parent-child interaction, healthy child development, and parent/caregivers' knowledge to meet their children's developmental needs.

- Each family will undergo a comprehensive Family Assessment that identifies the family's strengths, supports, and needs.
- The Family Assessment is an ongoing practice and includes an analysis of the family's dynamics, environmental factors, mental health status (including confirmed diagnoses), social history, safety, risk factors, education background, medical history, substance use history, and other pertinent information that will help identify family needs.
- If a family has unmet mental health needs or untreated substance use disorders, the provider will ensure those needs are met by providing mental health or substance abuse services on-site or by making a referral to another mental health or substance abuse services provider. All behavioral health services must be provided by licensed professionals who are trained to deliver trauma-focused, evidence-based treatment.

SPS eligible families are those who have children 0-5 years of age and do not have an open CYFD Protective Services investigation unless the child has a Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) Program Plan of Safe Care at the time of birth by hospital medical personnel due to prenatal substance exposure.

Performance Measures for Secondary Prevention Services:

1. Ninety percent (90%) of families served will not be the subject of substantiated child maltreatment while receiving services, nor within six (6) months of close of services.

2. Eighty percent (80%) of families served in each fiscal year will complete an evidence-based/informed parenting curriculum.

INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES SERVED

Family Preservation Services, Family Support Services and Reunification Services are provided statewide in all 33 counties.

	Families Served			Children Served			Adults Served		
	FFY2022	FFY2023	FFY2024	FFY2022	FFY2023	FFY2024	FFY2022	FFY2023	FFY2024
Family Preservation	350	198	213	856	511	371	542	289	219
Family Support Services	619	444	633	1429	1043	1239	889	623	769
Reunification	135	63	36	294	123	69	155	60	49
Total	1104	705	882	2579	1677	1679	1586	972	1037

As has historically been the case, Family Support Services continues to be the highest utilized services followed by Family Preservation Services with TLR services continuing to remain the least utilized service. CYFD continues to emphasize prevention efforts which seems to account for the significant decrease in the TLR services. The Family Services Division will, however, meet with the Office of Performance and Accountability to further analyze the data to determine if there were any additional factors that contributed to the notably low utilization of TLR.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

As previously noted, CYFD consolidated the contracted services supported through CBCAP and PSSF funding into the Community Based Prevention, Intervention and Reunification (CBPIR) contracts. These contracts are approaching the completion of the first year since being executed. The PSSF Family Support Services (FSS) funded component of the CBPIR contracts focuses on placement prevention and are available in all 33 counties. PSSF FSS is designed to safely maintain children in their home. Contractor providers use the information they gather during the warm hand-off, from the family members and a comprehensive assessment to determine the level of case management most appropriate for the family's needs. Families who can be considered for PSSF FSS include those who have unsubstantiated or substantiated cases of child abuse and/or neglect and need support and case management services to prevent child maltreatment. Eligible families include relative and non-relative foster and adoptive families, and referrals can be made by CYFD PSD and JJS staff, CYFD funded Home Visiting Level II programs, licensed childcare facilities, and New Mexico Pre-K providers; however, other referral sources can be considered and must be approved by CYFD. In addition, referrals made by PSD staff must be given priority by the contract providers. Families can receive PSSF FSS services for up to six months. The Prevention and Initiative Bureau has been regularly monitoring the CBPIR contracts using monthly reports and caseload data; and the unit staff have resumed on site technical assistance visits with contract providers. During the site visits, the Family Services Division reviews client files, fiscal and employee files and conducts interviews with contract provider staff, PSD field staff and families whenever possible. The Prevention and Initiative Bureau, along with the assistance of the Office of Performance and Accountability (OPA) evaluates each contract provider on the following performance measures:

- 93% of families served will not be the subject of substantiated child maltreatment while receiving services and within six months of close of service.
- 93% of families served will not have an entry into foster care while receiving services and within six months of close of case.

The Family Services Division Prevention Unit will ensure the contract providers receive programmatic support, training and/or technical assistance when program deficiencies are identified to assist the contract providers in being successful in-service provision and improve outcomes of the families served. Over the next three years the Family Services Division will consider how funding, service provision, and support will be distributed across the state.

FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

PSD's In Home Services (IHS) family preservation model incorporates the basic principles of family preservation services as an intensive in-home service while recognizing that the short-term crisis intervention model did not offer enough time needed to address the complex needs of the children and their families. In-home services are an integrated comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for or who are currently experiencing problems in family functioning and are at imminent risk of having a child removed from the home due to abuse or neglect. Family needs and strengths are identified through an initial as well as an on-going assessment process; the intervention process builds upon the family's existing strengths while supporting and expanding their network of resources to increase their capacity to meet the needs of the family system and those of the individual family members. The model also encourages and promotes a strong partnership between the department and the family and incorporates traditional and nontraditional supporting agencies, individuals and organizations into the intervention based on the unique qualities and characteristics of each family.

The consolidated CBPIR contracts also include the PSSF Family Preservation Services. As noted previously, these contracts are approaching the completion of the first year since being executed. The PSSF Family Preservation Services (FSS) component of the CBPIR contracts are referred to as Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS) and focuses on families who are in crisis and need intensive, comprehensive supports and services to prevent child abuse and/or neglect while maintaining children safely with their family of origin. IFSS is available in all 33 counties. As with PSSF FSS, contract providers utilize the information they gather during the warm hand-off, from the family members and the assessment to determine the appropriate level of case management for the family. Families who can be considered for PSSF IFSS include those with unsubstantiated or substantiated cases of child abuse and/or neglect who need intensive support and therapeutic services such as medical, behavioral and/or mental health to prevent repeat child maltreatment and the removal of the child(ren). Eligible families include relative and non-relative foster and adoptive families, and referrals can be made by CYFD PSD staff or internal case transfers from PSSF Family Support Services. Families that have unsubstantiated cases of child abuse or neglect must have CYFD approval prior to contract providers enrolling the family into this level of service. Families can receive IFSS for up to nine months though they can discharge from the service as soon as they successfully complete their Family Plan and there are no safety concerns. An extension can be considered for the family to achieve the goals outlined in their Family Plan.

The Family Services Prevention Unit has been regularly monitoring the CBPIR contracts using monthly reports and caseload data; the unit staff have scheduled and conducted site visits of the CBPIR contract providers. During the site visits, the Prevention Unit reviews client files, fiscal and employee files and conducts interviews with contract provider staff, PSD field staff and families whenever possible. The

Prevention Unit, along with the assistance of OPA, evaluates each contract provider on the following performance measures:

- 93% of families served will not be the subject of substantiated child maltreatment while receiving services and within six months of close of service.
- 93% of families served will not have an entry into foster care while receiving services and within six months of close of case.

The Family Services Prevention Unit will ensure the contract providers receive programmatic support, training and/or technical assistance when program deficiencies are identified to assist the contract providers in being successful in-service provision and improve outcomes of the families served.

TIME LIMITED REUNIFICATION (TLR)

Time-limited reunification (TLR) services are provided to families whose children could not remain safely in the home and have been removed to foster care. Intensive services are intended to reunify families within an expedited time frame - no more than four months from the date of referral and within 12 months of the most recent removal from the home. The services provided through TLR are multifaceted and may include the coordination of resources to support safety plans, the provision of supervised and monitored visitation, parent education and skill building and monitoring when the child returns to the home.

The Family Services Prevention Unit and its contractors also coordinate among ancillary support services provided by other divisions and state agencies such as childcare, substance abuse intervention, mental health intervention, and employment assistance, to further support the reunification process.

Another service component included in the consolidated CBPIR contracts is the PSSF Time-limited Reunification service. The PSSF Time-limited Reunification funded component of the CBPIR contracts focuses on placement prevention and are available in all 33 counties. The PSSF funded component of the CBPIR contracts focuses on reunification services to help support the safe transition and return of children to their families of origin from out of home placement.

Families who participate in the Family Reunification Services (FRS) receive support that will assist them in the reunification process following out of home placement. Families with children who are returning home from foster care or other out of home placements as part of a reunification plan with their parents, other family members or fictive kin, and anyone pursuing guardianship can be considered for the service. If children are in a voluntary placement, Family Reunification Services should begin at least one month prior to reunification and may continue for up to six months thereafter. If children are in CYFD custody, Family Reunification Services should begin at least two to three months prior to the start of the Trial Home Visit and may continue for up to six months thereafter. A 60-day extension can be considered in order for the family to achieve the goals outlined in their Family Plan. Only CYFD PSD staff can make referrals to FRS.

Families who participate in Time-limited Reunification (TLR) services must meet the following two criteria to be considered for the service: 1) the child(ren) has been in CYFD custody for less than 12 months and 2) the Trial Home Visit will begin within four months from the TLR referral date. Families will receive intensive, home-based services focused on supporting the family reunification with their child(ren). TLR services can include assisting the parents in successfully engaging and completing the items of their court ordered treatment plan to reunify the family in an expedited timeframe. Families

can receive TLR services for up to 15 months following the date the child(ren) begin Trial Home Visit regardless of when the referral was made to the CBPIR contractor.

The Family Services Prevention Unit has been regularly monitoring the CBPIR contracts using monthly reports and caseload data; the unit staff have scheduled and conducted site visits of the CBPIR contract providers. During the site visits, the Prevention Unit reviews client files, fiscal and employee files and conducts interviews with contract provider staff, PSD field staff and families whenever possible. The Prevention Unit, along with the assistance of the Office of Performance and Accountability (OPA), evaluates each contract provider on the following performance measures:

- 93% of families served will not be the subject of substantiated child maltreatment while receiving services and within six months of close of service.
- 93% of families served will not have an entry into foster care while receiving services and within six months of close of case.

The Prevention and Initiative Bureau will ensure the contract providers receive programmatic support, training and/or technical assistance when program deficiencies are identified in an effort to assist the contract providers in being successful in-service provision and improve outcomes of the families served.

ADOPTION PROMOTION

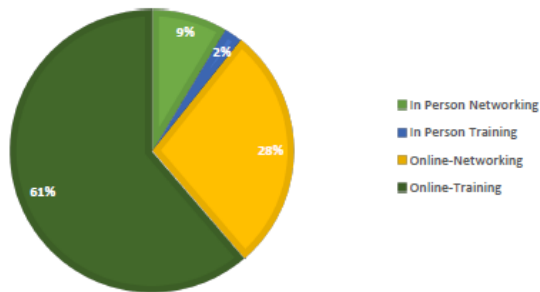
Pre/Post Adoption and Guardianship Support: New Mexico (NM) FIESTA program offers support to a network of families who have and/or are in the process of finalizing an adoption or guardianship and to licensed resource foster families currently caring for children and/or youth in the NM foster care system. The goal of NM FIESTA is to build natural peer-to-peer supports between families and offer functional tools and recommendations by lived experience peer mentors to enhance the family's ability to meet the unique needs of the children and youth they care for. Networking and training events are held in all five regions of the state and include topics such as ICWA training, Raising Children Who Have Experience Trauma, Animal Assisted Therapy, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and TBRI. NM FIESTA offers childcare to reduce barriers for participation and an array of resources to equip families and CYFD/adoptive professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to promote adoptive and guardianship stability and increase placement stability for children and youth in care.

Families and Children Served for Fiscal Year 2024

Region	Participant	Kids Group
Region 1	153	76
Region 2	97	13
Region 3	88	36
Region 4	123	60
Region 5	105	51
Total	566	236

Events by Type

Type	# of Events	% of All Events
In Person Networking	8	8.6%
In Person Training	2	2.2%
Online-Networking	26	28.0%
Online-Training	57	61.3%
Grand Total	93	100%



Average Attendance by Event Type

Type	Adult Participants	Kids Group Participants
Online Training	2.9	0
Online Networking	2.1	0
In Person Training	2.2	4.5
In Person Networking	2.2	18.25
Overall Attendance Average	2.5	0.14

Unique Households, Participants, and Individuals

	FY24	FY 23	FY 22	FY 21	FY 20
Unique Households	125	76	131	205	160
Unique Adult Attendees	185	117	208	326	241
Unique Child Attendees	153	15	12	25	215
Unique Individuals	338	132	220	351	456

In addition, All Faiths offers intensive case management, professional development, and adoption/guardianship placement services to families in the process of adopting and/or who have finalized an adoption. Case Management service delivery model utilizes an approach to trauma from a whole child perspective to support the adult caregivers and the children in the family simultaneously. This program is grounded in trauma-informed, evidenced-based behavioral health methodologies such as Nurtured Heart and Nurturing Parenting Program with intensive case management/parent psychoeducation to help remove social, educational, and financial barriers to healing. The professional development offered through All Faiths is catered to meet the individualized professional needs for CYFD staff, CYFD identified service providers and/or agencies, resource parents, adoptive and/or guardianship families, and/or natural supports. The post adopt/guardianship placement services aim to target the unique needs for referred adoptive and/or guardianship/kinship care families. Service duration will vary based on intake and individualized needs assessment. Each family will have an individualized service plan developed to meet their unique needs. The goal of the post adopt/guardianship services is to increase adoptive and/or guardianship stability by assessing for immediate needs, offering support, providing functional interventions-to include crisis intervention and planning, and develop life-long healthy strategies and/or locating long-term services, if needed.

Families and Children Served Since November 22, 2023: Four families have been referred to her unit for post-placement services. Region 1 (Sandoval County) had 1 family, Region 2 (San Miguel and Taos) had 2 families (1 per county), and Region 4 (Eddy) had 1 family.

Services Offered to Each Family:

- Sandoval County: Crisis intervention and safety planning. Services involve safety planning and warm hand offs.
- San Miguel County: Adoptive family referred due to an open investigation with CFYD. The family was referred to All Faiths for post-adoption services.
- Taos County: Father struggling with the behaviors of his two adopted children. Case management and support services provided; the family was referred to a community provider for therapy.
- Eddy County – Case management and support provide to family struggling with an increase in child behaviors. Assistance in navigating the services and working with the various providers.

Adoption Subsidy Support: Since January 2024 the Placement and Adoption Resource Bureau under the Placement Pillar reviewed, processed and approved 43 new Title IV-E adoption subsidy packets. The PAR Bureau also reviewed, processed and approved 12 Title IV-E adoption subsidy re-negotiations.

KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP NAVIGATION

Kinship Guardianship Navigator Program: New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) continues to apply for funding to support the enhancement of the Kinship Navigator Programs through the Marylee Allen, Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program and Family First Prevention Services Act. New Mexico has multiple cultures that are deeply rooted in promoting family and cultural traditions of “supporting our own” to grow as a people. Kinship care helps to preserve children’s cultural identity and relationship with their community. New Mexico is committed to ensuring that children who are being cared for by kinship families have the supports they need. Many of the benefits for children who stay with their kin include better medical outcomes, the severity of childhood trauma is limited, and fewer children end up separated from their siblings. CYFD recognizes the long standing and well documented need for kinship caregivers when children and youth cannot stay with their biological parents, to prevent removal, during foster care placements, and through guardianships or adoption.

CYFD strives to improve the service array to support all kinship caregivers, whether involved with the child welfare system or outside of the formal system.

CYFD currently implements contracts that provide a coordinated and comprehensive array of resources for relative and kinship caregivers of children to increase stability in the family setting, allow children to remain connected to their families and culture, and reduce long term effects of childhood trauma. These services are available for any individual who is a relative(s), godparent(s), member(s) of a child's tribe or clan, or an adult with significant bond (fictive kin) who are raising child(ren) or youth, because the biological parent(s) are not able or unwilling to do so. The individual does not have to have legal standing of the child(ren) to qualify for services.

These programs ensure that all clients or potential clients seeking services shall not be discriminated based on race, color, religion, national origin, immigration status, sex, age, ancestry, spousal affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. These clients’ or potential clients’ employment, socio-economic, or TANF eligibility shall not be used as a basis of determining the eligibility of receiving services, including direct legal services. These programs create and maintain relationships with potential referral sources, such as localized community-based service providers, governmental agencies, and the Courts, to promote effective partnerships among public and private agencies to ensure kinship caregiver families receive individualized family support. The programs support on-going partnerships

with specialized service providers in targeted areas such as mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, education, and vocational providers. These programs initially targeted populations in Bernalillo and Dona Ana counties, as well as other underserved areas of the state, including Rio Arriba County, San Juan County, and Jicarilla Apache Nation. CYFD's Kinship Navigator Program with Southwest Family Guidance Center has now extended services across the state. CYFD also has a Resource Guide that the public can access, with information about kinship programs and how to access those programs.

Kinship Navigator Services: CYFD provides community-based Kinship Navigator services to kinship caregivers who need assistance in caring for children and youth in their care. Services are inclusive to both "formal" kinship caregivers involved in the child welfare system, as well as "informal" kinship caregivers that are caring for children outside the child welfare system. Services available include:

1. Specialized case management;
2. Education related to kinship care;
3. Legal resources, to include completing guardianship paperwork;
4. Support Groups;
5. Peer Support;
6. Engagement with natural support system, including biological parents;
7. Connection to benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), childcare assistance, medical, dental, and behavioral;
8. Behavioral health services, and other financial or tangible needs (i.e., car seat, bed);
9. Advocacy for school, court systems, health care, mental health, benefit programs;
10. Outreach to promote healthy relationships with schools, public and private entities;
11. Community based and faith-based organizations;
12. Direct Kinship Navigator services are supplemented by the collaboration and connection to the 2-1-1 information services through United Way of New Mexico, as well as a toll-free help line and website dedicated to kinship caregivers through collaboration with SHARE New Mexico. (www.sharenm.org/kinship-navigation); and
13. Partnership with SHARE New Mexico provides members of our community with statewide listings of resources for grandparents and other relatives caring for children. All direct and supplemental services are available in English and Spanish. Language Access Services are available as well to ensure information is available in any language. We will collaborate with our partners in the twenty-three nations, pueblos, and tribes in New Mexico to increase availability of services in their Native languages.

Treatment Foster Care Agencies: CYFD continues to Partner with a New Mexico Treatment Foster Care (TFC) Agency to provide Formal Kinship Certification services for "Child Specific Foster Homes". The TFC agency provides Case Management and Therapeutic Services for children in formal kinship care settings. The TFC agency also provides path-to-permanency services, to provide parent coaching, parent training, and parent support services to kinship caregivers.

Resource Foster Parent Peer Support Services: The CYFD Protective Services Division (PSD) continues to provide Resource Foster Parent Peer Support Services (FPPSS) to New Mexico resource foster families through Title IV-B, sub-part 2 Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant. PSSF helps resource foster parents navigate child and youth serving systems and assist resource foster families provide the care their foster children and youth need through peer support services, such as warmline support. This resource is available to resource parents and legal guardians, which can be relative and fictive kin.

Family Finding: CYFD continues to implement family finding electronic search services statewide, which offers methods and strategies to locate relatives or fictive kin of children involved with the child welfare system. The overarching goal is to connect each child entering foster care with their family, as well as supporting the development of a network of natural connections to increase safety, permanency, and well-being for the child well into adulthood. This tool is also utilized throughout the life of a case to ensure we continue to make ongoing efforts to locate relatives and fictive kin.

Need for Elevated Care: CYFD is currently developing a program to provide children with an elevated level of care in a licensed resource home. This program identified the individual needs of the child and the family to provide care and support at a higher level than regular foster care. This program will be an option for relatives and fictive kin to maintain placement of their family members; while also ensuring they have the services and supports they need.

Children Served: During FY24, 4,186 children were provided services through the Kinship Navigator program.

Families Served: During FY24 2,443 families were provided services through the Kinship Navigator program.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN ADOPTED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

CYFD continues to utilize the AFCARS data to identify children who experienced a dissolution by utilizing the removal reasons of abandonment and dissolution. Based on research, no children with a dissolution were identified as having been adopted through an intercountry adoption. The Placement and Adoption Resource (PAR) Bureau under the Protective Services Placement Pillar continues to confer with the private adoption agencies throughout New Mexico to determine if services were provided to any children at risk of disruption or dissolution involved in intercountry adoptions. For Fiscal Year 2024, these agencies did not serve any children at risk of disruption or dissolution involved in intercountry adoptions.

CYFD does not have a specific policy on unauthorized and unsanctioned placement of adopted children when adoptive families no longer want to care for their adopted children. If an intercountry adoptive family calls into statewide central intake for assistance, they are referred like all families for services appropriate to their situation. As with any adoptive family in New Mexico, intercountry adoptive families have access to post-adoption services through the FIESTA program funded by CYFD. The PAR Bureau also continues to partner with the Adoption Alliance Network, adoption agencies certified by CYFD, certified counselors, and investigators to educate them on the requirement to provide services to families who have adopted children from other countries to ensure the network is up to date with the processes.

Another method for tracking intercountry adoptive families is to reach out to adoption agencies, certified counselors and any requests coming through the ICPC/NEICE systems on a quarterly basis to inquire, encourage and attempt to track the number of intercountry families that come to their attention for reporting purposes.

If an intercountry adoptive family comes to the attention of CYFD as being in crisis or in the process of a dissolution or disruption, a referral notification will be made with the family's name, child's name, number of children, name of the agency that handled the adoption, plans for the child as available, and the reason for the disruption or dissolution to the Council on Accreditation (COA) at 1-866-262-8088 (toll-free) or haguecompliance@coanet.org and to the Department of State at adoptionusca@state.gov.

The PAR Bureau works diligently with the information management system to determine the best method to capture data for intercountry adoptive families that come to the attention of CYFD.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE

Over the last two years, CYFD has worked to improve the ability to target services to those children aged 0-5 who are at most at risk of maltreatment. Through the CYFD Family Services Community Based Prevention, Intervention, and Reunification (CBPIR) contracts family support services are provided to parents and secondary caregivers who may have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect. Family support services are intended to work with families at risk of child

maltreatment. CYFD also continues to work with the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) in making referral and warm hand offs to the following programs:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Child Care Assistance
- Child Care Regulatory and Oversight
- Families FIRST (Perinatal Case Management)
- Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C)
- Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Home Visiting
- New Mexico Pre-Kindergarten (PreK), public schools and community-based organizations

The goal of the ECECD is to create a more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood system in New Mexico. That means coordinating a continuum of programs from prenatal to five – and ensuring that families in every corner of the state can access the services they need. This work is informed by stakeholders from across New Mexico – including the New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership’s [Birth-Five Needs Assessment](#) and the related [Native American Perspectives](#) report, in addition to the ECECD Advisory Council and their recommendations ([NMECECD Advisory-Council-Final-Report.pdf](#)). Services provided through ECECD include:

- **Families FIRST:** A perinatal case management program which assists clients in gaining access to medical, social, and educational services that are necessary to foster positive pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infants and children.
- **Home Visiting Including the Neonatal Intensive Care Home Visiting Services:** A prevention program for families to receive support prenatally through their child’s third/fifth birthday. The provider visits the family in their home (or setting of comfort) to share resources, support the caregivers, partner with the family to complete screenings, and develop goals for the child and family to guide services.
- **Early Intervention:** Intervention that serves families of infants and toddlers with, or at-risk of, developmental delays. Children under the age of 3 who are the subject of a substantiated report of child maltreatment are referred to the state’s early intervention program, Family Infant Toddler (FIT), for an assessment.
- **Child and Family Nutrition Programs:** Nutrition programs that contribute to the healthy growth, development, and wellness of young children and adults through nutrition support services in New Mexico. The Summer Food Service Program serves children ages 1-18; the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serves all ages.
- **Childcare Assistance:** New Mexico subsidizes the cost of childcare for eligible families/children ages 6 weeks to 13 years (up to 18 if special supervision is required).
- **NM PreK:** The NM PreK program prepares three and four-year-old children for school readiness.

CYFD Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs continue to provide home-based and evidence-based prevention services through CBPIR contractors to families with children ages 0 to 5 and CYFD Behavioral Health Services continues to connect families in need of Infant Mental Health Services.

- **Family Support Services:** Target services will be prioritized for parents and secondary caregivers who have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Infant Mental Health Teams:** PSD is partnering with providers for the provision of infant mental health services.

EFFORTS TO TRACK AND PREVENT CHILD MALTREATMENT

CYFD tracks child fatalities through an internal child fatality protocol process, which ensures a timely and appropriate response (e.g., ensuring safety of other children in the home). Fatalities are also tracked in the case management system (FACTS) for NCANDS reporting and other data aggregation. In most cases, fatalities are comprehensively analyzed through a Critical Incident Review process to better understand case circumstances around the fatality. In the spring of 2023, a new Safety Practice Quality Assurance (SPQA) unit was created within the agency. This unit will be responsible for taking over these reviews, which were previously completed by the CFSR Quality Assurance team. CYFD has joined the National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS), a quality improvement collaborative whose aim is to improve child safety and reduce child maltreatment fatalities through the application of safety science and shared data. CYFD has begun the process of transitioning its Critical Incident Review process to the system-focused model promoted by the NPCS, which utilizes the Safe Systems Improvement Tool (SSIT).

The Safety Practice Quality Assurance unit is currently training in the use of the tool and have fully transitioned to this review process in November of 2023. As of July 1, 2023, to June 2024, there have been 28 child fatalities, 8 have had full safety reviews. Unsafe sleep continues to be a major contributor to child fatalities; from January 2022 to June 2024 there have been 27 child fatalities related to unsafe sleep. Youth overdoses on Fentanyl have also increased in recent years. Finding appropriate services to address the concerns and appropriate use of referrals continue to be a barrier for families.

CYFD participates in the state's Child Fatality Review Boards (the board includes multi-disciplinary, cross-agency participation with the OMI, DOH, Law Enforcement, and other related disciplines) and has access to the data collected from the OMI and DOH regarding child fatalities. DOH coordinates these reviews and is responsible for the creation and distribution of the boards' annual report. There are now Five Child Fatality Review Boards: Abuse, Neglect, and Homicide; Suicide; Unintentional Injury; Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID); and Youth Gun Violence.

Infants continue to be the most vulnerable age demographic in terms of preventable child fatalities, and unsafe sleep practices such as bed-sharing, bottle-propping, or otherwise inappropriate sleep environments are the most common factor in these deaths. Parental substance use seems to elevate the risk of unsafe sleep deaths. CYFD's CARA navigator and other key agency staff have partnered with ECECD, DOH, and the governor's Children's Cabinet to review these cases, track their incidence, and create recommendations for a multifaceted response that includes a public health media campaign to educate the public about safe sleep.

POPULATIONS AT GREATEST RISK OF MALTREATMENT

CYFD recognizes children aged 0 to 5 years old as the population at greatest risk for maltreatment. The efforts detailed above seek to target services to this population and mitigate the risk of maltreatment. CYFD Protective Services, Family Services, and Behavioral Health Services and the Early Childcare Education and Care Department have continued to partner and collaborate to support children 0 to 5 years old identified as being at risk of maltreatment. The services and programs geared towards families with children between the ages of birth and 5 continue to focus on prevention service. Those include the CBCAP FSS component of the CBPIR contracts as well as the CARA Safe Plan of Care program, Infant

Mental Health services, Child Care, Pre-K, Early Intervention Services and Home Visiting, and the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) programs.

CYFD recognizes Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault as being at significant risk for further maltreatment. The section above regarding coordination with VAWA funded programs details various collaborations that target services to this population.

Given the increased focus on older youth that will accompany the state's implementation of Extended Foster Care, the Fostering Connections program intends to build out its services and support for youth who are at risk of sexual exploitation. Through the support of Fostering Connections and CYFD Behavioral Health Services (BHS), Protective Services staff and Juvenile Justice staff continued to be trained in the use of the CSE-IT validated Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool. CSE-IT is an evidence-based screening tool designed for use in multiple child-serving systems, including child welfare, juvenile justice, schools, residential, mental health, medical, and homeless services. The CSE-IT is used as part of a universal screening approach to systematically identify the presence of indicators of child sex trafficking. In the upcoming state fiscal year, two residential facilities for commercially sexually exploited youth will be established and BHS continues to work with Bernalillo County to set up a Safe Home. A Safe Home will serve adult survivors of trafficking; eligible survivors will be able to remain for 90 days so that they can transition into the appropriate place of residence or service in a trauma informed manner. BHS continues in their efforts to establish a Safe Home for child survivors of sex trafficking who are between the ages of 12 and 18.

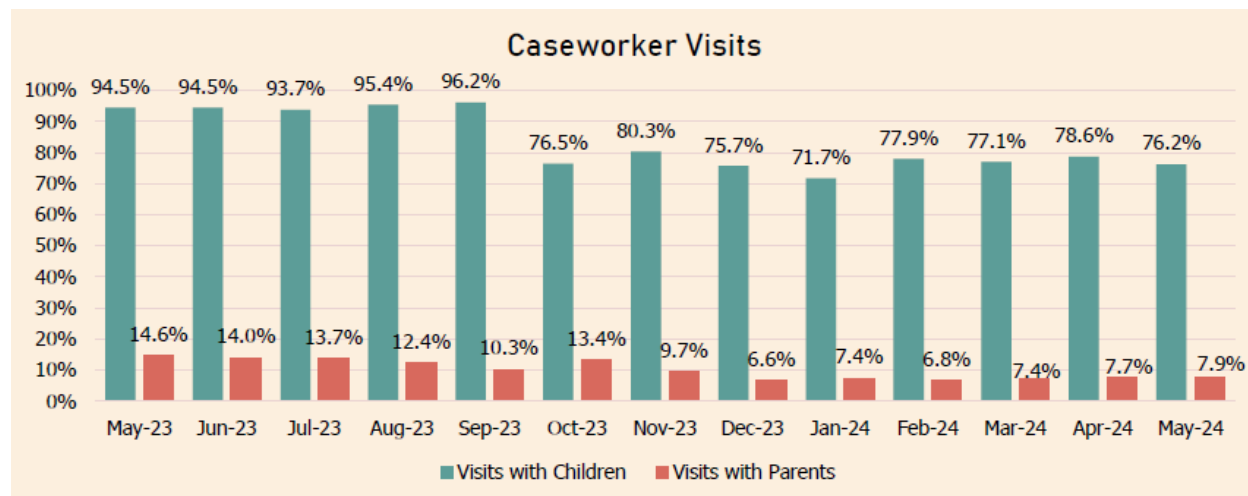
Services and programs geared towards serving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault were administered, monitored and/or supported through the CYFD Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Domestic Violence (DV) Unit, but under the CYFD structural reorganizations the DV unit is now under the umbrella of the Family Services Division. The DV Unit continues to provide the same level of oversight, support, and service coordination that it did under the BHS. Protective Services and the Training and Workforce Development Bureau continue to partner with the DV unit to successfully implement the Safe and Together Model within the State of New Mexico. Included in the implementation of the model, DV providers as well as the Protective Services field staff have participated in and will continue to participate in Safe and Together trainings

LGBTQ youth are also recognized by CYFD to be at significant risk of maltreatment and are disproportionately represented among homeless youth and those that attempt or commit suicide. The Fostering Connection program is currently reviewing and revamping its training, practices, and policies regarding support for LGBTQ youth.

MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISITS AND STANDARDS FOR CASEWORKER VISITS

New Mexico CYFD has struggled since the end of the pandemic to meet the 95% compliance for caseworker visits outlined in Section 424 (f)(1)(A) of Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. CYFD is working on filling a large number of vacancies and believes the organizational restructuring of establishing the Permanency Pillar will increase compliance. The use of the permanency pillar project coordinator position may also assist closely monitor monthly case worker visits and notifying county offices when visits are lacking. FACTS entries need to be completed on time after visits occur.

Below is a trend of the percentage of documented worker visits with children, of those children in care during the month requiring a visit and worker visits with parents.



CYFD ROM Data FY 2023-2024

Over the next five years, CYFD plans to use the Monthly Caseworker Visit Grant over the next five years to improve the quality of caseworker visits by continue to use transcription services for investigation and permanency planning workers and for translation services for investigation and permanency planning workers. Transcription services reduce the time spent entering notes in the state's data system, FACTS. This increases more time spent with families and children while ensuring important case notes are entered. Translation services provide a much-needed bridge to communication barriers for non-English speaking children and families working with CYFD.

JOHN H CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD (CHAFEE PROGRAM PLAN)

Agency Administering Chafee Program

The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), Protective Services Division (PSD), Fostering Connections (FC) directly administers, supervises, and oversees the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

As previously reported, in FY21 CYFD expanded and reorganized its Youth Services Bureau into what is now called Fostering Connections to ensure the State's ability to effectively implement Extended Foster Care and better support young adults, ages 21 to 26, participating in Aftercare. Youth and young adults impacted by foster care need and deserve a holistic relational-based approach to engagement that provides an effective safety net and a developmentally appropriate/identity affirming support system as they transition into adulthood. At the very end of FY22 and during FY23, Fostering Connections added additional positions in furtherance of our mission and commitment to provide quality services to older youth/young adults and created avenues for staff retention and professional development through promotional opportunities within the organizational structure. These positions include:

Deputy Director: Provides overall leadership, management, oversight, and evaluation of all services, support, and programs provided by Fostering Connections. Develops and leads the implementation of a strategic plan to increase and improve cross-division/cross-system support and case management for youth between the ages of 16 and 18 in foster care to ensure alignment with CYFD's core mission, values, and goals and to support a more successful transition to adulthood. Ensures maximization of budget allocations and other funding available to continuously develop, expand, and refine services and supports to the population served by Fostering Connections.

Associate Deputy Director of Field: This position consolidated the Fostering Connections Field staff under one leadership chain of command. Provides administrative and clinical supervision to the Fostering Connections Field managers, ensures a quality responsive workforce that partners effectively with young people to support their transition from foster care to adulthood, attainment of federal national standards and performance-based budget measures and adherence to applicable federal and state law, department policies and procedures. Provides on going coaching and support to FC county office managers around the practice model to ensure continual skill and competency development among staff. Ensures all activities provided and conducted by Fostering Connections comply with state and federal requirements. Partners with the Associate Deputy Director of Systems and Programs to ensure understanding of service gaps, training/coaching gaps, and assist in developing innovative solutions to address challenges.

Associate Deputy Director of Systems and Programs: This position consolidated the systems and compliance unit and the engagement and training unit under one leadership chain of command. Provides direct supervision to the Program Managers, oversees, and manages the implementation of community-based contracts and the provision of specialized support services (i.e., education/vocation;

disabilities support, housing, youth training and engagement, and parenting and expecting youth). Ensures ongoing training and support of the FC practice model implementation. Ensures all activities provided and conducted by Fostering Connections comply with state and federal requirements. Partners with the Associate Deputy Director of Field to ensure understanding of service gaps, training/coaching gaps, and assist in developing innovative solutions to address challenges.

EMS Corps Program Director: Provides ongoing implementation of daily operations, contract management, program evaluation, and growth/expansion of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corps program within the Protective Services Division of CYFD consistent with federal and state requirements. EMS Corps is a statewide program that provides training, support, and preparation for careers in the field of allied health. The program is available to young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who have been impacted by the foster care, juvenile justice, or are from under-served rural communities across New Mexico for careers in the field of allied health services.

Two Program Managers: Provides leadership, management, oversight and administration for the strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation of services and outcomes for Older Youth Services activities related to contract management, federal compliance, supports and services for youth with disabilities, supports and services for young parents and expecting youth, supports in a variety of housing options and housing stability, and supports and services related to educational/vocational opportunities for young people transitioning to adulthood. Incumbents work closely with leadership to assess compliance issues and needs in accordance with current applicable federal, state, and agency standards, guidelines, and regulations. Implements rules and regulations and assists in the development of new resources; utilizes data, continuous quality feedback loops, and effective communication to ensure accountability to young people, the agency, stakeholders, and the community.

Three Statewide Field Managers: Provides direct supervision to the FC Supervisors, oversees, and manages the provision of statewide direct services for youth and young adults, related to Protective Services Division, Permanency Planning services for 16 -18-year-olds, Extended Foster Care services for 18–21-year-olds, Aftercare services for 21–26-year-olds, and resource parent recruitment. Collaborates with PSD regional managers, as well as managers in Juvenile Justice and Behavioral Health Divisions to ensure cross-division support for youth. Expands and cultivates partnerships with community-based providers, manages data collection and dissemination to drive decision-making and programmatic refinements, and ensures staff are implementing our practice model with fidelity.

Special Projects Coordinator for Fostering Connections: Assists Fostering Connections leadership in researching, planning, developing, implementing, tracking and assessing projects specific to improvement initiatives that support best practice and improved outcomes for children, youth and families.

Fostering Connections Quality Assurance Specialist: Assess implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success practice model to improve what is working and identify areas of improvement. Assists Fostering Connections leadership with managing data from caseload spreadsheets to assess trends and provide needed data for ongoing program development.

Five Fostering Connections Supervisors: Provides overall management of field services and support provided by Fostering Connections Specialists directly to youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 26. Supports the implementation of data driven decision making around programmatic refinements and increasing collaboration with community-based providers to ensure youth/young adults have access to the community-based services and supports needed as they transition to adulthood. Partners with Associate Deputy Directors to ensure understanding of service gaps, training/coaching gaps, and assist in developing innovative solutions to address challenges.

30 Fostering Connections Specialist: Partner effectively with young people to support the transition from foster care to adulthood in developmentally appropriate and identity affirming ways; facilitate enrollment and ongoing participation in the Fostering Connections (extension of foster care) program; implement the coaching approach practice model to support growth across life domains (housing, physical and mental health, daily living skills, employment and finances, education, supportive relationships and community connections, cultural and personal identity; parenthood); serve as a partner, advocate, and support to young people in internal and external staffings, meetings, and with community-based providers; ensure opportunities to participate in normative activities that build (life) skills needed for successful adulthood.

Provide technical assistance to the field, foster/adoptive families, providers, and the community regarding youth and emerging adult development, the impact of trauma, and best practices to support engagement and thriving; provide technical assistance regarding the Chafee Act, services for older youth and young adults, and other legislation/policy/procedures that impact work with older youth.

Statewide Housing Analyst: Performs contract administration and management associated with community-based housing and budget analysis to maximize grant funding that supports housing opportunities available to youth transitioning to adulthood. Oversees the execution, tracking and performance outcomes of grants, contracts, and subcontracts associated with the FC and ensures regulatory compliance of invoicing, billing, reconciliation, pre- and post-award activities, and reporting.

Community Contract CQI Specialist: Performs a full range of program, policy, and budget analysis activities to maximize funding and to ensure a full range of supports and services available to youth transitioning to adulthood. This position works closely with Administrative Services Division to ensure that contracts are executed timely, and that Scope of Work accurately represent the services and performance outcomes intended. Works closely with Housing Navigator to support contract providers to ensure programming is in alignment with Fostering Connections values about older youth, while supporting flexibility that allows contractors to quickly iterate program designs to best meet the needs of older youth and young adults.

Community Contract Training Development Specialist: Performs program, training, and policy analysis activities to ensure a comprehensive array of quality supports and services are available to youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood. Works closely with Administrative Support Division (ASD) and the Fostering Connections Community-Based Contracts CQI Specialist to ensure timely execution of Scopes of Work that outline and include high-quality and responsive services expected for older youth and young adults.

Youth Disability Specialist: This position ensures that older youth with disabilities receive the services needed to successfully transition into adulthood in a developmentally appropriate and identity affirming

way. Supports with Development and Disabled (DD) waiver and Supplemental Security (SSI) applications, partners with New Mexico Legal Aid to refer clients for assistance with obtaining SSI and DD waiver benefits, assists with guardianship paperwork, scheduling Neuropsychic appointments and locating safe and appropriate housing options for disabled youth. Serves as an advocate and support person to youth with disabilities in internal and external staffing's and meetings and with community-based partners for opportunities to participate in normative activities that build life skills needed for successful adulthood.

Young Parent Specialist: Utilizes a strength-based approach to promote healthy parenting, including skill development and social connectedness to increase resilience. Assists in the development of parent-child relationships, economic self-sufficiency, and positive parenting skills. Connects young parents to developmentally appropriate community-based resources for parents and their children and multi-generational healthcare. Supports former foster youth who are now the subject of abuse and neglect investigations to ensure access to legal representation and protection of their rights.

Over the next couple of years, CYFD plans to add additional positions to Fostering Connections as New Mexico continues the buildout of a robust, holistic support system for youth aging out of the foster care system and transitioning to adulthood.

Description of Program Design and Delivery

Through Fostering Connections (FC), New Mexico provides a continuum of services for eligible youth and young adults between the ages of 14 and 26 years old, including:

- transition planning services for youth in foster care ages 14 to 18;
- extended Foster Care (EFC) services for young adults who aged out of foster care between the ages of 18 and 21;
- services for youth and young adults who were adopted from the foster care system or achieved permanency through guardianship at sixteen years of age or older; and
- Aftercare Services for young adults ages 21 to 26 years old.

Fostering Connections (FC) is committed to the creation and implementation of a child welfare system that meets the needs of youth and young adults by ensuring staff and stakeholder understanding of adolescent development, the impact of trauma, authentic youth-adult partnerships, and by identifying exposure gaps and providing access to opportunities that address these gaps and support young people to thrive into adulthood. Fostering Connections staff believes young people and their families are not simply clients but are powerful catalysts for change in their own lives and are partners in changing the systems that impact their lives. The Fostering Connections program aims to provide identity affirming and developmentally appropriate services to youth/young adults by implementing a practice model that is designed to authentically partner with youth and by operationalizing our values about older youth as outlined below:

- Partner with young people to strengthen their resilience, supporting them in moving beyond surviving to thriving.
- Eliminate racial and ethnic disparities and dismantle structural inequity experienced by young people involved in our systems.
- Belief that family, relatives, and communities' matter and that young people define their own family.
- Young people know best what support they need and what the system needs.

- Ensure that all interactions with young people are trauma informed and developmentally responsive.
- Engage in authentic partnerships with young people and their families based on trust, humility, and transparency.
- Recruit, retain, and train employees and volunteers whose expertise builds on young people's strengths and development.
- Belief that young people in care have a right to normative adolescent experiences, including the right to fail safely and try again.
- Highlight young peoples' personal assets and do not focus on problem reduction.
- Support young people as agents in their own learning and development and as powerful agents of change in their schools, communities, and society.

As of July 1, 2023, CYFD has fully implemented extended foster care. Per New Mexico statute, the program was implemented over the course of three years, beginning July 1, 2020. In addition to those that age out of the foster care system, New Mexico's EFC program also serves young people between the ages of 18 and 21 whose adoption or guardianship finalized through CYFD after the age of fourteen but the youth no longer receives financial or emotional support from their parent/guardian. All young adults enrolling in the program are eligible for monthly housing maintenance payments, regardless of their Title IV-E status.

Throughout this time of implementation until current, FC continues its implementation of a specialized practice model for case management and engagement with youth/young adults. The FC Practice Model is an adaptation of the Fostering Success Coach Model originally developed by Western Michigan University's Seita Scholar Program and is comprised of seven core principles and three steps for effective practice, designed to enhance staff's professional ability to partner WITH young people to assess strengths and challenges in life domain areas, to prioritize level of need and action, and to devise individualized interventions that build skills and strengthen a young person's healthy habits as they transition to adulthood. The Fostering Connections Practice Model also integrates concepts from Safety Organized Practice, Safe & Together, and other best practices in youth engagement to create holistic support for young people by providing workers with the practice tools needed to effectively respond to their needs with authenticity and flexibility, while considering the unique challenges of living through adversity and the foster care system.

Program Goals

To identify program areas for strengthening and building upon, the Department regularly seeks stakeholder input. One of the critical stakeholders are the youth of New Mexico that are impacted by the child welfare system. Stakeholder input and feedback is obtained through formal and informal processes. Formal processes include our annual youth-led town hall conducted during the Independent Living Youth Conference, facilitated discussions during monthly LUYVANM meetings, youth and stakeholder participation in workgroups and committees, surveys, and focus groups/listening sessions. In FY20 youth/young adults identified five areas to strengthen to improve outcomes for youth:

- implementation of extended foster care;
- expansion of the housing service array;
- increase access to community based behavioral health services;
- supports and opportunities to reconnect with siblings and other relatives; and

- life skills development services.

One additional area of need was identified during the implementation of Extended Foster Care expanded support and service coordination for youth with cognitive and physical disabilities.

Throughout FY24, Fostering Connections remained focused on these six core areas and achieved continued progress in the expansion and deepening of interagency and community-based partnerships needed to better meet the needs of youth aging out of care:

2. **Implementation of Extended Foster Care:** FY23 was the final year of implementation of New Mexico's Extended Foster Care program. Beginning July 1, 2023, all youth who age out of foster care between the ages of 18 and 21 and meet the eligibility criteria for the program are supported by NM's EFC program through the application of Active Efforts to effectuate their transition plans. An unfortunate oversight in the state law created an eligibility gap for youth who age out of care on a Voluntary Placement Agreement or without having been adjudicated. CYFD attempted to close this eligibility gap during the 2023 legislative session. These efforts were unsuccessful, resulting in a creative solution to ensure access for all youth to the services and support needed for a successful transition to adulthood. To that end, in 2024, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed an executive order to allow all young people who were in foster care the day prior to their 18th birthday. Over the past 4 years of implementation, Fostering Connections has provided 359 individuals with extended foster care housing first, maintenance payments and 61 of 359 have been issued the parenting maintenance payment. As of May 1st, 2024, \$4,044,200 has been distributed for basic rate payments and \$1,258,413.01 has been distributed to young parents.
3. **Expansion and Refinement of the Housing Array for Youth/Young Adults:** Partnerships are solidified with multiple community-based providers to operate a variety of housing options for older youth and young adults. In FY24 Fostering Connections focused on supporting providers to iterate current programs where needed to better support the needs of participants, expanding programming where possible, and developing new partnerships to support the housing needs of specialized populations in the following areas:
 - i. **Transitional Living for Young Adults (TYLA):** Two additional TYLA program were added, the first was to focus on the LGBTQ+ community to provide an elevated, supportive, and equipped environment for LGBTQ+ youth and emerging adults. The second programs is focused on primarily supporting young people who have complications of substance use or at increased risk of substance use. These programs provides safe and stable housing while allowing participants to focus on developing the skills and strategies needed for their transition to adulthood. With the addition of these programs, Fostering Connections now contracts with eight community-based agencies to provide supportive housing programs throughout New Mexico. Additionally, each community based agency has expanded their models to include on-site and off-site options to create more opportunities for participants to leverage their strengths to ensure their individual needs are met. In total, these programs provide 94 housing opportunities for our youth and young adults.
 - j. **Transitions Supportive Housing Program (State Funded Vouchers):** Fostering Connections contracts with two community-based providers to provide housing-choice vouchers for young people and their identified family across the state. One program provides vouchers and services to young adults in the Albuquerque Metro area and the other provides vouchers and services to young adults residing in the balance of the state. The statewide program provides up to 35 housing vouchers and case management services for young

people ages 18 to 21 with a mental health diagnosis. This program not only supports young people who experienced the foster care system but also young people who have experienced the Juvenile Justice system.

- k. **Expansion of HUD-Funded Vouchers:** CYFD has signed MOUs with local housing authorities to provide Fostering Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers for young adults in Torrance, Socorro, Valencia, Cibola, San Juan, Santa Fe, and Sandoval counties. Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers are utilized and available for young adults in Dona Ana and Bernalillo counties. CYFD and Fostering Connections hosted monthly collaborative meetings with the Housing Authority, HUD, and the office of the Secretary to discuss barriers with accessing vouchers and the process from FY21 through FY23. Fostering Connections has continued monthly collaborative meetings with the Housing Authority, HUD to discuss status of the current applications submitted.
- l. **Emergency Hotel Support:** Fostering Connections continues to issue emergency hotel vouchers through State General Funds and/or partnerships with New Day, Life Link, New Mexico Dream Center, First Nations, Strengthening Nations Domestic Violence, Haven House, and the Barrett House. This support ensures that no young adults experiences homelessness or a stay in an adult shelter while working to secure safe and stable housing. This is combined with a process to ensure that we are making efforts to partner with the young person to secure safe and stable housing with a plan to maintain during the time in a hotel.
- m. **Populations Needing Increased Support:** Fostering Connections continues to cultivate partnerships with local housing providers that serve special populations; including young families, young people who identify as LGBTQ+, victims of human trafficking, and rapid re-housing for young people with chronic mental health conditions and homelessness.
- n. **NM Crime Victims Reparation Commission (CVRC):** Fostering Connections continues to partner with NM CVRC to provide emergency rent and relocation funding for youth aging out of foster care or who are victims of crime after the age of 18. These funds specifically support emergency housing (for victims of interpersonal violence), storage and/or moving expenses, and deposit/rent for those eligible for this program. The Fostering Connections Compliance and Systems Manager serves as the liaison to this program.
- o. **Landlord Collaboration Program:** In FY24 Fostering Connections continued its implementation of the highly successful Landlord Collaboration Program. Currently, Fostering Connections contracts with three community-based agencies in Albuquerque, Taos, and Santa Fe to fund Landlord Liaison positions responsible for developing and deepening relationships with landlords to provide high-quality rental opportunities and stable tenancies for young people aging out of foster care. Additionally, through an intergovernmental agency agreement, CYFD provides funding to the Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) to operate a Risk Mitigation Fund. This fund provides reimbursement to landlords for lost revenue that occurs during tenancy, including property damages, improvements necessary to meet HUD standards, unexpected vacancy, and flex funds for utility payments. In FY23, key community stakeholders, including the Albuquerque Community Foundation, began exploring statewide expansion and recurring state funding for the program. This will program will continue through FY25 for ongoing support.
- p. **Analysis of Housing Needs:** Lastly, in FY24 Fostering Connections contracted with two providers to conduct in-depth analyses of the housing needs of young people in New Mexico. One contract focused on the housing arrays provided by current providers and the

second is conducting an in-depth needs assessment and count of the youth homeless population in southern New Mexico. The second contractor, University of New Mexico's Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) conducted a similar assessment and count in the Albuquerque Metro area that resulted in the City of Albuquerque funding a project to create a shelter for emerging adults ages 18 to 25 years old. Additionally, the County of Bernalillo is exploring the use of a tiny-house community for this same population. The results that were provided in the FY24 assessment will be utilized to further housing options for transition aged youth in regions 4 and 5. Fostering Connections will continue to work with community stakeholders to further ensure housing needs are met.

4. ***Increasing Access to Community Based Medical and Behavioral Health Services:*** In addition to efforts being made by CYFD's Behavioral Health Services Division and the Human Services Department to expand NM's behavioral health services for children in state custody, Fostering Connections has ensured that all TLYA contracts include deliverables around supporting access to medical and behavioral health services. Fostering Connections held a contract with a provider in the Albuquerque Metro area to provide Comprehensive Community Support Services, Wraparound services, and other therapeutic services for young people who aged out of foster care. This contract was executed during the pandemic to ensure increased support was available for young people exiting the foster care system. This contract ensured access to these services without lengthy waitlists. Fostering Connections continues its partnership with Children Medical Services to provide private flight services (angel flight) for undocumented youth to ensure access to life-saving medical care in Albuquerque without the barrier of traveling through immigration checkpoints outside of Las Cruces, NM. Lastly, Fostering Connections continues to deepen its partnership with home visiting programs for our first-time young parents to provide education around parenting infants and to provide additional resources needed (e.g., access to formula and other nutritional benefits, bassinets, and safe sleep education and options, etc.). In FY24, Fostering Connections deepened its partnerships with community providers by way of Baby Showers for expecting and young parents to support with warm handoffs and education of community services. In FY24 LUVYA also held statewide convenings where community providers were able to connect with young people about the resources that are available. In FY24 CYFD worked in partnership with the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) to establish a single MCO to provide medical and behavioral health services that specializes in supporting young people impacted by the foster care system which successfully led to this program being rolled out in FY25.
5. ***Support and Opportunities to Reconnect with Siblings and Other Relatives:*** While CYFD continues to roll out kinship care and Individualized Planning Process (IPP) to ensure greater familial and cultural connections for children/youth in care, Fostering Connections utilizes social media searches and the Circle of Support tool with young people to support (re)connection with relatives. Using the Circle of Support tool, youth/young adults easily identify family and fictive kin they want to know more about or have lost connection with. With this information, Fostering Connections Specialists assist youth with building connections with those they identify. Fostering Connections regularly supports young people in accessing housing options that allow siblings to remain together or to reunite, including supporting young adults in becoming foster care placements for their younger siblings still in care. Additionally, CYFD accesses Embassies and Consulates to assist in contacting familial connections residing in other countries and to support the (re)development of these relationships.

6. ***Life skill Development Services:*** In FY24, Fostering Connections continued partnerships with community providers to coordinate holiday parties in several counties across the state with a focus on community building and pro-social peer interactions. “HotSpot for the Holidays” provided food, free Wi-Fi and tablets for those individuals that are enrolled in Medicaid. Cooking classes, financial literacy, housing research, expectations of being a tenant, costs of apartments, accessing other housing options and knowing about the shelters available in each area of the state, additional life skills courses like financial literacy, cooking classes, programs to obtain a GED, connecting with ECECD for childcare assistance, and skills for obtaining a job are hosted by HotSpot, Heart Gallery, LUVYA and Chavez County CASA. When possible, these courses are also provided through online platforms to increase access. Fostering Connections supports young people in acquiring technology to participate in these activities through its ongoing partnership with One Simple Wish. A New Day also provides a variety of monthly virtual life skills opportunities for young people. Fostering Connections requires life skills development in all TLYA contracts and holds contracts with providers in Las Cruces and Roswell to provide drop-in center services and life skills for youth/young adults residing in those communities. The Las Cruces program specializes in providing affirming support for young people who identify as LGBTQ+. There are two drop-in centers in the Albuquerque area currently. Fostering Connections has also made further efforts to shift the narrative around life skill development. This is done both by engaging one on one with young people or providing education to permanency coordinators and resource parents about engaging young people in navigating real life situations and identifying the skills present.
7. ***Expanded Supports and Service Coordination for Youth with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities:*** CYFD renewed its partnership and updated its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Aging and Long-Term Services Division, the Department of Health’s Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver program, the Office of Adult Guardianship, community-based housing providers including Intermediary Care Facilities and Community-Homes, and the Disabilities Right of New Mexico. This partnership and MOU ensure CYFD honors the agency of young people with disabilities by recommending and pursuing least-restrictive co-decision-making services necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our young people with disabilities.

CYFD currently holds a contract with New Mexico Legal Aid to ensure youth have access to needed Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. This program helps young people complete the SSDI application and appeal denials when necessary. Fostering Connections Specialists and the Disability Specialist actively supports youth and young people through the application processes for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver. The Fostering Connections Disability Specialist collaborates closely with department attorneys, including the Office of Children’s Rights, for guidance to file documentation, partners with external agencies to collect medical records, and facilitates case staffing’s to ensure timely completion of tasks and critical deadlines. They also hold monthly meetings with the Department of Health (DOH) to discuss and address barriers to accessing the DD Waiver and services provided under this program. Other supportive services are offered in the areas of adult guardianship, representative payee services and other co-decision-making support services, and placement services for young people that require higher levels of support.

Youth Engagement in the Development of the Plan

Youth and young adults are encouraged to participate in leadership activities such as legislative advocacy, policy/procedure development, staff interview and selection, and program evaluation in multiple ways within the agency. Youth and young adults are voting members of the Extended Foster

Care (EFC) Advisory Board to support and guide ongoing implementation and improvement of the program. Youth and young adults continue to be a part of the hiring panel for all Fostering Connections (FC) staff. Youth and young adults are also compensated for their participation in all these efforts, including workgroups, panel discussions, participation on interview panels, and focus groups where they provide input and feedback around lived experiences and ideas for system improvements and growth.

During FY24, FC has integrated input from young people with lived experience to revitalize Leaders Uniting Voices, Youth Advocates of New Mexico [LUVYANM] in addition to recommendations received in FY23 from Anna Gennari through a contract with Foster Youth in Action of California Youth Connection. Youth voice has shaped the new in-person meeting format and has formed regional chapters for LUVYANM to cater to a larger audience of young people across the state. Chapters have been designed to meet monthly with a statewide meeting occurring quarterly to bring all youth members together.

LUVYANM meetings provide a space for learning and practicing life skills, developing leadership skills, building supportive networks, sharing resources and information, storytelling, and advocacy. Young people that choose to participate are encouraged to share their feedback and aspirations for the group to make it as youth led as possible. Young people are also encouraged to join in the planning and implementation process to develop additional coordination, outreach, and facilitation skills that promote confidence building to co-facilitate group functions. Youth Engagement Coordinators then collaborate with Fostering Connections staff, young people, and community partners to raise awareness of the group, address obstacles for participation, and to create strategies for achieving the group's decided goals.

Throughout this process, Fostering Connections continues to provide opportunities to authentically partner with young people to establish more supportive relationships and to better understand the needs and goals of today's system involved young people. During FY24 Fostering Connections has implemented an effective structure for the Youth Advocacy Board (LUVYA NM) to create and ensure an inclusive and impactful platform for youth engagement and decision making. Throughout the next five years Fostering Connections is committed to continuous quality improvement for ongoing implementation of our comprehensive strategy to amplify youth voice and cultivate youth leadership at the statewide and local levels.

Fostering Connections also utilizes many opportunities to seek and obtain input and feedback from our youth. Due to ongoing challenges with large in-person gatherings, Fostering Connections utilized the following venues:

The FY23 ILY Conference Town Hall: A conference planning organization was utilized to host the virtual conference. One session included the annual town hall where CYC and youth and young adults presented their findings and recommendations for the LUVYANM rebuild. Participants were provided the opportunity to respond to the plan and overall supported the proposal for regionally based chapters that would allow for more direct community engagement and advocacy.

Individual Feedback from LUVYANM Members and Youth Leaders: The two full-time Youth Engagement Coordinators continue to support youth and young adults in providing access to opportunities to participate in various workgroups that guide program evaluations and implementation, to serve as members of the hiring committee for new FC staff, and to serve on committees (including the EFC Advisory Committee) to provide recommendations for improvement and expansion of services provided by Fostering Connections. Additionally, youth input led directly to the continuation of the "Covid phone program" using state general funds to provide low barrier access to phones and data cards to youth and young adults that was administered from FY21-FY24. While the "Covid phone program" is no longer this

led to being able to utilize emergency discretionary funds to support young people with accessing reliable communication to support them in achievement of their goals.

Satisfaction Surveys: TLYA providers and other contracted service providers are required to seek youth input and feedback as a deliverable within their contracts. The purpose of this feedback is to support these programs in their continuous quality improvement processes. Youth and young adult input has resulted in refinements to many programmatic procedures, including increased support from staff, access to additional resources, and specific life skill development courses. Transitional supportive housing also conducts feedback surveys to support the improvement to the Transitional supportive housing program. The survey analysis is provided yearly to encompass both current participants as well as participants at the time they are exiting the program.

As previously reported, in FY22 our temporary Youth Advocate positions were replaced by two full-time Youth Engagement Coordinator positions (positions dedicated to young professionals with lived system experience). These staff positions continue to deepen the opportunity to utilize youth perspectives to support the ongoing implementation of the FC Practice Model. In addition to serving as the primary staff liaisons to LUVYANM, the Youth Engagement Coordinators ensure youth involvement and engagement by participating in case staffing's to provide coaching on authentic youth-adult partnerships, conduct ongoing outreach to youth to complete NYTD surveys, conduct training for staff and young people about Fostering Connections services and supports, including extended foster care, and seek individual youth feedback around various programmatic elements, including additional support and services needed by our young parents. The Youth Engagement Specialists have been successful in engaging young people to participate on panel discussions around ending homelessness by implementing preventative strategies, building affordable housing units, and providing increased access to voucher programs and social support systems. The Youth Engagement Specialists frequently collaborate with community partners to increase access and opportunities for youth and young adults to participate in community-based events and presentations, such as the annual Heart Gallery Gala and facilitating Authentic Youth Engagement with CYFD's Behavioral Health Services Division.

Positive Youth Development

The Fostering Connections Practice Model is an adaptation of the Fostering Success Coach Model developed by Western Michigan University's Seita Scholar Program and is comprised of seven core components and three steps for effective practice, designed to enhance a child welfare professional's ability to partner WITH young people to assess strengths and challenges in life domain areas, to prioritize level of need and action, and to devise individualized interventions that build skills and strengthen a young person's healthy habits as they transition to adulthood. The Fostering Connections Practice Model also integrates concepts from Safety Organized Practice, Safe & Together, and other best practices in youth engagement to create holistic support for young people by providing workers with the practice tools needed to effectively respond to their needs with authenticity and flexibility, taking into account the unique challenges of living through adversity and the foster care system. All staff are trained in this model and ongoing coaching is provided to ensure fidelity and that we are utilizing tools that highlight young people's strengths to achieve their goals.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

Sharing Results: New Mexico administers NYTD surveys in effort to collect data and meet federal regulations. The Research, Assessment and Data (RAD) Bureau's Data Unit provides electronic notices to

Fostering Connections by age of the specific youth that have been identified as needing to complete a survey. The preference is for the surveys to be completed in person utilizing Survey Monkey; however, it is not always possible for the surveys to be completed in person thus the Fostering Connections Specialist or other Fostering Connections staff may conduct the survey with the young person via zoom or telephone. To increase youth engagement, youth are eligible to receive a financial incentive of \$25.00 for 17-year old's and \$50.00 for 19- and 21-year-old for their participation in the survey. CYFD continues to use the following methods to locate and engage youth who have aged out of care who are part of the survey cohorts:

- Social media platforms;
- Previous Support Systems;
- Phone;
- E-mail;
- Text Message; or
- Postal Service/Mail.

Fostering Connections continues to request current contact information from youth, to ask youth how staff can be of assistance, and to offer services at the time of the survey.

Fostering Connections Specialists (FCS) and Permanency Coordinators (PPW) enter service data into the CYFD's Family Automated and Client Tracking System (FACTS) database. When the PPW uploads the Casey Life Skills Assessment into FACTS, an independent living (IL) category is created for the specific youth under the primary FACTS case and allows for the PPW, FCS, or other approved staff to enter youth services related information for that youth. Options available under IL include each domain of life skills and financial assistance, an option to customize entries for uncategorized services such as decision-making skills and a menu of descriptors which allow for the ability to extract data for specific life skill services. Contractors who provide life skills development and housing support services, such as our Transitional Living for Young Adults (TLYA) providers, collect data on the services they provide to the youth who are involved with the state's child welfare system and provide that data to their contract program manager on a semi-annual basis. The Federal Compliance Specialist then enters the data into FACTS to ensure the services the youth participate in are captured in their case record and included in the NYTD reports.

Fostering Connections will continue to partner with contractors to include TLYA programs in an effort to collect data and youth voice. The data will then be compiled and reviewed to direct systematic enhancements to better support young people. In effort to enhance the collaboration and data collection efforts, the Federal Compliance Specialist continued providing bi-annual technical assistance with programs during to explain the purpose of NYTD data collection and review data collection materials with programs. Data collection will allow for the enhancement of life skill development and educational goals for young people by supporting youth in achieving their own goals. Data will reflect for TLYA what areas within the data collection are areas of strength while also outlining the areas of growth, thus allowing for a continuous improvement plan to be created to support young people. Partnering with programs to support young people will result in supporting Fostering Connections and programs to gather information and build a relational based approach as modeling for young people.

Improving Service Delivery: NYTD data has specifically informed the development of engagement curriculum and interventions with older youth. The design and implementation of the extension of foster care program specifically has used NYTD questions around housing and health and wellbeing support for young people and new contractual services for transitional living programs. Data collected by NYTD is used to guide practices for behavioral health providers and housing partners to inform and improve policy, procedure, and practice. CYFD intends to utilize the New Mexico NYTD data to identify

areas of need for improvement and analyze how funding can be diversified to strengthen systems with community providers as we expand our youth services as part of the fostering connections program.

Data Collection: Efforts to improve the awareness of NYTD, including cross-system collaboration during FY23 were accomplished by holding staff wide trainings that explained the purpose and expectations for NYTD, including New Employee Training for Fostering Connections staff. These training courses also covered the specific areas of focus including surveys, life skills, and education. Fostering Connections collects and documents data from TLYA's and Aftercare services for youth and young people who are in their program during each reporting period. In FY24 expansion of NYTD trainings took place to ensure FC has a clear and concise understanding of NYTD and the purpose and importance of NYTD, to include the NYTD guidelines. The Federal Compliance Specialist also supports ongoing awareness through individualized coaching with field staff around the purpose and expectation of NYTD. FC has presented throughout the year on Fostering Connections practices, policies and procedures to local county office staff and external providers. These presentations include information about NYTD such as the purpose and importance of NYTD. These efforts will continue to support the ongoing awareness of staff.

During FY24, cross-system collaborations have successfully continued to take place with the Aftercare and TLYA programs to provide culturally specific services that include housing support, resources in education, behavioral health, physical health including connecting with doctors, identifying exposure gaps, and access to Start Up and ETV funding. Cultural humility training is provided to both Aftercare and TLYA program staff by invitation to participate in the Fostering Connections practice model development training.

Over the next 5 years, the Children Youth, and Families Department in New Mexico plans to upgrade the state's system of record. In FY24-25, we have been working with RedMane to create a system to meet our needs with an anticipated go live date of December 2025. During this upgrade fostering connections has been highly involved in the creation of this new program to better meet the needs of serving older youth. One of the functions of this new program is that it will have the capability to gather multiple data points and provide reports. This new system will be able to track and identify the services provided to youth. It will also allow for tracking youth needing NYTD surveys as well as process reports of the survey responses and results. Through this project New Mexico is also creating a youth portal where the NYTD surveys will also be available on the youth portal where youth will be prompted to complete the survey. In addition, the financial incentive for young people completing the NYTD survey will increase to of \$45.00 for 17-year old's, \$60.00 for 19-year olds, and \$75.00 for 21-year-olds. CYFD will continue outreach efforts as identified above to encourage youth participation in NYTD surveys.

Youth Engagement in the Development of the Plan

Youth and young adults are encouraged to participate in leadership activities such as legislative advocacy, policy/procedure development, staff interview and selection, and program evaluation in multiple ways within the agency. Youth and young adults are voting members of the Extended Foster Care (EFC) Advisory Board to support and guide ongoing implementation and improvement of the program. Youth and young adults continue to be a part of the hiring panel for all Fostering Connections staff. Youth and young adults are also compensated for their participation in all these efforts, including workgroups, panel discussions, participation on interview panels, and focus groups where they provide input and feedback around lived experiences and ideas for system improvements and growth.

During FY24, FC has integrated input from young people with lived experience to revitalize Leaders Uniting Voices, Youth Advocates of New Mexico [LUVYANM] in addition to recommendations received last fiscal year. Youth voice has shaped the new in-person meeting format and has formed regional

chapters for LUVYANM to cater to a larger audience of young people across the state. Chapters have been designed to meet monthly with a statewide meeting occurring quarterly to bring all youth members together.

LUVYANM meetings provide a space for learning and practicing life skills, developing leadership skills, building supportive networks, sharing resources and information, storytelling, and advocacy. Young people that choose to participate are encouraged to share their feedback and aspirations for the group to make it as youth led as possible. Young people are also encouraged to join in the planning and implementation process to develop additional coordination, outreach, and facilitation skills that promote confidence building to co-facilitate group functions. Youth Engagement Coordinators then collaborate with Fostering Connections staff, young people, and community partners to raise awareness of the group, address obstacles for participation, and to create strategies for achieving the group's decided goals.

Throughout this process, Fostering Connections continues to provide opportunities to authentically partner with young people to establish more supportive relationships and to better understand the needs and goals of today's system involved young people. During FY24 Fostering Connections has implemented an effective structure for the Youth Advocacy Board (LUVYA NM) to create and ensure an inclusive and impactful platform for youth engagement and decision making. Throughout the next five years Fostering Connections is committed to continuous quality improvement for ongoing implementation of our comprehensive strategy to amplify youth voice and cultivate youth leadership at the statewide and local levels.

Fostering Connections also utilizes many opportunities to seek and obtain input and feedback from our youth. Due to ongoing challenges with large in-person gatherings, Fostering Connections utilized the following venues in in FY23:

The FY23 ILY Conference Town Hall: A conference planning organization was utilized to host the virtual conference. One session included the annual town hall where CYC and youth and young adults presented their findings and recommendations for the LUVYANM rebuild. Participants were provided the opportunity to respond to the plan and overall supported the proposal for regionally based chapters that would allow for more direct community engagement and advocacy.

Individual Feedback from LUVYANM Members and Youth Leaders: The two full-time Youth Engagement Coordinators continue to support youth and young adults in providing access to opportunities to participate in various workgroups that guide program evaluations and implementation, to serve as members of the hiring committee for new FC staff, and to serve on committees (including the EFC Advisory Committee) to provide recommendations for improvement and expansion of services provided by Fostering Connections. Additionally, youth input led directly to the continuation of the "Covid phone program" using state general funds to provide low barrier access to phones and data cards to youth and young adults that was administered from FY21-FY24. While the "Covid phone program" is no longer this led to being able to utilize emergency discretionary funds to support young people with accessing reliable communication to support them in achievement of their goals.

Satisfaction Surveys: TLYA providers and other contracted service providers are required to seek youth input and feedback as a deliverable within their contracts. The purpose of this feedback is to support these programs in their continuous quality improvement processes. Youth and young adult input has resulted in refinements to many programmatic procedures, including increased support from staff, access to additional resources, and specific life skill development courses. Transitional supportive housing also conducts feedback surveys to support the improvement to the Transitional supportive

housing program. The survey analysis is provided yearly to encompass both current participants as well as participants at the time they are exiting the program.

As previously reported, in FY22 our temporary Youth Advocate positions were replaced by two full-time Youth Engagement Coordinator positions (positions dedicated to young professionals with lived experience in foster care). These staff positions continue to deepen the opportunity to utilize youth perspectives to support the ongoing implementation of the FC Practice Model. In addition to serving as the primary staff liaisons to LUVYANM, the Youth Advocate Liaisons ensure youth involvement and engagement by participating in case staffing's to provide coaching on authentic youth-adult partnerships, conduct ongoing outreach to youth to complete NYTD surveys, conduct training for staff and young people about Fostering Connections services and supports, including extended foster care, and seek individual youth feedback around various programmatic elements, including additional support and services needed by our young parents. The Youth Engagement Specialists have been successful in engaging young people to participate on panel discussions around ending homelessness by implementing preventative strategies, building affordable housing units, and providing increased access to voucher programs and social support systems. The Youth Engagement Specialists frequently collaborate with community partners to increase access and opportunities for youth and young adults to participate in community-based events and presentations, such as the annual Heart Gallery Gala and facilitating Authentic Youth Engagement with CYFD's Behavioral Health Services Division.

LGBTQ Supports

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ undergo oppression within communities and programs work to support young people along with their identity by providing LGBTQ+ specific services to support young people.

In FY24 Fostering Connections saw the continued successful expansion of services to youth across the state through the contract aimed at providing community-based support to LGBTQ+ youth and young adults in the Las Cruces community and the drop-in center for youth in Roswell. Both programs offer a variety of services and support, including crisis intervention, employment skill development, and a safe, supportive place to gather. One example of these services and supports provided is our FYI LGBTQ+ specific TLYA program in Las Cruces who provides an opportunity for young people to participate in a program facilitated pride prom.

In FY25 Fostering Connections will partner with the newly established Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA) who is working with Lambda Legal and Casey Family Programs to plan a LGBTQIA+ Child Welfare virtual convening for states in the southwest region. This opportunity available for young people will be a total time commitment of 16-20 hours with a \$1600.00 stipend for their participation. Fostering Connections will also continue to build upon community connections for increased engagement and input for young people to share their thoughts on improving service delivery.

In FY24 Fostering Connections contracted with Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) to identify housing instability, homelessness, and LGBTQ youth in Southern and Eastern New Mexico. There was both a youth count and housing survey and qualitative interviews and focus groups conducted. There were 658 participants that participated in the survey 167 of those participants identified as LGBTQ+. Qualitative interviews and focus groups were conducted for 20 young people 15-25 years old of which 50% identified as part of the LGBTQ+ community. The findings were that homelessness and housing instability disproportionately impacted LGBTQ+ youth especially those that identified as transgender or gender diverse young people. This was driven by stigma and discrimination perpetuated by families and

other social supports and institutions. Behavioral and mental health concerns tied to minority stress, abuse and neglect that go untreated leading to other coping mechanisms like substance use.

Most LGBTQ+ young people were accessing services that were affirming despite community conservatism. Drop-in centers and other programming inclusive of LGBTQ+ people were accessible in several communities. LGBTQ+ young people reported that they were able to find supportive adults in their communities, even if not connected to official services. Findings pointed to deficits in systems that are meant to support and protect these young people including family, community and services. Despite these challenges it was identified that these participants were incredibly resilient. It is our job moving forward to address root causes of the challenges young people face to make sure they can realize their full potential.

Serving Youth Across the State

Youth Ages 14-18: At age thirteen and a half, youth who are in foster care participate in the IL Assessment which includes the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA), the Let's Get Started Planning for the Future and the Individual Capacity and Functional Assessment. Youth actively participate in their individual case planning, the development of their life skills plan, and the identification of needed transition support services. The youth's Permanency Planning Worker (PPW) and resource parent or foster care provider work with the youth on developing life skills based on the needs identified in the CLSA. The PPW provides transition support services for youth under the age of 18 who are in foster care and youth over the age of 18 who remain under the jurisdiction of the court. The Fostering Connection Specialist provides transition support services for youth over the age of 18 who aged out of foster care at age 18 and those who were adopted from foster care at age 16 or older.

The Federal Compliance Specialist now ensures credit reports are obtained for and provided to youth beginning at age 14 on an annual basis until the youth exits foster care. In FY23, accounts continued to be fully executed to run reports on behalf of youth with Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax. If any discrepancies are identified during this process, the Federal Compliance Specialist works with the credit reporting agency to resolve any issues prior to a youth exiting care.

At age 16 ½, youth become eligible to participate in Transitional Living for Young Adults (TLYA) programs and/or participate in Under-18 Independent Living Placement Status, if appropriate, to receive a monthly stipend to live in a semi-independent living placement that has been identified by the young person and assessed as safe and stable by CYFD. The youth's PPW is required to assess and verify the home is safe, the youth have the skills necessary to live safely and self-sufficiently and ensure the youth will not be exploited financially or otherwise.

Starting at 16 we start working with young people to create transition plans which reflect the young person's input around their personal goals, strengths and interests and needs. We will continue to support staff in developing their own language around the purpose of the fostering connections plans to ensure authentic partnership to develop plans that are related to their culture, identity and what they want their future to look like.

Young Adults Ages 18-21: Legislation allowing for the extension of foster care was passed during the 2019 Legislative Session through the Fostering Connections Act and was signed into law by Governor Lujan Grisham. Once a youth ages out of foster care at age 18, the Fostering Connections Specialist becomes the primary worker for the provision of services under the Extended Foster Care program. As mentioned above, Governor Lujan Grisham ensured that barriers unintentionally created in the law were mitigated to ensure that adjudication was no longer a needed element to participate in the

extended foster care program. Young people participating in extended foster care program will be able to access Title IV-E funds for essential documents as well as the monthly housing first payments. Chafee funds will continue to support young people in purchasing items in starting up their lives to include but not limited to pots, pans, beds, and vehicles. The Federal Compliance Specialist will ensure Chafee is not being utilized for items that Title IV-E will be utilized for.

Transition planning continues for young people who opt into the fostering connections program 18-21. Young people are also eligible for Chafee and ETV funding as well as case management through the lens of our coaching approach to ensure we are providing a holistic approach to young people in achieving their goals.

Young Adults Ages 21-23: New Mexico is committed to ensuring that emancipated youth between the ages of 18-23 continue to receive supportive services as they acclimate to adulthood. In SFY22, the expansion of Chafee services was implemented to provide young people 21 until their 23rd birthday with additional financial supports through Chafee funding. Chafee funds were extended and doubled, allowing young adults to access a total of \$3,000.00 prior to their 23rd birthday. Young adults are now eligible for \$1,500.00 between the ages of 18-21 and another \$1,500.00 between the ages of 21-22. Chafee funding is accessed through a start-up application that the young person completes to request financial support. Young adults ages 18-26 are eligible to receive Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act.

Young Adults Ages 23-26: Youth who age out of foster care are also eligible to receive Medicaid to the age of 26 through the Affordable Care Act. New Mexico requires young adults to complete a form with their assigned Fostering Connections Specialist so Medicaid will remain in effect until their 26th birthday, unless the youth specifically request for it to be discontinued before then. CYFD has met with HSD to discuss the Medicaid eligibility for young adults formerly in foster care who move to a new state after January 1, 2023. Fostering Connections supports young people by requesting services from the residing state to support young people with accessing Medicaid. NM does provide support to include Medicaid to eligible young people who aged-out of foster care from different states. If eligible, young adults are also able to access Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) and the tuition and fee waiver until their 26th birthday. To ensure service providers and community partners can aid young people in accessing this increase in available support we have and will continue to hold trainings to continue to educate young people, staff and community partners.

All Youth and Young Adults: The data provided by NYTD includes FY18-FY22 and is current as of June 2023. This data snapshot states that 59% of those surveyed are homeless at age 17 and that number drops to 11% at age 19 and the data is not yet available for our 21-year-old cohort. It reports that 17% of young people at age 19 are connected to public housing assistance and 56% of the young people surveyed receive public food assistance. 66% of young people surveyed are participating in employment either full time or part time or receiving educational aid.

Serving Youth of Various Ages and States of Achieving Independence

Fostering connections has implemented Extended Foster Care. The implementation of this program has removed barriers of young people having to be licensed at 18 if they remain in their resource home past the age of 18. We have also ensured that young people who are in a subsidized guardianship or adoption past age 16 receive an extension to the subsidy until 21. This has allowed us to better support them in building lasting relationships with supportive adults. Fostering Connections through legislation ensures that all young people who are in foster care have the extended foster care program explained to them, so they are aware of the program available to them as well as the services and supports that

come along with it. To opt into the fostering connections program New Mexico has decided to implement the program with court oversight to ensure that young people are receiving developmentally appropriate and identity affirming support as they transition to adulthood. This program is initiated by the young adult and fostering connections specialist signing a Voluntary Services and Supports Agreement that outlines the qualifying activity that the young person is going to participate in as well as detailing the support they can expect from us in this program. As of now we have an 85% enrollment rate into our Extended Foster Care program which is 345 out of 404 Eligible Adults that have accessed the extended foster care program.

In FY22 Fostering Connections executed contracts with community partners to provide after care services. These contracts were to support young people in accessing not only case management support but also support in accessing Start-up and ETV funding. In FY24 in person training was facilitated by fostering connections to support the providers in their ability to access start-up and ETV funds for young people. Fostering Connections has also created a Services and Supports Matrix for all community partners and stakeholders to support young people who were impacted by foster care understand the criteria for each service and available support as well as a centralized phone number and email to reach out for support.

Fostering Connections accepts youth who were formally in foster care and moved to New Mexico to access all services and supports that are available for youth who aged out of foster care in New Mexico. Fostering Connections has a referral form that is filled out for young adults who have moved to another state.

Representative Payee for Children and Youth Receiving Social Security Benefits and/or Supplemental Security Income

CYFD Fostering Connections takes the following steps for children and youth who are eligible for or receive Social Security benefits or Supplemental Security Income.

1. The Permanency team will explore if a child/youth could possibly qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Retirement, Survivor, Disability Insurance (RSDI) benefits. This is determined by the level of need assessment in FACTS, CANS assessment and behaviors/diagnosis. The Permanency team will complete the SSI or RSDI application to Social Security Administration (SSA). If the Permanency team needs assistance, they can complete the NM Legal Aid referral.
2. The Social Security Liaison applies to become the representative payee when a child who enters CYFD custody has an established Social Security claim (SSI/RSDI) in place prior to coming into custody. The Department will explore who would be appropriate to apply for the representative payee (The Department or Relative placement). The SS Liaison will maintain the claim by sending placement notices, accounting reports and change of custody's from to SSA. The Department manages the monthly SSI benefit by applying funds to placement and care each month. The remaining amount will go into a maintenance account where the funds will accrue and an MFD spend down request will be completed, and funds will be distributed to the resource parents. The RSDI funds are placed in a saving account and returned to the child/family after a child leaves custody.
3. As the youth turns 17.5, the Social Security Liaison coordinates with the permanency team and fostering connections team to provide information to support the next steps for a youth to apply to become the representative payee or appointment a guardian. The fostering connections team and the permanency team will ensure the young person understands their

eligibility for Social Security benefits via forms and meetings before their 18th birthday and allow them the opportunity to apply for benefits if they would like. The team can engage New Mexico Legal Aid to complete redeterminations, applications, and appeals for all young people interested in accessing Social Security Benefits.

Collaboration with Other Private and Public Agencies

New Mexico has always provided Medicaid to all young people eligible despite which state they came from. Fostering Connections works with the Human Service Department (Medicaid Authority for NM) and the CYFD Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit to ensure availability and continued coverage of Medicaid for all young people who age out of foster care. These young people are eligible for Medicaid until age 26 under the Medicaid Category of Eligibility (COE) 066. The Fostering Connection Specialist works with the Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit in approving Medicaid for young people aging out of foster care and in maintaining Medicaid eligibility until the young person turns 26. At 18, when the young person chooses to opt into continued Medicaid coverage under COE 066, the young person has the option of choosing a Managed Care Organization. At 18, the young person also has the choice to opt out of CYFD automatically approving Medicaid under COE 066.

Fostering connections and our providers supporting young people with case management support them in accessing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This support is used in conjunction with the housing first maintenance payment to ensure their needs are met.

Determining Benefits and Services

Fostering Connections has dedicated two system positions managed by a systems manager to review and approve all Start-up and ETV funding utilizing a matrix to ensure fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients. When young people are not eligible for funding, Fostering Connections will connect with providers such as the Heart Gallery Foundation of New Mexico to meet the unmet need. Fostering Connections has ensured that young people who reside out of state are able to continue to receive their benefits and the distance does not become a barrier.

Cooperation in National Evaluations

CYFD Fostering Connections will cooperate with any federal national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of Chafee.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program

ETV funds are available for youth/young adults who meet eligibility criteria to assist them in accessing post-secondary education or vocational training. This includes young people formerly in foster care in another state who then move to New Mexico Subsequently and wish to re-engage with post-secondary education and apply for ETV.

Funds are dispersed through a contracted fiscal agent and paid to the vendor or provider rather than through personal checks payable to the youth. The youth's assigned Fostering Connections Specialist aids as needed to the youth in completing and submitting the ETV application packet. The ETV Program provides up to \$5,000.00 per year for a total of five cumulative years for eligible youth. In SFY22, New Mexico continued to implement a program allowing ETV vouchers to be available until an eligible youth reaches 26 years of age within the required five-year limit. In SFY23, ETV funding is submitted directly to the education institutions instead of paying vendors to simplify the process and

reduce any issues for youth. If any funding is available, the education institution disburses remaining funding to the youth. The old process of requesting funding for vendors by check or gift card is still an option but only utilized when absolutely necessary on a case-by-case basis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, statewide efforts were made to ensure continued engagement or re-engaging students to support educational endeavors were supported by hosting regularly technology based virtual meetings with youth. Fostering Connections staff, including the Educational Vocational Specialist, led the engagement and re-engagement efforts by reaching out to youth directly and checking in to offer support and resources. During this time, staff would gauge where the young person was and discuss continuing educational options and supports. Funding information to cover educational costs as well as personal care need items such as rent, groceries, utilities, and household items were discussed in effort to support the youth. Collaborative efforts with college campuses and support programs occurred to support youth and increase enrollment, retention, and graduation. Fostering Connections staff, including the Educational Vocational Specialist, contacted several colleges and universities to discuss support for youth. The Educational Vocational Specialist created a resource list that includes school's programs and contacts that can be utilized to support young people. The Fostering Connections Education and Vocation Specialist has conducted college tours with local colleges to include a campus tour as well as workshops on the application process and on financial aid and scholarships. This opportunity was provided to youth and young adults from 17-26 years old.

Youth are informed that ETV cannot be used to cover expenses already paid by scholarships, grants, loans, work study, etc. Youth are also informed that receiving ETV funds does not affect their eligibility for other federal assistance.

In the next five years, we will hold tours at New Mexico colleges statewide. We are committed to pairing these with our continued efforts to improve our processes with continuous quality improvement cycles to include youth voices.

Chafee Training

Fostering Connections provides new employees with a specialized training with the learning objectives listed below:

- articulate the purpose of John H. Chafee Program;
- articulate federal reporting expectations related to tracking education attainment, life skill development, and completing NYTD surveys;
- describe the importance of life skill development, how to support this effort in the field, and demonstrate entry of life skills in FACTS (Case management system of record);
- demonstrate how to create an Education Icon in FACTS and update data successfully; and
- articulate Active Efforts to complete a NYTD survey and demonstrate how to conduct a survey with a young person.

Consultation with Tribes

Fostering Connections partners with the CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) and the Navajo Nation. Future in collaboration with OTA will be presenting and providing information on the services and support available through Fostering connection. Fostering connections also plans to present at the next ICWA conference to ensure that all tribal workers know how to access support, services, and funding. See Section 5, Consultation with Tribes for more details.

SECTION 5: CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES

CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION

Beginning in July 2022, and continuing through the remainder of 2024, the Children Youth and Families Department's Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) have consistently met with New Mexico's Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (N/P/Ts). These meetings have occurred not only with OTA, but many of the meetings with N/P/Ts were a collaboration of OTA and other internal CYFD departments to include but not limited to Protective Services, Workforce Development Bureau, the Federal Reporting Bureau, the Office of Children's Rights and Juvenile Justice Services. (See list below of recurring and one-time meetings).

The meetings have been with N/P/Ts governing body and leadership, social service departments, Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal social workers, tribal Indian Child Welfare Workers, tribal youth with lived experiences, tribal attorneys, national and locally affiliated child and family welfare programs such as Casey Family Services, New Mexico Tribal State Judicial Consortium, New Mexico Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium, the NM Administrative Office of the Courts, the Corrine Wolfe Center for Child and Family Services, the Native American Training Advisory Committee with NM Health and Humans Services Department, the All Indian Pueblo Council of Governors, and NM Early Childhood Education & Care Department to name a few.

The meetings have included both video conferencing and in person gatherings to collaborate, consult, discuss, train, review and develop policy and procedure and training curriculum. The meetings have focused and encompassed individual case consultation, family centered meetings, protective services issues such as compliance with statutory mandates of both the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA), training and tribal listening sessions. Some of the topics that were the basis of the collaboration meetings included notice, Qualified Expert Witness, active efforts, cultural compacts, cultural intervention and connectedness, investigations, placement preferences, permanency, recruitment and retention of native resource parents (foster parents), licensing procedures, cultural lifestyles, customary adoptions, implementation of policy and procedure regarding the IFPA, voluntary placement agreements, training, the OTA's role, Title IV-E foster care, guardianship and adoption assistance agreements, Title IV-E administrative costs, cultural costs reimbursement, tribal technical assistance, Mobile Response Stabilization Services (MRSS), Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA).

Below are opportunities CYFD OTA will continue to utilize for collaboration and coordination of services with New Mexico tribal partners:

- ***Tribal-State Judicial Consortium:*** The Tribal-State Judicial Consortium's (TSJC) purpose is to build closer relationships between the state and tribal courts and enhance communications. CYFD continues to work with the TSJC, an advisory committee to the New Mexico Supreme Court and the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). Subcommittees address state services for tribal children, full faith and credit, collaboration, and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The mission of the TSJC is to "encourage and facilitate communication and collaboration between State and Tribal Court judges on common issues, focusing on domestic violence, domestic relations, child custody, child support, child abuse/neglect, and juvenile justice and addressing questions of jurisdiction and sovereignty as they relate to each particular issue." The goals of the TSJC are to:

- “Create rapport between State and Tribal Judges; Educate and Train State/Tribal Judges and Tribal leadership; and
 - Continue to review State services for Native children and families on and off the reservation.”
 - The TSJC is nationally known for its work on requests from other tribal and state judiciaries. The TSJC membership consists of both tribal and state judges. The CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) and a representative from the Office of General Counsel attends regular quarterly meetings as an interested party. The OTA and the CYFD Office of General Counsel representative conducted several presentations to the TSJC on the Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA) and the proposed statutory changes to the Children’s Code with the passage of the IFPA. Feedback and input on the proposed legislation was received.
- **Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs):** CYFD’s Protective Services Division, Office of Tribal Affairs and Office of General Counsel continue to regularly meet with Nations, Pueblos and Tribes (N/P/Ts) within the state to provide information and propose the opportunity for N/P/Ts to enter JPA’s with CYFD for Title IV-E and State funded foster care maintenance payments on behalf of children in tribal custody. One goal of the JPA is to increase ICWA preferential placements by partnering with tribes to increase licensing of tribal resource families and providing both Title IV-E and State General Funds to support placements. For the past year, CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) facilitated a workgroup consisting of the Title IV-E/Medicaid unit, Protective Services staff, and the CYFD Office of General Counsel to update the JPA template and supporting attachments. The updated JPA template is currently being utilized with New Mexico N/P/T partners.

OTA has reserved weekly timeslots each Friday for meetings with the N/P/Ts to discuss Title IV-E and state subsidized funding requirements, request technical assistance and bring forth any concerns or issues regarding the JPA process. This past year, CYFD entered a new JPA regarding the pass through of Title IV-E foster care, adoption assistance and guardianship assistance payments with the Pueblo of Jemez and the Pueblo of Laguna. PSD, OGC, and OTA continue to work on renewing existing JPA’s.

The Title IV-E Unit and Office of Tribal Affairs provides on-going training and technical assistance to the N/P/Ts on the JPA process, understanding Title IV-E regulations, and providing ongoing collaboration. CYFD has a designated Title IV-E staff for eligibility determinations, questions, consultations and technical assistance or training regarding children in tribal custody. Court Order templates have also been developed with specific Title IV-E eligibility required language for tribal courts to incorporate into their orders.
- **New Mexico Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium (NMTIC):** NM TIC was founded in February 2015 and is comprised of tribal ICWA representatives who advocate to preserve the culture, traditions, and identity of all Indian children by working to enforce the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. NM CYFD has partnered with NM TIC and has served as an interested party member during their monthly meetings. Through CYFD’s Office of Tribal Affairs, the work with NM TIC has helped to strengthen the partnership between the N/P/Ts and the state to improve outcomes for children, youth and families being served by NM CYFD.
- **New Mexico Partners:** NM Partners was established in August 2015 and was created to support effective and efficient pathways to permanency for Native American families through culturally informed education, advocacy, and collaboration with tribes, state agencies and the court. Core membership is the Tribal-State Judicial Consortium (TSJC), NM Tribal Indian Child

Welfare Consortium (NM TIC), Navajo Nation, NM CYFD, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and Tribal/State youth with lived experience. The Partners meet on a quarterly basis and have unified in this partnership on a common purpose to demonstrate effective and equitable government-to-government relationships to uphold ICWA, meet the needs of Native children and families, and serve as a model for navigating 21st Century Indian child welfare.

- **Weekly Tribal Procedure Workgroup:** CYFD's Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) began hosting weekly discussion and review of CYFD procedures in March 2022. This workgroup was created to encourage and support tribal voice as the department revises and creates procedures which impact child welfare practices affecting Native children, youth, and families. Through their representatives, N/P/Ts can share how past procedures and policy have negatively impacted Native children, youth, and families, and work with the department in a constructive manner to strengthen and improve practice.
- **The Children's Court Improvement Commission (CCIC):** The OTA Director and a representative of CYFD's Office of General Counsel attends regularly scheduled quarterly meetings of the CCIC and provides guidance, feedback and information on tribal related policy, procedure and legislative issues involving Native American children in state custody matters.
- **Weekly Meetings with Human Services Department (HSD) Tribal Liaison:** The Office of Tribal Affairs, Protective Services Federal Reporting Bureau and the Office of General counsel meet with HSD's Tribal liaison (weekly) and the Medicaid Assurance Department (biweekly) to discuss, collaborate and problem solve regarding the development and expansion of access to culturally relevant services, treatments, interventions and supports, including traditional and customary healing, through Medicaid, for children in state custody.

The Office of Tribal Affairs will continue to have stakeholder meetings with NM Nations/Pueblos/Tribes to facilitate ongoing participation for 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan activities, and continue to receive critical input on the Tribal-State Title IV-E Agreements, case consultations, and Out-of-Preferred-Placement staffing (OOPPS). OTA will continue to provide information and instruction for the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act (CARA) and the Plans of Care for tribal communities experiencing substance use. These stakeholder meetings will continue to be conducted in-person and/or virtually, as appropriate. On-going stakeholder meetings will continue to occur as scheduled:

- Tribal Partners/CYFD Procedural Discussions and Reviews-**weekly Wednesday** meetings: some topics covered: OOPP, SCI SDM intake/procedures, ICPC, Licensing and Recruitment and Retention of Native Families, and the CANS assessment.
- Monthly OOPP meetings **occurring weekly (Wednesday-Thursday)**
- TTM, FCM's, Legal, Placement and other general meetings with PS CYFD field staff and tribal partners averaging 35 per month.
- NM Tribal State Judicial Consortium-**quarterly meeting**

SERVICES ARRANGED JOINTLY

As of May 2024, there are 226 Native American children in custody (NCIC), of which 164 are placed in a preferred placement 62 are in non-preferred placement. One of the main goals for OTA is to prevent to removal of the Indian child from their home. OTA is a support to both protective services staff and

our tribal partners. Some of the programs and initiative to provide support to meet the unique needs of or NACIC and their families are as follows:

Office of Tribal Affairs Staffing

The Office of Tribal Affairs has grown over the past two years, it has gone from three in 2022 to seven in 2024. The office currently has a director, an administrative assistant/consultant, two tribal coordinators, an ICWA consultant, a resource parent consultant, and a quality assurance manager. The OTA has subject matter experts in protective services, behavior health, recruitment and retention of resource families, juvenile justice, coaching and training, and research and accountability. The OTA is foundational to the CYFD Pillars, we provide support to all areas (investigations, permanency, placement, etc.). The OTA is planning on hiring additional staff to include a tribal coordinator, an ICW consultant, an ICW training coordinator, legal staff, and a deputy director. This will enable OTA to continue to build relationships with and support our tribal partners, especially the 23 unique N/T/P in the state of New Mexico.

Indian Child Welfare Consultant

The Indian Child Welfare Consultant is a new position to OTA, goals this year for the ICWC is to establish professional and supportive relationships with CYFD workforce, Tribal ICWA/Social Workers, community-based providers and stakeholders. The ICWC is a subject matter expert for CYFD workforce, providing mentorship and actively participating in the creation, implementation and evaluation of coaching/training plans for CYFD staff which supports compliance with ICWA/IFPA and improves practice outcomes for Native children, youth and families.

Native American Resource Parent Consultant

The NARPC is a new position to OTA, some of their primary responsibilities will be to establish professional and supportive relationships with CYFD workforce, Tribal ICWA/Social Workers, community-based providers, and stakeholders. The NARPC is a subject matter expert for CYFD and resource families. This position will provide mentorship and actively participate in the creation, implementation and evaluation of coaching/training plans for CYFD staff and resource families, which support compliance with ICWA/IFPA and improves practice outcomes for Native children, youth and families. Additionally, the NARPC will work closely with the PSD's Placement pillar and the N/P/Ts to support the development and implementation of Native American Resource Parent Recruitment and Retention plan.

Quality Assurance Manager

The Office of Tribal Affairs QA Manager is responsible for identifying both areas in need of improvement and best practices statewide in the compliance with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, the NM Indian Family Protection Act and the Kevin S. Settlement Agreement. Duties include but are not limited to:

- conducting and reporting on monthly quality assurance reviews in various county offices statewide on the Indian child welfare cases;
- coordinating with CYFD's Quality Assurance Unit and Workforce Development Bureau, the Administrative Office of Courts and NM Nations/Pueblos/Tribes on data collection, reporting, and training in improving compliance and support best practices procedures;
- conducting bi-weekly audits on the notification of tribes, during investigations, to collaborate when an Indian child is involved;

- providing reports to our co-neutrals regarding Kevin S. Settlement Agreement; and
- providing quarterly reports to our Nations/Tribes/Pueblos on data involving Indian children involved in the state child welfare system.

Indian Family Protection Act Best Practices Curriculum

The Office of Tribal Affairs created an 8-hour training course for all protective services staff. The training was developed based on conversations, feedback and recommendations from our tribal partners during Tribal Agreement Meetings, Tribal Partners CYFD Procedural Discussions, and meeting with the NM Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium. Training has been provided to more than 650 PS staff. Staff completed a pre- and post-test increasing about 10 points from the pre- to the post-test. More than 50 percent of staff rated the presentation as EXCELLENT on the presentation evaluation. The Office of Tribal Affairs will continue to provide the training to all new employees during their onboarding training.

Title IV-E Funding

CYFD continues to create more opportunities for N/P/Ts in New Mexico to leverage Title IV-E federal funding for children and youth at risk or in foster care. CYFD is focusing on continued dialogue, technical assistance and training, and Title IV-E information so N/P/Ts can make an informed decision to and enter into a joint power agreement (JPAs) with CYFD to access IV-E funds for children and youth in tribal foster care systems. CYFD is committed to continued conversations on the federal level that advocates for preventive services, and eligibility for Title IV-E funding under the Families First Services Prevention Act (FFSPA), to be more inclusive of traditional Native American services that do not meet the federal criteria of well-supported or supported under the current FFSPA clearinghouse guidelines.

Policy Development for Cultural Interventions

CYFD in collaboration with New Mexico N/P/Ts continue to work to ensure cultural connectedness for Native American children in state custody. The Office of Tribal Affairs has worked closely with the Office of Performance and Accountability and CYFD Administrative Services to identify a mechanism to assist with traditional healing and cultural activities. CYFD works directly with the child/youth's respective tribal representative to ensure a child can engage and participate in traditional healing practices and cultural activities.

Cultural and Traditional Healing

CYFD and the Office of Tribal Affairs have identified funding to ensure Indian children in custody are introduced, strengthens or maintain cultural connectedness to their tribes and can utilize traditional healing as an intervention to address behavioral health, medical health, physical health or spiritual health needs which are provided by a traditional healer or traditional ceremony accepted by the child's N/P/T.

The cultural activities can be reimbursed by Title IV-E as a child-based incidental that is an extension of the monthly foster care maintenance payment. For those who are not Title IV-E eligible, state general funds are utilized. Traditional healing is funded through state general funds or Medicaid.

Funding was used for a youth in custody who is an enrolled member of a tribe in Alaska to participate in a cultural event in Juneau, Alaska on June 5-9, 2024. This was an opportunity for the youth to meet with their bio relatives and help in preserving their family connections.

Funding was used for a youth in custody to attend an event in Oklahoma where the youth was able to meet with other citizens from their tribe.

Funding was used to pay for a cultural funeral for a youth who passed away while in custody. Funding was used to have traditional healer/medicine man to perform a ceremony for the youth in custody.

Out of Preferred Placement Team Meetings

During OOPP team meetings the facilitator helps to identify opportunities for parents and families to get involved in visits with the children in custody. They assist in identifying cultural needs of the family and identifying ways to help ensure the children and families have opportunities to be culturally connected. The facilitator encourages a natural support network for the family and strengthening the family network, they advocate for holistic transition plans that include school goals, support for family, support for resource parents, medical/behavior health/dental, and transportation needs. The facilitator helps to identify barriers/challenges before they occur.

ICWA Summit

The Office of Tribal Affairs in partnership with Casey Families-Indian Child Welfare Program has hosted two successful ICWA Summits (2023 and 2024). There were nearly 500 registrants, including participants from Tribal social services programs, judges and attorneys, and Tribal leaders. Participants also included staff from CYFD Protective Services Division, Juvenile Justice Services, and Behavioral Health Services, judges and attorneys. Topics and presentations during the 4th Annual ICWA Summit included:

- Keynote address from CYFD Cabinet Secretary, Teresa Casados;
- CYFD look back over the last year and how far we have come with IFPA;
- Lasting State and Tribal Partnerships;
- Indigenous Youth's Perspectives on Child Welfare;
- Understanding Ke': Protecting Blood Memory, Cultural Eco-systems, and Community Connections;
- Long-term Healing and Well-being for Current and Former Youth in Care; and
- US Supreme Court *Haaland v Brackeen* Upheld.

The Office of Tribal Affairs is currently planning the 5th Annual ICWA Summit which is to be held in October 2024.

2024 Native American Children's Cultural Enrichment Conference

The Office of Tribal Affairs partnered with the Navajo Division of Social Services to host the Native American Children's Cultural Enrichment Conference June 25th and 26th 2024. The event featured sessions focusing on Native American Culture; 222 Native American children in custody and their resource families were invited to attend. The event was held at Hotel Albuquerque and featured sessions on Traditional Dress Making, Bridging Media and Culture, Navajo Rug Weaving, Navajo Moccasin Making. Title XX Social Security Block Grant funding was used to hold the conference.

Training, Coaching, and Consultation

The Office of Tribal Affairs conducts informal training twice a week, in what they call "Open Door," on Monday's and Fridays. This is an opportunity for PS to join the OTA staff for a period of consultation on

current cases and participate in “micro” trainings around the notification to tribes, active efforts, documentation, MFD process, Pre- and Post-Initiation Form, MFI, Jurisdiction, etc.

During case consults/legal staffing OTA helps staff identify active efforts and how to meet these obligations. OTA assists in identifying culturally responsive remedial services to prevent the removal of the child from their home, to reunify if removed, and to license relatives for the Native child (relative placement).

McKinley County Protective Services Office is the only county that has a designated Indian Child Welfare Unit, meaning active efforts are implemented for all cases, even those that are not protected under ICWA or IFPA. The Indian Child Welfare Consultant provides weekly training and coaching support to all staff in the implementation of ICWA/IFPA regulations, policy and procedures.

STRENGTHS AND CELEBRATIONS

- **Support in NW County Office:** San Juan, McKinley, and Cibola County Permanency Manager, Crystal Hubert continues to lead the way in utilizing OTA as a support to successfully implement IFPA. She is an active and knowledgeable leader.
- **Bernalillo County ICWA Unit and the McKinley County IFPA Office:** Practice comes from a foundation of active and timely efforts; involves collaboration and communication; the teams are very knowledgeable about their cases; staff has adequate supervision from Manager to Supervisor to workers; they understand why and are invested in following procedures and laws; there is a level of humility.
- **Proximity of Bernalillo Investigation Staff:** The Office of Tribal Affairs is located primarily in Bernalillo County, sharing space with the Investigations Pillar. Investigations staff are beginning to invite OTA to legal staffing and Family Centered Meetings.
- **Global Email Address:** OTA has increased avenues of communications via the OTA Inquires email.
- **Open Consultation:** On-going consultations at the request of any party.
- **Agency Involvement:** Increased invitation and participation in cross-division team meetings.
- **Funding:** Funding for IFPA and grants to tribes (\$1 million awarded).

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

- A challenge that continues to exist is the timeliness of notification to collaborate sent to tribes when a child is involved in an investigation. The Quality Assurance Manager sends out monthly reminders to Protective Services (PS) staff. The Office to Tribal Affairs utilizes an “Open Door” meeting setting to provide ongoing training to PS staff on notification to tribes, active efforts, etc.
- The Office of Tribal Affairs cannot make Protective Services field workers create relationships with families and tribes, we can only encourage them.
- Lack of understanding of the role of and support from OTA by PS staff, some staff do not realize OTA is an internal office with CYFD and may not engage with OTA because the worker thinks OTA is Tribal entity.

- There is a lack of accountability from Protective Services supervisors who do not support the changes needed or to sustain positive collaboration with New Mexico's Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos.
- OTA is often left out of discussions and case management activities by Protective Services field workers.
- Protective Services field workers often do not have support from their supervisor/managers to follow-through on the recommendations made by OTA.
- Lack of consistent IFPA implementation, despite on-going training and coaching.
- OTA is often not included in the IPP process for cultural connections.

ICWA/IFPA COMPLIANCE

ICWA/IFPA compliance is documented in individual case records (in court reports, activities, narratives, etc.) and compliance data will be obtained through Quality Assurance (QA). CYFD ensures compliance with ICWA/IFPA through staff training, supervision, QA reviews and ongoing meetings with tribal representatives. The Office of Tribal Affairs conducts compliance checks and ongoing meetings with county offices during Out-of-Preferred-Placement Staffing (OOPPS) meetings which occur every 30 days if the native child is in state custody and placed in an out of an ICWA preferred placement. CYFD will continue to address ICWA compliance through training. ICWA is included in the legal module of foundations of practice. A 90-minute e-learning course, Introduction to ICWA, is mandatory for all staff.

In the past year, OTA created an 8-hour IFPA Best Practices training module for all Protective Service Staff. This training is an overview of the history that lead to the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act, federal challenges to ICWA and the passage of the Indian Family Protection Act, active efforts during investigations which includes notification to the tribe; active efforts to prevent the removal of an Indian child from their family, active efforts after a child has been taken into custody to reunite with their family, active efforts to collaborate with the child's tribe throughout the case, and active efforts to ensure the Indian child is in a preferred placement. The Office of Tribal Affairs will continue to provide this training to all new employees.

In the past year, PSD continues to utilize data from Quality Assurance (QA) Reviews, information obtained from our judicial partners, and information from meetings between PSD and tribal partners to improve and maintain our compliance with the ICWA (25 U.S.C §§ 1901 *et seq.*). Each month the QA team conducts a legal review of practice in a different county throughout the year, specifically as one of the many data points captured pertains specifically to ICWA compliance. The process includes a review of the hard copy legal records, a FACTS review, and meetings with the Children's Court Attorney and/or Managing Attorney. The reviews are conducted by the Title IV-E unit that includes the Regional Children's Court Attorney, the assigned Children's Court Attorney. The intent of the review is to determine the strengths and challenges from the legal perspective and to identify opportunities for improved collaboration between legal services and program.

The Office of Tribal Affairs has coordinated a workgroup to develop policies and procedures that align with the IFPA regulations and are inclusive within the Legal Services and specific references and requirements in Investigation, Permanency Planning, and Adoption Act Regulations. The New Mexico Children's Code incorporates the provisions of ICWA and the IFPA into state law. This workgroup convenes weekly to provide input to the development and promulgation of policy and procedures.

The Office of Tribal Affairs Quality Assurance Manager will conduct compliance audits on ICWA/IFPA cases using a quality assurance tool aligned with the Indian Family Protection Acts guidelines. The Office of Tribal Affairs is expecting to start conducting case audits July 1, 2024.

OUT OF PREFERRED PLACEMENT STAFFINGS

CYFD is committed to preserving connections between Indian children and their families, culture and communities and endeavors to keep Indian Families together. If an Indian child in foster care is not placed in a preferred placement, CYFD's Protective Services Division implements active efforts to place the Indian child in the highest order of preferred placement identified by the Indian child's N/P/T or in accordance with the Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA).

If an Indian child is not placed in the highest order of preferred placement, OTA facilitates an Out of Preferred Placement (OOPP) Team Meeting to specifically focus on moving the Indian child to the highest order of preferred placement. An initial OOPP Team meeting is held with 45 days of the placement then takes place every 30 days until the number one placement preference is secured for the Indian child, they are reunited with parents/guardian/custodian (p/g/c), or the court determines there is good cause to deviate.

If after 2 consecutive OOPP Team Meetings, an Indian child remains in an out of preferred placement that is not the first order preference, the OTA facilitator schedules an OOPP Up-Staffing with PSD Director, PSD Investigations, Permanency, and Placement deputy director(s), or their OIC(s) and the OTA Director or their OIC.

As of May 2024, there are 73 Indian children in placement that is not a first order placement. Since January 2024 we have had 29 final OOPPs, meaning the child moved into a first order preferred placement.

CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES REGARDING ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICES FOR ETV AND CHAFEE PROGRAM

The Extended Foster Care Program allows eligible adults, including those in tribal care, to remain in foster care until age 21 to support their transition to adulthood and advance positive outcomes related to permanency, housing, education, and financial stability by providing enhanced services and supports. The Children Youth & Families Department's Office of Tribal Affairs independently and in collaboration with other internal CYFD departments to include but not limited to Protective Services, Workforce Development Bureau, the Federal Reporting Bureau, the Office of Children's Rights and Juvenile Justice Services consistently met with many Nations, Pueblos and Tribes (N/P/Ts). The meetings have been with N/P/Ts governing body and leadership, social service departments, Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal social workers, tribal Indian Child Welfare Workers, tribal attorneys, and the New Mexico Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium.

The meetings have included both video conferencing and in person gatherings to collaborate, consult, and discuss policy and procedure.

Consultation to tribes regarding Chafee and ETV benefits were and will continue to be done during Joint Powers Agreement meetings and during the Tri-State Meeting with the Navajo Nation. OTA staff utilizes the Out of Preferred Placement staffing to inform tribal ICWA workers of the benefits provided

by Chafee and ETV for children between the ages of 13.5 and 18. The Fostering Connections Specialist (FCS) provides Indian youth in foster care with notice of the Fostering Connections Bureau supports and services as well as the Extended Foster Care (EFC) program and its benefits during the first case planning team meeting that occurs after their 16th birthday. There are 52 Indian children between the ages of 13.5 and 18 in CYFD custody who are eligible for Chafee and ETV benefits. Benefits afforded to Indian children include:

- **Transition Support Services:** Available to youth ages 14 through 17 who are in custody of a federally recognized tribe or pueblo are eligible for transition support services and young adults 18 through 26 years of age who were in custody of CYFD PS, PS of another state, or of a tribe or pueblo on their 18th birthday.
- **Start-up Funds:** Start-up funds are available through the Chafee Act to assist eligible youth in purchasing the household items and/or services needed to establish a home or support the youth's transition into adulthood. Examples include rent deposit and rent (youth over 18), utility deposits/hook-up fees, furniture, appliances, personal care, computers, transportation related expenses, secondary and post-secondary education fees, work apparel, and vocational training.
- **Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs):** which are funded through the federal Chafee Act and provide financial assistance to eligible youth and young adults who have obtained a high school diploma or GED. Students participating in the ETV program are eligible for up to \$5,000.00 per year for up to five years, whether consecutive or not, or until their 26th birthday as long as they are enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program and making satisfactory progress towards completion.

Currently we do not have any tribes who have requested to develop an agreement to administer, supervise, or oversee the Chafee or and ETV program with respect to eligible Indian children and to receive and appropriate portion of the state's allotment for such administration or supervision.

The Office of Tribal Affairs will continue to provide information regarding Chafee and ETV to our tribal partners via presentations during NMTIC meetings, JPA consultation, OOPPs process, and a presentation to the All-Pueblo Council of Governors.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

CYFD in collaboration with the Office of Tribal Affairs will make the Annual Progress Service Report available to all our tribal partners during our in-person gatherings and via the CYFD external website.

2023-2024 CYFD Procedure Review and Discussion with Tribal Partners

CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs and the CYFD Policy Office staff meet regularly with members of New Mexico's Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos to review CYFD procedures and make recommendations for practice improvement when working with Native American children and families. Below are the dates the procedure meetings occurred in 2023 and 2024.

07/05/2023	09/06/2023	11/22/2023	02/14/2024	05/08/2024
07/12/2023	09/13/2023	11/29/2023	02/21/2024	05/15/2024
07/19/2023	09/20/2023	12/06/2023	03/06/2024	05/22/2024
07/26/2023	09/27/2023	12/13/2023	03/13/2024	05/29/2024

08/02/2023	10/04/2023	12/20/2023	03/20/2024	06/05/2024
08/09/2023	10/11/2023	12/27/2023	03/27/2024	
08/16/2023	10/18/2023	01/17/2024	04/03/2024	
08/23/2023	10/25/2023	01/31/2024	04/17/2024	
08/30/2023	11/08/2023	02/07/2024	04/24/2024	

During the CYFD Procedural Discussion and Reviews with Tribal Partners the following is discussed:

- JPA-IGA Meeting reminders
- Data Requests from OTA by Tribes
- Financial Requests (Cultural activities)
- Resource Parent Recruitment and Retention
- Tribal input into OOPP procedures
- Tribal input into Cultural Activities and Traditional Healing Services procedure
- Tribal input into Investigations procedures

Out of Preferred Placement Meetings with CYFD Staff and Nations, Tribes, & Pueblos

Out of Preferred Placement Meetings (OPPMs) occur monthly with CYFD Field staff, the Office of Tribal Affairs, the PS ICWA Unit, and Social Services and ICWA workers with New Mexico's Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. When an Indian child in foster care is not placed in a preferred placement, CYFD's Protective Services Division implements active efforts to place the Indian child in the highest order of preferred placement identified by the Indian child's N/P/T or in accordance with the Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA). Compliance with ICWA and IFPA are efforts described in the state's 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan. Below is the schedule for OOPM's.

Cibola County	4 th Thursday, 10:00 am – 10:30 am
Dona Ana	4 th Wednesday, 9:00 am – 10:30 am
Eddy County	1 st Wednesday, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Lea County	2 nd Wednesday, 9:00 am – 10:00 am
Lincoln, Otero	3 rd Wednesday, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
McKinley	2 nd Thursday, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
	1 st Thursday, 9:00 am – 9:20 and 11:00 am – 11:45 am
Metro 1	3 rd Thursday, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Metro 2	1 st Thursday, 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Metro 3	3 rd Thursday, 9:00 am – 11:30 am
Metro 4	2 nd Thursday, 9:00 am – 11:00 am
Metro 5	4 th Thursday, 1:00 pm – 1:30 pm
Rio Arriba	2 nd Wednesday, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
San Juan	4 th Thursday, 2:30 pm – 4:15 pm
San Miguel	4 th Wednesday, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Sandoval	2 nd Wednesday, 10:00 am – 11:00 am
Santa Fe	3 rd Wednesday, 10:00 am – 11:00 am
Taos	3 rd Thursday, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Valencia	3 rd Wednesday, 9:00 am – 10:00 am and 1:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Other Tribal Meetings and Gatherings

Tribal Meetings

September 1, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
September 12, 2023	Tribal Meeting – IGA/JPA
September 15, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
September 22, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
September 22, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
September 29, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
September 29, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
October 13, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
October 20, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
October 27, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
November 29, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
December 7, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
December 12, 2023	Tribal Meeting - IGA/JPA
February 16, 2024	Tribal Agreement Follow-up Meeting with Tribes
March 8, 2024	JPA Meeting with Tribe (9:00 am – 11:00 am)
April 19, 2024	Tribal Agreement Meeting (JJS) (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm)
May 17, 2024	Tribal Quarterly Meeting (1:30 pm – 5:00 pm)

Other Meetings

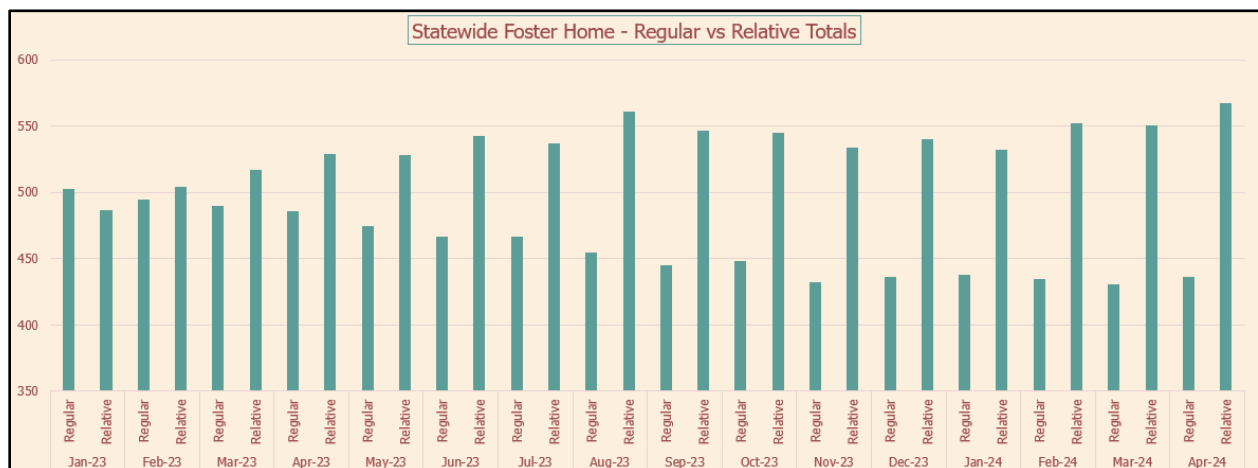
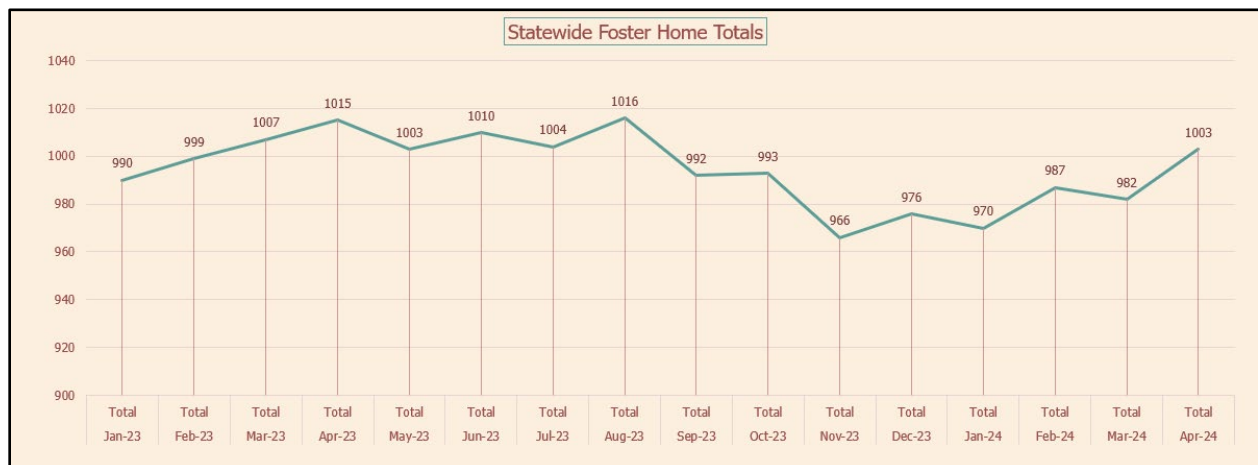
July 5, 2023	Annual State-Tribal Leaders Summit
July 10, 2023	ICWA Curriculum Workgroup Meeting
July 17, 2023	ICWA Curriculum Workgroup Meeting
July 21, 2023	NM Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium Meeting
July 24, 2023	ICWA Curriculum Workgroup Meeting
July 20, 2023	ECECD Tribal Liaisons
August 14, 2023	ICWA Curriculum Workgroup Meeting
August 18, 2023	NM Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium Meeting
August 21, 2023	ICWA Curriculum Workgroup Meeting
September 8, 2023	IGA Tri-State with Tribe
September 11, 2023	ICWA Curriculum Workgroup Meeting
October 16, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup

October 23, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup
November 6, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup
November 13, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup
December 4, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup
November 15, 2023	Tribal Roundtable Discussion on Family Services Division & CARA
November 16, 2023	Recruitment and Retention Meeting San Juan County
November 17, 2023	NM Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium Meeting
November 17, 2023	Tribal State Judicial Consortium Quarterly Meeting
November 27, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup
November 28, 2023	Tribal Roundtable Discussion – Systems of Change
November 28, 2023	Recruitment and Retention Meeting
December 11, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup
December 18, 2023	Tribal ICWA Curriculum Workgroup
January 1 – 5, 2024	Executive Leadership Statewide Tour (Farmington, Gallup, Grants, Roswell, Ruidoso, Las Cruces, Socorro, Las Lunas)
January 9, 2024	Children’s Law Institute, Virtual Presentation, IFPA First Year in Review.
January 11, 2024	Children’s Law Institute (Albuquerque, NM), In person presentation, IFPA First Year in Review
February 9, 2024	Tribal State Judicial Consortium Quarterly Meeting
March 29, 2024	Casey Family Foundation and Tribe Meeting (9:00 am – 11:00am)
April 8-11, 2024	National Indian Child Welfare Association Conference (Seattle, Washington) Presentation, Indian Family Protection Act, First Year in Review
April 19, 2024	2nd Annual Social Services Conference, Presentation, Promoting cultural Connectedness through Collaboration (Albuquerque)
May 10, 2024	Tribal-State Judicial Consortium Quarterly Meeting

TARGETED PLANS WITHIN THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN

I: FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT DILIGENT RECRUITMENT PLAN

Over the next five years, the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) Protective Services (PS) Placement Pillar will continue to assess, plan, and implement best practices in the recruitment foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care and are freed for adoption. Over the next five years the PS Placement Pillar will focus on increasing the number of resource family homes that meet the needs of children in CYFD custody. In particular, the focus will be in recruiting and retaining family resource homes that have the community behavioral health and agency support needed in maintain stable placements for children and youth with high behavioral health needs. CYFD will continue to work with relatives in increasing relative placement to increase placement stability and reaching timely permanency.



CYFD ROM Data

Characteristics of Children and Youth Needing Foster and Adoptive Homes

As of 2024, CYFD currently has 970 total licensed foster homes; of those homes, 363 (37.4%) homes are non-relative, 535 (55.5%) homes are relative homes, 26 (2.6%) are non-relative ICWA homes, and 46 (4.7%) are relative ICWA homes. CYFD continues to see an increase of relative placements and continues to support relative and kinship placements that may ultimately lead to more support during reunification efforts with parents or achievement of permanency through increased number of relative/kinship guardianships or relative adoptions.

In 2023, CYFD launched an initiative under the Kevin S Settlement Agreement to obtain more information on the race and ethnicity of foster homes in New Mexico. The result of that initiative showed that New Mexico had 839 licensed foster homes at the time:

- 296 (35.3%) identified as Hispanic;
- 367 (43.7%) identified as White Non-Hispanic;
- 81 (9.7%) identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native;
- 34 (4.1%) identified as African American;
- 2 (0.24%) identified as Asian;
- 37 (4.4%) identified as two or more races; and
- 22 (2.6%) identified as other.

When comparing the data of licensed homes to foster child entries and race and ethnicity of children by population in New Mexico (See Figures 1 and 2 below), it appears there may be need for more Hispanic identifying foster homes. Another interpretation might be that the low number of Hispanic foster homes could be due to more foster homes identifying as two or more races rather than just Hispanic. As of 2024 (a total of 970 licensed home thus far), Hispanic foster homes are remaining the same at around 297 licensed homes, while the number of White/Non-Hispanic population has reduced considerably to about 230 licensed homes. African American licensed foster homes (4.1%) are consistent with the number of African American children entering custody (4.4%); however, it should be noted that New Mexico is taking in a higher rate of African American children into foster care (4.4%) than the total population of African American children in the state (2%).

CYFD continues to maintain a consistent number of Native American licensed foster homes. Native American homes make up about 9.7% of licensed homes while Native American children make up about 6.5% of children entering foster care. The CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs has created and hired for a new position that will assist in placement of Native American children. The Native American Resource Parent Consultant (NARPC) responsibilities will be to establish professional and supportive relationships with CYFD workforce, Tribal ICWA/Social Workers, community-based providers, and stakeholders. The NARPC is a subject matter expert for CYFD and resource families. This position will provide mentorship and actively participate in the creation, implementation and evaluation of coaching/training plans for CYFD staff and resource families, which support compliance with ICWA/IFPA and improves practice outcomes for Native children, youth and families. Additionally, the NARPC will work closely with the Protective Services Placement Pillar and the N/P/Ts to support the development and implementation of Native American Resource Parent Recruitment and Retention plan.

FIGURE 1: CHILD POPULATION BIRTH TO AGE 19 BY RACE AND ETHNICITY IN NEW MEXICO

Location	Race or Ethnicity	Data Type	2022
New Mexico	Asian	Number	8,084
		Percent	1.6%
	Black Or African American	Number	10,421
		Percent	2.0%
	Hispanic	Number	318,162
		Percent	61.9%
	Native American	Number	56,631
		Percent	11.0%
	Native Hawaiian	Number	332
		Percent	0.1%
	Non-Hispanic White	Number	114,261
		Percent	22.2%
	Some Other Race	Number	85,159
		Percent	16.6%
	Two Or More Races	Number	155,863
		Percent	30.3%

Annie E. Casey Foundation and New Mexico Voices for Children/KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER, October 2023

FIGURE 2: NEW MEXICO FOSTER CARE POPULATION, ENTRIES, AND ENTRY RATES PER 1,000

Population, Entries, and Entry Rates per 1,000																% of Total Child Pop.	% of Total Entries
	Child Population					Entries					Entry Rates per 1,000					2022	23A23B
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	19A19B	20A20B	21A21B	22A22B	23A23B	19A19B	20A20B	21A21B	22A22B	23A23B		
Age at Entry																	
< 1 yr.	23,036	22,138	21,177	20,830	20,830	176	171	140	158	173	7.64	7.72	6.61	7.59	8.31	4.5%	18.0%
1-5 yrs.	124,114	120,684	116,867	113,084	113,084	303	298	229	198	304	2.44	2.47	1.96	1.75	2.69	24.6%	31.6%
6-10 yrs.	134,655	132,550	130,005	127,994	127,994	205	185	145	144	221	1.52	1.40	1.12	1.13	1.73	27.9%	23.0%
11-16 yrs.	167,716	172,580	170,974	169,154	169,154	170	186	138	169	239	1.01	1.08	0.81	1.00	1.41	36.8%	24.8%
17 yrs.	27,688	28,423	28,432	28,451	28,451	15	13	13	9	25	0.54	0.46	0.46	0.32	0.88	6.2%	2.6%
Total	477,209	476,375	467,455	459,513	459,513	869	853	665	678	962	1.82	1.79	1.42	1.48	2.09	100%	100%
Race/Ethnicity																	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	46,844	46,596	45,741	44,880	44,880	44	63	44	43	63	0.94	1.35	0.96	0.96	1.40	9.8%	6.5%
Asian	5,758	5,864	5,802	6,004	6,004	0	0	0	1	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.33	1.3%	0.2%
African American	8,465	8,602	8,559	8,626	8,626	37	34	17	18	42	4.37	3.95	1.99	2.09	4.87	1.9%	4.4%
Hispanic	294,236	293,441	288,284	283,225	283,225	557	557	414	449	531	1.89	1.90	1.44	1.59	1.87	61.6%	55.2%
Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	252	248	237	221	221	1	1	0	0	1	3.97	4.03	0.00	0.00	4.52	0.0%	0.1%
White	109,278	108,939	106,119	103,704	103,704	205	164	175	139	186	1.88	1.51	1.65	1.34	1.79	22.6%	19.3%
Two or More	12,376	12,685	12,713	12,853	12,853	14	25	15	13	25	1.13	1.97	1.18	1.01	1.95	2.8%	2.6%
Unknown						7	8	0	15	112	0	0	0	0	0	0%	11.6%
Missing Data						4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

Administration for Children and Families – New Mexico CFSR 4 Data Profile/AFCARS and NCANDS 02-20-2024

Strategies for Community Outreach

Protective Services County Offices began County Based Recruitment and Retention Teams (CBRRT) in 2023; one of the tasks of the CBRRTs was to gather qualitative data about what successful homes looked like and resources were available in each county/community to address the needs of foster children in those counties/communities. CBRRT's also interviewed resource parents to gather information on which licensed foster homes were willing to accept children and youth by age, gender, and LGBTQ preferences. With that information, the CBRRT's explored the process for how current families were identified and recruited, what residential area within the county do those families live, the type of work they do, and the types of social activities or groups they belong too.

Each team was assigned three tasks to support the recruitment and retention areas in their counties. The first task was to retain currently licensed families, the second was to recruit additional resource families for identified areas of need, and the third was to respond to prospective resource parents and retain them from inquiry through final licensure. Counties also continued quarterly Resource Parent Meetings to support input and feedback. These meetings are happening regularly again after experiencing a decline while CYFD was undergoing a large organizational restructuring. Each county meets monthly to discuss their recruitment and retention strategies and plans and plan monthly events, such as Resource Parent Appreciation events and Ice Cream Socials. CBBRRT's attend various Career and Resource Fairs to recruit new homes but have only seen a small percentage of success when looking at the number of monthly inquiries.

Each region holds monthly orientations to present information on becoming a resource parent. The meeting also addresses aspects of becoming a relative or fictive kin resource parent. Flyers are distributed in the community that describe the content and information presented at the orientation meetings. The Protective Services Placement could use a full-time resource parent recruiters in each office or region to support recruitment events, research opportunities for hold recruitment events, and following up with inquires. The Placement Pillar currently has five navigators, one in each region of the state to answer inquiries, support facilitation of the CBRRT groups and support recruitment. Protective Services field staff are expected to volunteer to participate in these workgroups and events which takes away from their primary position.

Access to Licensure and Licensure Process

Throughout the remainder of 2023 CYFD updated the Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing Standards in collaboration with Nations, Pueblo, and Tribal partners. In January 2024, the new licensing standards were published and in effect. The new licensing standards aim to provide an easier path to licensure for relatives and fictive kin. Because of the collaborative process with our Nations, Pueblo, and Tribal partners CYFD eliminated the need for an initial relative assessment and an initial home study for relatives and fictive kin. The process now includes a comprehensive relative assessment that does not duplicate questions and efforts as was the case in the previous process. The updated licensing standards are accessible on CYFD's external facing website at <https://www.cyfd.nm.gov/policies/>.

An inquiry line is available to prospective resource parents as well as the option of contacting CYFD's Statewide Central Intake to inquire about becoming a resource parent. The CYFD website provides information listed about orientation forums and how to make inquiries about becoming a resource parent through the Binti system. Once an inquiry is made, a navigator is assigned who can support that prospective resource parent through the licensing process. A placement worker is also assigned to assist the prospective resource parent in starting the licensing process.

Under the New Mexico Child Placement Licensing Act, 40-7A-4 D NMSA 1978, the Children and Youth and Families Department is authorized to license and monitor agencies that place children in adoptive

homes or in foster care so that the safety, permanency, and wellbeing interests of the child are served; and to require the agency to protect the rights of children in foster or adoptive placement and to monitor agency compliance with the New Mexico Children's Code, the New Mexico Adoption Act and regulations, the Indian Child Welfare Act, the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children, the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-Ethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996, the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Safety Act, the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act, the Adam Walsh Act, the Fostering Connections for Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Reauthorization of 2010.

Child Placement Agencies (CPAs) are licensed individual, partnership, association or corporation, for profit or non-profit, undertaking to place a child in a home in this or any other state for the purpose of providing foster care or adoption services. An agency may be licensed as an adoption agency, a foster care agency or both. An Adoption agency is an agency licensed by PSD to facilitate the adoption of a child or perform a function within the adoption process. Foster care agency is an agency licensed by PSD for the purpose of supervising foster care homes, treatment foster care homes, or other levels of foster care as developed by protective services division. All Child Placement agencies have website and advertise services in their communicates and across the state. CYFD works closely with Treatment Foster Care (TFC) agencies in providing therapeutic placement for children in foster care.

Staff Training and Working with Diverse Populations

The Placement Pillar has recognized the need more Spanish speaking placement workers and more access to materials and platforms in Spanish. A small increase in salary for those placement workers who speak another language has been offered, but Protective Services continues to lack enough Spanish speaking workers. The Placement Pillar is also working with the Immigration Liaison in with the Office of Children's Advocacy to help in finding more resources and platforms for Spanish speaking resource parents. Obtaining forms in other languages has proven to be difficult, not only in Spanish, but in Dine and other languages spoken by New Mexico's Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. The CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs has created and hired for a new position that will assist in placement of Native American children. The Native American Resource Parent Consultant (NARPC) responsibilities will be to establish professional and supportive relationships with CYFD workforce, Tribal ICWA/Social Workers, community-based providers, and stakeholders.

During the CYFD organizational restructuring, the Placement Pillar lost clinical based positions which supported placement stability through providing support to resource parents in their homes. There continues to be a need for these positions especially for those older youth freed for adoption with higher behavioral and mental health needs. The Placement Pillar is actively working to address the need for licensed resource homes to support older youth with higher needs. A pilot program for Foster Care Plus is being rolled out at the end of 2024 to enhance the resource parent's skills, provide case management, and collaborate to support placement stability for youth who have not had success in a Treatment Foster Care program. The goal is to have five Foster Care Plus licensed homes in 2025 that have the training and case management tools to support Foster Care Plus.

Beginning in 2023, as part of the Kevin S settlement agreement, CYFD has been providing annual trauma information training required of all CYFD Protective Services, Family Services, and Behavioral Health Services staff. Trauma training addresses how workers can improve engagement and address the unique needs of children and families that have experienced individual trauma and generational trauma.

In the past year, OTA created an 8-hour IFPA Best Practices training module for all Protective Service Staff. This training is an overview of the history that lead to the passage of the Indian Child Welfare

Act, federal challenges to ICWA and the passage of the Indian Family Protection Act, active efforts during investigations which includes notification to the tribe; active efforts to prevent the removal of an Indian child from their family, active efforts after a child has been taken into custody to reunite with their family, active efforts to collaborate with the child's tribe throughout the case, and active efforts to ensure the Indian child is in a preferred placement. The Office of Tribal Affairs will continue to provide this training to all new employees.

Efforts to Achieve Appropriate Adoptive Placements

The Protective Services Placement Pillar is utilizing AdoptUS kids as a platform to recruit adoptive placements for children legally freed for adoption without an adoptive resource. Adoption and Retention Specialists, a team of six individuals, are assigned to support targeted recruitment for these children. There are currently 91 children freed for adoption without a resource. CYFD chose to stop in-state recruitment events prior to COVID, so as an alternative the Adoption and Retention Specialists are planning virtual recruitment events with support from New Mexico Heart Gallery Foundation. The Placement Pillar has launched staffings with all counties to discuss these children and to assess potential family members found through SENECA searches; for older youth, CYFD Fostering Connections is partnering with the Placement Pillar to explore with the youth appropriate and supportive adoptive placements.

Data Collection and Measurements

The Office of Performance and Accountability is working with the Placement Pillar in designing a tool to conduct monthly Placement and Licensing Reviews. Reviews will take place every month in the same counties that are selected for CFSR QA review. The Office of Performance and Accountability will work with the Placement Pillar in finalizing the tool by the end of August 2024. Placement and Licensing Reviews will begin in October 2024. Placement Supervisors and Senior Placement Staff will team up and review a randomly selected number of cases. Results will be shared with the Placement Pillar staff and CYFD executive management. The results will be reviewed in tandem with the results of the CFSR case reviews and will be used in making strategic decisions moving forward. The Office of Performance and Accountability will assist the Placement Pillar in setting up some data collection methods to help recruitment and retention of resource parents. Much of this work will be manual until CYFD can fully implement the new CCWIS, NM Impact.

Barriers to Data Collection: One of the barriers identified to data collection is that Protective Services Placement workers must perform double entry of licensing information into our current data system (FACTS) and then again into Binti which built with the purpose of providing a Foster Parent dashboard/portal. Because of the double entry and no interface between FACTS and Binti, some data was lost as there were over 100 homes that lacked updated information. For example, it has been difficult to gather good information on homes identified as willing to take children by age groups. It appears there are many homes willing to take children ages 0-2 and 3-5 age, however there are less homes willing to take ages 6-12 and those 13 and up. Many homes are willing to take siblings. At this time there has not been a reliable method to ensure accurate numbers, but this is a barrier that the Placement Pillar will continue to address to get an accurate picture of licensed foster homes.

Interstate Placement of Children

Children in PSD custody may be placed out-of-state in licensed relative or non-relative foster family homes, or with parents, in accordance with the requirements of the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 and ICPC. Foster family homes are licensed by the receiving state and PSD has no authority to license foster family homes in other states.

Placement of a child in CYFD custody in a placement outside of New Mexico may occur when such a placement is in the best interest of the child and is made in order to:

1. Reunify the child with their parent;
2. Place the child in a prospective adoptive placement in another state;
3. Facilitate the placement of the child with relatives; or
4. Allow a child in custody who is currently in placement with either their parent or foster parent to move out of state.

When a potential foster care or pre-adoptive placement for a child in another state is identified, an ICPC 100A form for each child must be completed. Once completed, it is sent to the receiving state for that state to complete their respective section. If placement is denied by the other state, the child cannot be placed. If the placement is accepted by the other state, ICPC Form 100B is completed by New Mexico and sent to the receiving state.

When a referral is received by New Mexico from another state a PSD placement supervisor is assigned through FACTS and is forwarded the referral information, including the ICPC 100A Form and other documentation. Within 60 calendar days of receipt of the referral from the sending state, the placement worker completes the home safety checklist, family member interviews, and the criminal records checks, and make preliminary recommendations regarding the prospective placement. ICPC staff review the home study and final recommendations and either approve or deny the placement and notify the sending state within 180 days of the referral.

New Mexico no longer has an ICPC agreement with Mexico and must follow all rules, laws and regulations the same as any other country when conducting an ICPC request with Mexico. From CY2021 to the end of CY2023, New Mexico had a total of 549 ICPC requests with 277 meeting the 60-day timeframe for a timely ICPC rate of 50.5%. Criminal Records Checks (CRC) have been identified as a barrier to timely placement. Workers report they have completed all paperwork but are waiting on the CRC to be completed (staffing issues to complete licensures). However, the timeliness has improved when relative licensure changed to 30 days, and this has improved those approvals for relatives within the states. CYFD does not have any fingerprinting machines at any of their county offices so families must go to a third-party provider to get fingerprinted.

Navajo Nation has an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with New Mexico. The current agreement states no ICPC request is needed to place a native child in Arizona or Utah on the Navajo Nation. Stakeholders did note there have been issues with Medicaid being dropped due to lack of communication and understanding of the rules, causing a gap in loss of Medicaid coverage. It is not common for a native child to require an ICPC placement out of state, but it does occasionally happen. New relative licensing procedures and 30-day time frame has helped approval of relative home to be approved sooner.

Non-Discriminatory Fee Structure

CYFD provides foster care maintenance payments to licensed resource homes and licensed foster care providers. Rates are set to provide payments to non-relatives, relatives, and fictive kin in family home settings. Rates are driven by age of the child and level of foster care need. Need is based on the assessing the child's needs to maintain a safe and stable placement while pursuing the child's permanency plan. Rates are also set for congregate care setting based on age and need and takes into consideration other funding streams such as Medicaid payments. *Please see 2023 foster care maintenance rates for CYFD below.*

FAMILY FOSTER HOME SETTINGS

Family Foster Home (Non-Relative, Relative, and Fictive Kin Foster Homes – Level I)

Age	Daily	Monthly 28 Days	Monthly 30 Days	Monthly 31 Days
0-5 yrs.	\$20.91	\$585.48	\$627.30	\$648.21
6-12 yrs.	\$22.06	\$617.68	\$661.80	\$683.86
13-17 yrs.	\$22.95	\$642.60	\$688.50	\$711.45

Treatment Foster Care (Licensed TFC Agencies Placements - Level II)

Age	Daily	Monthly 28 Days	Monthly 30 Days	Monthly 31 Days
0-5 yrs.	\$21.86	\$612.08	\$655.80	\$677.66
6-12 yrs.	\$22.55	\$631.40	\$676.50	\$699.05
13-17 yrs.	\$23.08	\$646.24	\$692.40	\$715.48

Specialized Family Foster Home (Non-Relative, Relative, and Fictive Kin Homes - Level II)

Age	Daily	Monthly 28 Days	Monthly 30 Days	Monthly 31 Days
0-5 yrs.	\$27.09	\$758.52	\$812.70	\$839.70
6-12 yrs.	\$28.21	\$789.88	\$846.30	\$874.51
13-17 yrs.	\$29.08	\$814.24	\$872.40	\$901.48

Specially Arranged Family Foster Home (Non-Relative, Relative, and Fictive Kin Homes - Level III)

Specially Arranged	A variable rate is calculated on an individual basis according to the needs of the child. Level 3 Memorandum for Decision (MFD) Review and Approval needed prior to rate being approved. This amount is entered as a client specific rate in FACTS in the "Out of Home Placement" window.
Level III with Approved MFD	Up to/Maximum of \$1850 per month
ARCA Rate with Approved MFD	ARCA has own rate of \$4031.85. ARCA does not bill Medicaid.

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE/FOSTERING CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

Extended Foster Care (18-21 yrs.)	New Rate	
	Daily	Monthly
Youth Is Own Provider in a Supervised Independent Living Setting that may include youth's last Under 18 Foster Care Setting.	\$25.00	\$750
Specialized Rate for Pregnant and Parenting Youth	Enter Client Specific Rate	
<i>The variable rate can be keyed in for Pregnant and Parenting Youth in the Extended Foster Care Program.</i>		

CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS

Shelter Stay (Emergency and Crisis Shelters as listed in FACTS) (FACTS Foster Care Level I)

Age	Daily	Monthly 28 Days	Monthly 30 Days	Monthly 31 Days
0-5 yrs.	\$175	\$4,900	\$5,250	\$5,425
6-12 yrs.				
13-17 yrs.				

Group Homes/Multi-Purpose Homes (FACTS Foster Care Level I)

Age	Daily	Monthly 28 Days	Monthly 30 Days	Monthly 31 Days
0-5 yrs.	\$21.76	\$609.28	\$652.80	\$674.56
6-12 yrs.	\$23.14	\$647.92	\$694.20	\$717.34
13-17 yrs.	\$24.13	\$675.64	\$723.90	\$748.03

Pregnant and Parenting Home/Maternity Home (FACTS Foster Care Level I)

Age	Daily	Monthly 28 Days	Monthly 30 Days	Monthly 31 Days
6-12 yrs.	\$24.14	\$675.92	\$724.20	\$748.34
13-17 yrs.				

Residential Treatment Center JCAHO Accredited – In State and Licensed (Level II)

Age	Daily	Monthly 28 Days	Monthly 30 Days	Monthly 31 Days
0-5yrs	\$0.67	\$18.76	\$20.10	\$20.77
6-12 yrs	\$1.37	\$38.36	\$41.10	\$42.47
13-17 yrs	\$1.87	\$52.36	\$56.10	\$57.97
Medicaid Reimbursed Placement				

II: HEALTHCARE OVERSIGHT AND COORDINATION PLAN

CYFD collaborates with New Mexico's Healthcare Authority and Managed Care Organizations to provide quality healthcare oversight and coordination for children and youth in state custody.

CONSULTATION WITH MEDICAL ASSISTANCE DIVISION (MAD) OF HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY (HCA)

The Health Care Authority is the New Mexico's designated Medicaid agency. CYFD collaborates with HCA in the following ways:

- **Biweekly Meetings:** The Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit meets with Medical Assistance Division (MAD) Quality Bureau and other MAD staff to discuss tracking needs and services for Children in State Custody (CISC) as part of the Kevin S Settlement Agreement. These meetings also provide for discussion and preparation of the roll out of the new Medicaid Turquoise Care program beginning July 1, 2024. As part of this transition, all CISC will be assigned to one Managed Care Organization instead of being spread across three different Managed Care organizations.
- **Quarterly Meetings:** The Title IV-E/Medicaid unit and Fostering Connection have quarterly meetings with the MAD Eligibility staff to discuss issues around eligibility and maintenance of Medicaid for Children in State Custody (CISC) and youth that age of foster care at age 26, or youth that come to New Mexico who have aged out of foster care from another state. CYFD has developed an agreement with the Medical Assistance Division within the New Mexico Healthcare Authority to provide Medicaid coverage to young adults until the age of 26.
- **Weekly Meetings with HCA Tribal Liaison:** The Office of Tribal Affairs, Protective Services Federal Reporting Bureau and the Office of General counsel meet with HSD's Tribal liaison (weekly) and the Medicaid Assurance Department (biweekly) to discuss, collaborate and problem solve regarding the development and expansion of access to culturally relevant services, treatments, interventions and supports, including traditional and customary healing, through Medicaid, for children in state custody.

MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATIONS (MCOS)

Most children and youth who are covered by Medicaid are enrolled with an MCOs in the state. The child's worker ensures every child in care is referred to and assigned an MCO care coordinator. The worker verifies this immediately upon assignment of the permanency planning case. The MCO care coordinator assigned to the child or youth must work in conjunction with the worker, the resource family, and the child or youth to identify needed services. A Native American child or youth may elect to opt-out of Medicaid Managed Care and will have medical coverage under a Medicaid "Fee for Service" model.

Within three business days of notification of the child's or youth's entry into CYFD custody, the MCO care coordinator must contact the child or youth's worker to engage with the child or youth and the child's or youth's team. The CYFD Title IV-E/Medicaid Specialist can assist the MCO Care Coordinator in locating contact information for the child/youth's worker and can assist in contacting the MCO care coordinator when needed. If a resource parent refuses care coordination, the MCO care coordinator must contact the child or youth's permanency worker to inform them of the refusal. The worker contacts the resource parent to ensure that the resource parent accepts care coordination.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Every child or youth in state custody will receive a comprehensive well-child checkup within 30 days of

entering state custody. Once the initial well-child check is completed, the child or youth will receive annual well-child checks, annual eye exams, and bi-annual dental exams and cleanings. The child or youth's PPW documents information regarding the child's medical care, behavioral health care, dental care, and eye care and maintains copies of records are maintained in the child's case file; records are provided to the resource family. If the child is 14 years or older, the child's written consent is required for the release of behavioral health and medical records. Any medications, prescribed or over-the-counter medications, administered must be clearly documented in every court report filed.

- **Immunizations:** Immunization records, if they exist, are to be kept current. In any case where the parent, guardian, or custodian objects to immunizing the child, the PPW informs the parent, guardian, or legal custodian they may obtain an exemption certificate from the Department of Health. The child's worker obtains a copy of the exemption certificate, provides it to the child's school, and maintains it in the child's record. The worker also notifies their supervisor of the parent, guardian, or custodian's objection to immunizations. The exemption certificate is filed in the child's case record and is also provided to the child's guardian ad litem or youth attorney.
- **Medical Decisions:** If the rights of the parent, guardian, or custodian have not been terminated, they maintain the right to make medical decisions regarding their child. If the child is 14 years or older, New Mexico law allows the child the right to make medical and behavioral health treatment decisions for him or herself. [NM Stat §§ 32A-6A-14 through 16 (2019)] The child's worker must involve the child's parent, guardian, or custodian in all medical decisions and keep them informed of the child's health status. Children under 14 should be involved in medical decisions about their health, whenever possible. Children and youth aged 14 years or older must be involved in all medical decisions and be kept informed of any health-related issues. When there is an injury or medical condition requiring medical attention for any child or youth, the worker notifies the child's guardian ad litem or youth attorney via email within one business day of learning of the injury or condition.

MEDICAID/MEDICAL COVERAGE

Nearly all children and youth who enter CYFD custody will qualify for Medicaid under the category of eligibility (COE) 066, however, there are additional Medicaid COEs for children in state custody. The Title IV-E/Medicaid Specialist works with the Health Care Authority (HCA), and Medical Assistance Division (MAD) to qualify the child under the correct category of eligibility to begin coverage or to ensure continued Medicaid coverage.

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits:** SSI benefits are Social Security benefits paid to a child or youth with a documented disability. Children or youth who receive SSI are automatically eligible for Medicaid through the Social Security Administration under COE 004.
- **Non-Citizens:** Children and youth who are non-citizens may not qualify for Medicaid under the COE 066. The Title IV-E Specialist will work with HCA MAD Eligibility Bureau to determine if the child or youth can qualify for Medicaid under another category of eligibility. If the child or youth cannot qualify for Medicaid, then CYFD is responsible for paying all medical and therapeutic expenses through Title XX or the State General Fund. The Title IV-E/Medicaid Specialist can approve COE 066 for non-citizen children and victims of human trafficking. If a child or youth secures SIJS (special immigrant-juvenile status), the Specialist can approve COE 066.
- **Out of State Placements:** When a child or youth is placed out of state through the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC), medical coverage is obtained in the following ways:

1. *New Mexico is the Sending State, and the Child or Youth is IV-E Eligible:* The child/youth's worker verifies the child or youth's IV-E status with their assigned Title IV-E/Medicaid Specialists and indicates the child or youth is IV-E eligible by checking the box on the 100B ICPC (Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children).
2. *New Mexico is the Sending State, and the Child or Youth is not IV-E Eligible:* The child/youth's worker must work with the receiving state to set up Medicaid in that state. New Mexico Medicaid will not follow the child across State lines. For non-IV-E eligible children, the worker provides the out-of-state resource family a copy of the child's ex-parte custody order so that family can successfully apply for Medicaid in the receiving state.
3. *New Mexico is the Receiving State, and the Child or Youth is IV-E Eligible:* The child's IV-E eligibility will be indicated on the 100B, and the Title IV-E/Medicaid Specialist will approve New Mexico Medicaid.
4. *When New Mexico is the Receiving State, and the Child or Youth is Not IV-E Eligible:* The child/youth's worker will notify the Title IV-E/Medicaid Specialist to approve New Mexico Medicaid.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE CHILD

The effects of foster care can be extremely traumatic and stressful for children and youth. Children and youth may have also experienced some level of trauma prior to coming into care. These exposures and experiences may lead to an increased need for behavioral and mental health services and supports. These needs may be evidenced through various behaviors such as:

- self-harm;
- putting themselves in unsafe settings;
- changes in mood (such as anger or depression);
- changes in social connections;
- truancy or decreased school performance; and
- an overall increase in withdrawn or negative behaviors.

To support the child through the experience of foster care, and to address their history of trauma, the Investigation Worker or the PPW conducts a New Mexico Crisis Assessment Tool (CAT) or a New Mexico Child and Adolescent Needs & Strengths (CANS) Tool screening to better understand the needs and strengths of the child or youth and to make appropriate referrals to community providers. In addition to the CAT or CANS screening, the worker can provide additional support to children or youth by:

- actively engaging with and listening to the child or youth during home visits or contacts.
- obtaining information from the child or youth about mood, school performance, extracurricular activities, patterns of behaviors and friends.
- providing ongoing assessment of the child or youth's mental and behavioral health needs and making appropriate referrals to meet their needs.

New Mexico Crisis Assessment Tool (CAT): The CAT is a decision support and communication tool that is used as a way of communicating the needs and strengths of the child or youth and their caregivers in a quick and consistent manner. It is used to make decisions regarding a child or youth's foster care level of care, treatment, services, supports, etc. Once an abuse and neglect petition has been filed, all children in the case will have a CAT completed by the investigator and filed with the court clerk no less than 24-hours before the 10-day hearing. If this deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the screening results must be filed no less than one business day prior to the 10-day hearing.

A Community Behavioral Health Clinician (CBHC) may consult with the worker regarding the CAT as needed.

New Mexico Child and Adolescent Needs & Strengths (CANS) Tool: The CANS is a screening tool that summarizes and integrates information that the worker has gathered during the case. The CANS is completed by the assigned worker or an available CANS-certified CYFD worker within 45 days of removal from the home. The CANS is re-administered before the initial judicial review and every judicial review and permanency hearing (or within six months, whichever comes first) to review progress in the case plan or to adjust services and supports as results may indicate. The CANS shall also be updated upon discharge from CYFD custody. In addition, the CANS shall be completed whenever any change in behavior is identified, and after any significant life-changing event. Life-changing events may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- change in placement;
- change in the clinical level of care;
- a safety or crisis event;
- a traumatic event; and
- a birth or death of a family member.

Results from the CANS may indicate the need for additional assessments or evaluations, including screening for intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or sexual exploitation; CANS results drive discussions with teams related to treatment services and evaluations. Follow-up screenings, evaluations, or assessments that are indicated by the CAT/CANS will be conducted immediately when possible, or within 10 days of indication otherwise. If a child or youth is discharged from legal custody before screenings, evaluations, or assessments are completed, then the worker must make a referral for those services. The worker is responsible for coordinating these additional assessments or evaluations by collaborating with the provider, the Resource Family, the parent, guardian, or custodian, and other interested parties, such as the CBHC. Recommendations for behavioral health services are documented in the child/youth's case file.

Referrals For Evaluations or Other Assessments: Based on the CAT or CANS results, referrals for further assessment or evaluation may be needed. Other assessments or evaluations may include (but are not limited to) psychological, neuropsychological, and developmental assessments. Referrals to providers must reflect the individual needs of the child or youth as identified in the CAT and CANS screening.

- **Selecting a Provider:** When it is determined further assessment or evaluation is needed for a child or youth, the worker consults with the child or youth's team (including resource parents and parent, guardian, or custodian when rights have not been terminated) to identify and select an appropriate provider to meet the needs of the child or youth.
- **Identifying Parameters of an Evaluation:** When making a referral, the worker ensures the results of the CANS yields an appropriate referral to meet the needs of the child or youth. The worker attaches to the referral any other necessary collateral information, in addition to the results from most recent CANS or CAT. If the child is 14 years or older, written consent by the child is required for release of behavioral health and medical records.

PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

The use of psychotropic medication is one of several interventions used to address the emotional and behavioral needs of children in PSD custody and is used in concert with other interventions in accordance with the treatment plan. Children are to be free from unnecessary or excessive medication

as expressed in the Children's Code 32A-6A- 12A (12). Depending on the age of the child or number of medications prescribed, a higher level of monitoring may be warranted. If there are concerns with the medications (type, dose, multiple, off-label) The child/youth's worker asks psychiatric clinical experts about the most appropriate use of medication, dosage, and ongoing monitoring.

Prescription and Use of Psychotropic Medications: CYFD only accepts prescriptions of psychotropic medications, including "as needed" (PRN) psychotropic medications, prescribed by professional providers who have been licensed to prescribe such medications. Prior to the initial prescription, the child/youth's worker requests the prescribing provider to conduct a comprehensive evaluation to include any applicable lab work and explain the need for the medication related to the child's mental health diagnosis. The worker requests that the prescribing provider discuss the potential side effects, as well as risks and benefits of taking the medications versus not taking the medication (See Informed Consent below). The worker or the child or youth's parent, guardian, or custodian retains the right to request a second opinion if there is reason to question the prescription of psychotropic medication for a child.

- **Consent:** For a child under 14 years of age, the parent, guardian, or custodian decides whether to consent to the psychotropic medication, unless parental rights have been terminated. If parental rights have been terminated, the PPW consults with the supervisor and the child's resource parent or other caretaker, before consenting to any psychotropic medication. Youth 14 years of age or older decide whether to consent to psychotropic medication.
- **Therapeutic Use:** Psychotropic medications may be an appropriate part of a treatment plan when needed to help a child or youth in CYFD custody attain and maintain their highest level of functioning and well-being. Psychotropic medication is only one component of the total therapeutic approach and use of such medication must be included in the child or youth's treatment plan. The treatment plan must be reviewed at regular intervals by the child's treatment team and should also include monitoring of lab work of which the child/youth's worker is an active participant. Psychotropic medication will only be used for the purpose of treating the symptoms related to the child or youth's diagnosed psychiatric condition. Other interventions to address the symptoms should be considered in the overall behavioral health treatment plan.

PSD Approval Process: Prior to approving the prescribed medication (including off-label usage and over-the-counter medication) for the child or youth, the child/youth's worker consults with the prescribing provider, parent, guardian or custodian, and their supervisor within seven calendar days of the medication recommendation.

- **Informed Consent:** Informed consent must be obtained for a child or youth in custody to receive psychotropic medication. At a minimum, informed consent is the process of the prescribing provider presenting information to the child and parent, guardian, or custodian, or the youth, about the risks and benefits of medication and presenting all other possible treatment options for the child. The intent being that youth 14 years and older and the parent, guardian, or custodian of a child under 14 years of age can make an informed decision regarding which treatment option is most appropriate for the child. The child/youth's worker uses the following questions from "*Questions for Parents, Guardians and Workers to Ask Doctors*" to guide medication discussions with the provider:
 1. What is the medication being prescribed for?
 2. What changes should we expect to see from the use of this medication?
 3. How long before the medication begins to have a therapeutic effect?

4. What are the possible side effects that I should be watching for? What can I do to address any side effects from the medication?
5. Are there any drug interactions that I should be aware of while this child is on this medication?
6. How long will the child need to be on the medication? (Is this a long-term medication, a trial medication, or a short-term solution?)
7. Are there any alternatives that could be used instead of medication to treat the behavior or the symptoms that we could try at home?

- Differing Parental Opinion or Absent Parent for a Child under 14 Years of Age:

- When the child's parent, guardian or legal custodian, or child/youth's worker does not agree with the treatment option of using psychotropic medication to address symptoms of a diagnosed psychiatric condition, the worker contacts another prescribing provider for a second opinion regarding the use of psychotropic medication. The worker invites the parent, guardian or custodian to the child's appointment. If the parent, guardian or custodian is unable to attend, the worker discusses the second opinion with the child's parent, guardian or custodian. If the parent, guardian or custodian continues to object to the use of psychotropic medication, but CYFD supports the use of psychotropic medication to address the symptoms, the worker requests a family-centered meeting (FCM), or court mediation.
- In cases where there is an absent parent, CYFD will continue its efforts to locate the parent and document those efforts in the case record.

- Youth Aged 14 and Older: Consent to the use of psychotropic medication is required from the youth aged 14 and older. The child/youth's worker seeks consent from the youth for the use of the psychotropic medication. The worker discusses what medication is used for and the possible side effects. In accordance with NMSA 32A-6A-15, when the youth does not give consent, but the worker and parent, guardian, or custodian support the use of psychotropic medication to address the symptoms of a diagnosed psychiatric condition, then the worker may obtain two physician evaluations to determine incapacity, or may seek a court order to determine whether the youth has the capacity to make such a decision. If the court determines the youth does not have the capacity to make such a decision, the worker may request the appointment of a mental health treatment guardian who then will decide whether to consent to the medication on behalf of the youth. If CYFD seeks a court order, the prescribing provider must be willing and able to testify. The worker must tell the youth what is happening and why and must inform the youth's attorney of CYFD's decision to assess the youth's capacity to consent to medication, as well as the youth's right to request an FCM, court mediation or a hearing related to the use of psychotropic medication.

Obtaining informed consent by a youth 14 and older is a three-part process that ensures the youth's understanding regarding the use of psychotropic medication and its potential effects, side effects, and drug interactions with other medications or substances. When discussing psychotropic medication and informed consent with the youth, the PPW must take into consideration:

- the child's developmental abilities;
- the child's treatment options;
- the child's right to speak with a youth attorney regarding the presumption of capacity to consent;

- the child voluntarily choosing to undergo treatment options; and
- how the child is communicating this choice or refusal to consent and how it is documented.

Emergency Use of Psychotropic Medication: The emergency use of psychotropic medications will be allowed only for children placed in a hospital facility or a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility per federal guidelines and must follow the requirements of state law (the Children's Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Act).

If emergency use of psychotropic medications or chemical restraints is a frequent use for emergency behavior modification for a child or youth (more than twice during an entire placement), an emergency treatment team meeting must take place to explore other alternatives or to discuss root causes and determine approaches other than medications or chemical restraints to address the exhibited behavior. CYFD will assure all in-state and out-of-state hospital and psychiatric residential treatment facilities to which children and youth in CYFD custody are admitted understand these limitations, document the use of emergency medications in a consistent and timely manner in the facility's records regarding the child or youth, and notify via email or other written communication to the child/youth's worker within 24 hours of their use.

Monitoring and Tracking: When a psychotropic medication has been prescribed to a child/youth, the child/youth's worker is responsible for regularly assessing the impact of the medication on the child. The worker participates in every medication management meeting with the treatment team either in person or by phone. The meetings occur with the prescribing physician at least monthly if the child is in TFC/RTC or more frequently if recommended by the prescriber. Meetings with the prescribing physician must be held at least every 90 days for children in other settings, or more frequently as recommended by the prescriber. The child or youth's CYFD and MCO care coordinators must participate in the treatment team meetings. Other treatment team members may participate as requested or applicable.

CYFD monitors and tracks trends of psychotropic medication for children in care through its management information system (FACTS). Information is shared with field staff to monitor the well-being of children in care. Ongoing training is provided to PSD staff on the use of psychotropic medication regarding diagnosis, symptoms, and typical classes of medication.

A list of potential medications to be considered psychotropics and any potential side effects or interactions with other medications (medical or behavioral health) will be maintained by the agency clinical expert and reviewed and updated regularly.

Higher level of monitoring: While there are specified practices when the child is prescribed psychotropic medication, most of these practices are also relevant for children who have chronic health conditions. Prescription medication should always be monitored closely; however, there are certain criteria the child/youth's must always be aware of, which indicate a higher level of review and monitoring are needed. If a child/youth may need higher level of monitoring, then the worker submits a request for consultation from an independently licensed clinician authorized by New Mexico law to prescribe psychotropic or other medications for behavioral health conditions and who has knowledge of and experience with such medications.

The worker will schedule staffings at least every 60 days to review the child or youth's medication use. More frequent staffings will be called if the child or youth is experiencing difficulties with the medications or side effects or recurring or uncontrolled symptoms.

III. DISASTER PLAN

The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) provides child protective services and other child welfare services in every geographic area in the state. Administration of the child welfare program is centralized, with direct services offered through county offices located within five designated regions. In the event of a wide-scale emergency, CYFD is responsible for the children in its custody. CYFD also plays a role in the protection of other children who may become separated from their caregivers due to the emergency. The federal government has recognized the importance of these responsibilities for child welfare agencies across the nation, as codified in the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006. In response to this Act, and in acknowledgement of its responsibility to the children entrusted to its care, CYFD has developed an All-Hazard Emergency Response Plan.

In February of 2020, CYFD developed an all hazard “Disaster Response and Recovery Plan - Continuity of Operation for Child Welfare” in response to the growing concerns of a potential COVID-19 pandemic. The updated plan included CYFD’s “Protective Services All-Hazard Emergency Response Plan” along with other essential functions from CYFD’s departments. Given the unprecedented nature of COVID-19 many of CYFD’s initial planning assumptions had to be adjusted. In May 2022 the Emergency Response Plan Workgroup was created in to update and improve the plan from February 2020. As a result of that workgroup, County-based emergency plans identify contact information, building lay out with emergency exits, and protocols for following up with foster children, resource parents, and staff in the event of an emergency. All the plans are managed by regional and county office administrators. All the plans are organized by county offices and located on the internally accessible CYFD Employee Portal.

In May 2025, CYFD identified the need to update the County-based emergency plans to include the following information:

1. Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under state care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster.
2. Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster and provide services in those cases.
3. Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster.
4. Preserve essential program records.

New Mexico does not typically experience many disasters, but wildfires are a threat to rural communities in the state. In cases over the past two years, when a wildfire has caused evacuation of a city or town, CYFD Operations and Office of the Secretary provides support to that county office with:

1. Accounting for employees to ensure safety.
2. Moving case records to an area where threat is not imminent.
3. Contacting foster families, children and youth to verify location, safety, and needs.
4. Provide for on going support with shelter when foster families, children and youth need to evacuate their homes.

Additionally, those county offices affected by disaster are provide additional support through Statewide Central Intake and provided courtesy support in responding to child welfare cases from neighboring counties.

In August 2024, the Office of Performance and Accountability Deputy Director began working with regional and county office administrators and CYFD Operations Manager to update all 32 County Office

plans. This task is expected to be completed by June 2025. CYFD will also work with the Administration for Children and Families Children's Bureau on technical assistance in contacting and communication with other states about their current disaster plans. Collaboration and lessons learned from other state may provide additional support and help to CYFD staff, resource parents, children, youth, and parents.

IV. TRAINING PLAN

STAFF TRAINING AND THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The previous five-year plan was interrupted and modified due to the COVID pandemic, staff changes, and leadership shifts. The in-person structure of new hire training and ongoing staff training pivoted to a virtual platform that was less interactive and did not provide an opportunity for practice, simulation lab work, or coaching. Since 2022, CYFD has moved to a blended learning model incorporating in-person, e-learning, and live online learning. Since the spring of 2022, significant training and coaching structure changes have been made, including a collaborative system-wide approach to learning and development. The new plan, derived from best practices and internal evaluation of current training practices, will be outlined below. The new training plans aim to continue to provide robust training and coaching to our new hires, develop advanced on-the-job training, and implement ongoing staff training that supports continued growth and career paths for staff to grow their careers within CYFD. CYFD recognizes that planned activities and processes may shift with the results of the federal Round 4 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) currently being conducted.

Qualifying New Workers

An important goal set to achieve during this five year period is to develop a training system that “qualifies” staff to be ready to begin field work and advance their practice through on-the-job training. After New Employee Training (NET), staff return to their offices to receive on-the-job training (OJT) from other staff members or supervisors. The Workforce Development Bureau team informs supervisors of any concerns or areas that need development specific to their workers. Staff, coaches, and supervisors work together to build a development plan within four weeks after the completion of NET. This plan currently serves as a guide for the supervisor to provide targeted OJT and for the coach to suggest targeted learning activities for the employee. However, there is no current process for measuring or ensuring competency. Creating a qualification process would provide documentation of a worker’s skillsets as they enter the field and build their skillsets and practice. Developing a process to qualify new hires will contribute to the safety and well-being of children and families. The development of the qualification plan will include the following phases.

Phase One

1. Engage stakeholders in the process. Stakeholders include PSD field staff, supervisors, children and families with lived experience, providers, community members, and representatives from tribes, pueblos, and nations.
2. Conduct an in-depth evaluation of the current training system’s effectiveness and determine needed measures to better the system to yield prepared PSD field staff. Develop recommendations for how coaching should complement new hire training to facilitate learning transfer.
3. Partner with Technical Assistance providers and area Universities to research best practices and develop change management and implementation plans.
4. Develop an executable project plan for the design and redesign of the curriculum.
5. Develop criteria for the Qualification Program, plans for those not obtaining qualification, and continuous learning requirements.

Phase Two

1. Partner with Technical Assistance consultants to develop role-specific job competency profiles that will support skills development and achieving competency. Develop recommendations for how regional coaches partner with supervisors and new employees to utilize job competency profiles for initial and ongoing professional development.
2. Align initial new hire training content with best practices, job competencies, organizational goals, process improvement commitments, and other contributing factors.
3. Develop on-the-job training protocols that align with job competencies.
4. Provide supervisors with training and ongoing coaching to better understand their role in facilitating on-the-job training and the coming Qualification Program.
5. Communicate changes and the Qualification Program plan and timeline.

Phase Three

1. Develop program pilot. The pilot version will be evaluated using empirical data derived from outcome data that can be linked to the participants' training system and qualification process.
2. Outcomes and other data will be compared to workers who did not participate in the pilot.

Phase Four

1. Make the necessary changes to the program and launch the finalized program by the end of Year 3.
2. Evaluation efforts will be ongoing, and needed adjustments and improvements will be made continuously.

Phase Five

1. Begin planning for additional qualification programs for advanced levels, such as senior workers, supervisors, etc.
2. Develop leadership coaching initiatives specifically designed for senior workers, supervisors, and managers that align with qualification programs and support leadership development.

Training for Non-Social Work Prepared Workers-INSPIRE Project

The New Mexico Highlands University Facundo Valdez School of Social Work's (NMHU FVSSW) Center for Excellence in Social Work (Center) is developing a 12-month project titled "A Training Initiative for Non-Social Work Prepared Individuals in Child Protective Services to Support the Reunification and Empowerment of Families" (INSPIRE). The INSPIRE project aims to enhance the mandatory core training provided by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for new employees, focusing on recently hired PSD workers from various disciplines who lack social work degrees. This project will span 18 months. Renewing the project will be determined near the end of the 12-month commitment along with assessing the current needs of the PSD workforce and capacity of the Workforce Development Bureau. However, it is planned to carry out the pieces of training or a version of it over the next five years.

The INSPIRE project will offer an 8-module curriculum for up to 200 PSD workers lacking social work degrees. The curriculum will be delivered to ten cohorts, each consisting of 20 participants, through eight 90-minute lunch and learn sessions conducted in a hybrid format. Each session will feature 45 minutes of interactive instruction, a 5-minute review of a relevant case scenario, 35 minutes dedicated to skills application, and 5 minutes for questions and answers. Participants will also receive pre-work assignments to prepare for each session. The eight modules will cover the following topics:

1. Establishing a Shared Paradigm: Safety First and Family (Re)Unification as a Goal (Dignity and Worth of Families/Caregivers);
2. The Lenses Through Which We See Families/Caregivers: Knowing and Addressing Our Hot Buttons (Biases and Trauma Exposure for Workers);
3. Noticing and Integrating Cultural Capital and Strengths of Families/Caregivers in the Work;
4. Rethinking Caregiver Behaviors Through a Trauma-Informed Lens;
5. Balancing Child Safety and Self-Determination in the Face of Caregiver Intimate Partner Violence or Substance Use;
6. Leaning into Supervision: Methods for Maximizing Support from Your Supervisor;
7. The Value of Critical Incident Debriefing and Reflective Practices; and
8. Achieving Balance by Integrating Self- and Collective Care into Your Work Life.

A Trauma-Informed and Responsive System

Over the past several years, CYFD has taken great measures to build a more trauma-responsive system. This includes developing new and more in-depth training for all CYFD staff and being a trauma-responsive leader for new supervisors and managers. Currently, **97%** of all CYFD staff with over one year of service have completed the training. The leadership-level training was rolled out in the spring of 2024. This training will continue with the goal of all PSD supervisors and managers completing the training by March 2025. All newly hired PSD supervisors and managers must be enrolled in a session within 90 days of their new position's start date.

Over the next five years, we plan to expand on the current offering. This includes:

1. A yearly schedule of quarterly topic-specific Trauma-informed training. CYFD will be partnering with subject matter experts to provide the training. Topics will be determined according to data collected and compiled by the Training Evaluator and Quality Assurance team. This data is currently under review by the Quarterly Trauma Informed Training Cross-divisional team. A schedule of sessions and classes will be published by November 2024. The first session will be facilitated in January 2025. All PSD leaders will be expected to participate in these sessions, and PSD field workers will be strongly encouraged to attend. PSD field workers will be required to attend two of the four sessions per year.
2. Each year, the Cross-divisional team will continue to evaluate data findings and determine the topics for the following year. The committee has agreed that in the event of any significant incidents that affect CYFD staff, families, or children, the content of upcoming sessions will change to address trauma effects related to the incident.
3. The efficacy of the current Trauma-informed training for new hires is assessed regularly. A survey is sent every six months to those who participated in the class during the previous six months. The survey collects data regarding knowledge, application, and support. We are looking at what people remember or know related to the course content, how they are or are not applying that knowledge, and how they are receiving or seeking support to maintain their resiliency and avoid secondary trauma.
4. The overarching goal of all trauma-related training is to assist employees in addressing trauma experienced by the child, birth family or legal guardian, the foster parents, and themselves.

Child Maltreatment

While CYFD currently has a robust Child Maltreatment training module, the five-year plan includes expanding on the foundational training to build a more in-depth knowledge base and additional skills-building opportunities for new and existing staff. Currently, newly hired PSD workers complete an e-learning module and then attend an in-person class with Dr. Karen Campbell that dives deeper into the practice of identifying and responding to maltreatment. Dr. Karen Campbell's career has been based in New Mexico. Dr. Campbell graduated from the University of New Mexico (UNM) Medical School in 1994 and subsequently completed her Residency and Fellowship with a focus in Forensic Pediatrics/Child Abuse in 1998. Dr. Campbell serves on the UNM Child Abuse Response Team (CART) and has provided expert consultation to CYFD for several years.

Over the next five years, the Workforce Development Bureau will collaborate with Protective Services subject matter experts, service providers, and develop technical assistance resources to expand the current system. In addition, people with lived experience in the child welfare system will be invited to participate in the development and implementation of advanced Child Maltreatment training.

Year one's plan includes the development of supervisory training that addresses supervisors' understanding of data regarding child maltreatment and effectively supervising and supporting staff regarding child maltreatment. Secondly, experts from the University of New Mexico Hospital's Child Abuse Reporting Team (CART) will be asked to collaborate in developing and implementing advancing staff and leader training. CART is a team of specialized healthcare providers who are dedicated to evaluating and caring for children and adolescents when there are concerns for physical abuse, neglect, or emotional abuse. They provide comprehensive medical care, crisis intervention and referrals. In addition, a plan to design and implement a Collaborative Assessment Process (CAP) refresher and reinvigorating the organization's commitment to implementing Safe and Together training and to utilizing the model.

Year two will see the development and pilot of micro-training opportunities. This encompasses the creation of six short e-learn modules, released bi-monthly, that provide participants with videoed scenarios or other training activities, opportunities to practice assessment skills, and feedback regarding their assessment. These micro-learnings will be mandated to all field staff. Supervisors will be accountable for debriefing microlearning content with staff individually or in a group setting. They will also be responsible for ensuring staff complete the micro-learnings. After the pilot, the project will be assessed, and a determination will be made to continue with microlearning events or pivot to another method to continue the commitment to increasing the identification of child maltreatment, prevention of repeat child maltreatment, and related content. Current topics slated for microlearning development include:

1. Trafficking;
2. Substance Use and Parenting;
3. Adult Mental Health and Parenting;
4. Children's Mental Health;
5. Interpersonal Violence; and
6. Sexual Abuse

Equitable Child Welfare Practices

Equitable practice, being the consistent and just treatment of all people, including individuals who belong to underserved and marginalized communities, has proven to be an area of need in most states. New Mexico faces challenges due to our rural and remote communities, 23 unique sovereign

nations (Native American tribes, pueblos, and nation), lack of adequate statewide services or inability to access services, diverse communities, and relationships with community members and providers. While great strides have been made in providing Cultural Humility, ICWA/IFPA Best Practices, and Perception and Bias training, more work can be done. Currently, PSD workers receive 22 hours of related training during their first year. Supervisor-level training is being prepared for implementation in the Fall of 2024. The curriculum is designed in collaboration with our tribal, pueblos and nation partners. This curriculum will focus on leadership behavior and supervisory skills related to diversity, equity, and servicing marginalized communities. A more advanced senior leadership level, 26-hour training, is in the works and slated to be rolled out in the fall of 2026.

Year one will begin data collection regarding equitable practices and the impact of training on practice and our children and families. A multi-disciplinary team that includes representation from our tribes, pueblos and nation, Resource Parents, children and parents with lived experience, and field staff and leaders will be formed to review data and determine a plan of action, design and implementation plan, and program evaluation plan. It is planned that by year three an initiative to increase equity will be in place. In addition, a full-time position will be proposed to continue and expand on the work. It is hoped that the position will be the beginning of a fully staffed and functioning unit committed to decreasing inequities in New Mexico's marginalized communities.

In 2023, CYFD began a community engagement initiative. This included an 8-hour training course for all CYFD leaders, supervisors, and above. Unfortunately, staffing and leadership changes led to the initiative being put on hold. The initiative's next phase would have included community meetings to build trusting relationships and gather continuous feedback from New Mexico communities and CYFD services. It is planned by year three, the ability to bring back this initiative, starting with Community Engagement training for all leaders. All leaders will be required to participate in a minimum of two community events per year. The collected feedback will be aggregated and presented to CYFD leaders bi-yearly.

Building Trust and Engagement

The goal of trust and engagement training is for all employees to learn to communicate with children, parents, guardians, foster parents, and other partners in child welfare to effectively assist in achieving safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. We partner with the Child Welfare Group to provide Individualized Planning Process (IPP) training and facilitation for PSD staff. The purpose of the IPP facilitation specialists is to assist and facilitate family-centered meetings that are individualized to family needs and assist protective services to ensure quality services to achieve the goals of safety and well-being for children and families served by the agency. Newly hired field staff receive skills training in interviewing, engagement, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, documentation, and assessment tools. Learning is reinforced with ample practice and coaching. During the next 5 years, this work will continue and be expanded on with additional training, skills practice opportunities and coaching activities.

Augmented Reality Training Environment

CYFD has partnered with the University of Utah to implement an Augmented Reality application that staff can use to refine their skill sets. Currently, the application is in its infancy. The University of Utah is continuously expanding the scope of the scenarios. During New Employee Training (NET), new hires complete scenarios designed to build situational awareness, observation, scene assessment, and documentation skills. The modules provide learners with feedback and detailed reasoning behind the feedback. In addition, reports are produced to help students determine what

skills to focus on as they develop their practice. We plan to expand our use as the scenarios and technology are refined and grow. CYFD has committed to working with the University of Utah to help build an ICWA-specific scenario. This work is expected to be completed and implemented by 2028.

Legal Week and Legal Accountability and Responsibility

Given organizational changes, the amount of legal-related training for PSD workers has decreased to e-learning during new hires' NET training and yearly Mock Trial training sessions. Most legal-related training happens on the job through supervisors and peers. In addition to the current activities, we intend to design and implement a weeklong statewide summit to provide new and refresher training on all aspects of interacting and working with the legal system. This work will be a joint effort with the newly formed Office of Family Representation and Advocacy, the Courts, CYFD legal staff, field staff and supervisor, resource parents, and those with lived experience. The goal is to launch the first weeklong summit during the Summer of 2026. This will be a yearly event for CYFD staff and providers working with our children and families.

For the past few years, mock trial events have only been facilitated in Region 5. This is due to CYFD staffing and staffing within the court systems. In 2025, we plan to expand into other parts of the state. By the end of 2027, we plan to have mock trial learning events in at least six locations, once per year, per location. In addition, in Region 5, Regional Coaches and CYFD Legal staff facilitate a monthly legal debriefing and quarterly affidavit and court reporting writing workshops. Alongside mock trial learning events, we plan to expand the debriefing and legal writing workshops statewide.

Data-Driven System

NM Impact: CYFD's Office of Performance and Accountability is responsible for collecting and analyzing data regarding the efficacy and quality of our child welfare activities. County-specific data is reviewed by quality assurance teams to determine continuous improvement efforts. Data is regularly reported and used to make decisions and implement change. A foundational level class is offered on quality documentation and use of data collection systems. In the fall of 2024, quarterly sessions will be offered to staff and leaders regarding using these systems and the use of data in driving practice improvement. This will be a more advanced dive into using and interpreting data and use of data systems.

In October 2025, CYFD will transition to a new case management system. To comply with federal regulation, CYFD is transition its State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), also known as FACTS, to a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). CCWIS will be known as NM Impact and work is currently happening to see the CCWIS fully functioning by late 2026. Between October 2026 and December 2026, all PSD will be trained in using NM Impact. In January 2026, training will be incorporated into New Employee Training.

Part of successfully using a documentation system is ensuring documentation is professional, accurate, and well-written. Currently, new hires receive training on documentation during NET. Starting in 2025, a monthly drop-in lab will be available for staff to improve their documentation skills. This lab will also be available to supervisors to help them improve their skill set regarding documentation review.

Results Oriented Management (ROM): This training introduces new employees to the most frequently pulled report in ROM and the utilization of the data management system by area. The course will be offered quarterly. It is open to all staff and required for all PSD leaders.

Peer Review Training: In 2022, the CFSR Quality Assurance (QA) team created an updated two-day Peer Reviewer Training on the federal On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI). On the first half day of training, each participant learns about the history of the CFSR and CYFD's QA Process and important information about the mock case they will review. In the 2nd half of the first training day, each participant listens to case-related interviews and reads through the mock case file to prepare to rate the case utilizing the online OSRI. On the 2nd day of training, the participants work in small groups to rate the mock case, and QA specialists go over each item with all participants to complete the CFSR review of the mock case. Once the participants complete rating their mock case and the CFSR online activities they become certified to be a Peer Reviewer.

Since the pandemic, the QA team has not been able to utilize Peer Reviewers due to reviews being conducted virtually. However, the QA team has been working hard to certify new Peer Reviewers through these trainings. In 2022 the QA team held 5 Peer Reviewer Trainings for current CYFD staff. To date CYFD currently has 23 certified Peer Reviewers. In March of 2022 the QA team started to conduct in-person reviews and has had 4 Peer Reviewers assist in the QA review process. The QA Team has an additional five training courses scheduled in 2024 in the hopes to recruit additional Peer Reviewers before Round 4 of the CFSR's.

Over the next five years, we will train and maintain a minimum of 40 peer reviewers to create a culture of continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making and planning.

Title IV-E Funded Training for BSW and MSW Child Welfare-Focused Students

Through contractual agreements with the four Universities offering Social Work programs in the state (New Mexico Highlands University, New Mexico State University, Western New Mexico University, and Eastern New Mexico University), stipends are offered to BSW or MSW students focused on child welfare, in exchange for coming to work for PSD upon graduation. This includes the students completing their practicum work with CYFD. Over the past three years, the program has expanded participation from eight students in the spring of 2022 to 33 students in the spring of 2024. On going collaboration between the universities and CYFD to increase participation is currently occurring. There is an expected increase in participation to 50 students by 2025. In addition, in 2023, a monthly professional development program was added to the students' experience. The 90-minute sessions are facilitated by child welfare experts, CYFD leaders, and other service providers.

In Fall 2025, the University of New Mexico will launch a graduate-level Social Work training program. CYFD will partner to ensure a robust child welfare curriculum. Using New Mexico State University's current contract, UNM will begin participation in the Student Stipend Program. Once UNM's program achieves accreditation, we will develop a contractual relationship like the agreements with existing university partners.

A Culture of Safety

Over the next five years, CYFD will continue to offer training that supports safe practices for staff, children, and families.

Handle With Care: Over the next five years, this curriculum will be offered in each region twice a year. All staff will be required to participate in the class every other year.

Safe and Together: Safe & Together CORE training will be offered in person once a quarter in each region, and supervisory training will be offered semi-annually in both online and in-person formats. In addition to two-day training courses, monthly micro-trainings focusing on key areas of the Safe & Together child welfare practice model will be offered virtually. Regional coaches will

offer case consultations to facilitate the application of training concepts to real cases involving known or suspected domestic violence.

CPR: Recently, PSD entered a contract with **Care Tactics CPR** to provide CPR training to all CYFD staff. The training is in the form of e-learning and is free to all staff. The training is available for FY25 and expected to be renewed. All staff are expected to complete the training within one year of service starting in August 2024.

Leadership Development

In the spring of 2024, the Workforce Development Bureau launched the Leadership Development Program (LDP) pilot. This 10-week program consists of nine 90-minute modules complemented by leadership-focused e-learns available to all State of New Mexico supervisors and managers. The LDP guides new supervisors and managers through a learning journey consisting of understanding the HR responsibilities and procedures of leading a team and individuals, performance management and supervision processes, coaching skills, conflict resolution techniques, trauma-informed supervisory practice, emotionally intelligent leadership, and the development of a supervision plan that is unique to each leaders' staff members and in line with the supervisors' and managers' personal leadership philosophy.

The design incorporates the Supervisory Practice Framework developed in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2019. The Supervisory Practice Framework training was implemented in February 2021. The framework incorporates three primary buckets of supervision practice. Those buckets are "administrative," "education," and "support." The intent is for supervision practice to encapsulate all three buckets, providing workers with comprehensive supervision that supports their practice and the employee's growth and well-being.

The Leadership Development Program (LDP) will continue through the next five years. Each cohort will participate in an evaluation process measuring learning and its impact on retention and outcomes. An evaluation process is currently being designed. Below are the current and projected session and e-learning topics:

1. Managerial Tasks: Timesheets, Payroll, Granting Leave
 - a. Stepping Up: A Guide for New Managers & Supervisors (*eLearning*)
 - b. Creating a Respectful and Harassment-free Workplace
2. Performance Appraisals
 - a. Conducting Performance Evaluations Part 1 (*eLearning*)
 - b. Conducting Performance Evaluations Part 2 (*Instructor-led*)
3. Employee Misconduct
 - a. Giving Employee Feedback (*eLearning*)
 - b. Living in the Union Environment (LIUE) (*eLearning*)
4. Core Values and Leadership Philosophy
 - a. Introduction to Managing a Team (*eLearning*)
5. Emotional Intelligence and Leading Groups
 - a. Holding Productive Meetings (*eLearning*)
6. Management Conflict
 - a. Managing Employee Conflict (*eLearning*)
7. Coaching and Reflective Supervision
 - a. Strategies for Positive Management (*eLearning*)

8. Trauma Responsive Supervision

The LDP design includes matching new supervisors and managers with experienced leaders in mentoring relationships. We could not secure enough mentors to pair with each LDP participant. To compensate, we create a weekly virtual open office hour each week. Experienced leaders and subject matter experts were invited to attend the office hours to review the week's content. Participants were able to drop in and ask questions or receive a mentoring session via break-out rooms. The office hours proved to be valued by the participants, therefore this practice will be continued. However, we will continue to build a pool of mentors that can be matched to each participant. Current staffing levels and the number of experienced leaders has led to the decision to aim for 2025 to launch the Leadership Development Program Mentorship Program fully.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)/Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA)

The Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) conducts compliance checks and ongoing meetings with county offices during Out-of-Preferred-Placement Staffing (OOPPS) meetings which occur every 30 days if the native child is in state custody and placed in an out of an ICWA preferred placement. CYFD will continue to address ICWA compliance through training. ICWA is included in the legal module of foundations of practice. A 90-minute e-learning course, Introduction to ICWA, is mandatory for all staff.

Indian Family Protection Act Best Practices Curriculum: Over the past year, OTA created an 8-hour IFPA Best Practices training module for all Protective Service Staff. This training is an overview of:

- the history that lead to the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act,
- federal challenges to ICWA and the passage of the Indian Family Protection Act,
- active efforts during investigations which includes notification to the tribe;
- active efforts to prevent the removal of an Indian child from their family,
- active efforts after a child has been taken into custody to reunite with their family,
- active efforts to collaborate with the child's tribe throughout the case, and
- active efforts to ensure the Indian child is in a preferred placement.

The training was developed based on conversations, feedback and recommendations from our tribal partners during Tribal Agreement Meetings, Tribal Partners CYFD Procedural Discussions, and meeting with the NM Tribal Indian Child Welfare Consortium. Training has been provided to more than 650 PS staff. Staff completed a pre- and post-test increasing about 10 points from the pre- to the post-test. More than 50 percent of staff rated the presentation as EXCELLENT on the presentation evaluation. The Office of Tribal Affairs will continue to provide the training to all new employees during their on-boarding training.

Training, Coaching, and Consultation: The Office of Tribal Affairs conducts informal training twice a week, in what they call "Open Door," on Monday's and Fridays. This is an opportunity for PS to join the OTA staff for a period of consultation on current cases and participate in "micro" trainings around the notification to tribes, active efforts, documentation, MFD process, Pre- and Post-Initiation Form, MFI, Jurisdiction, etc.

During case consults/legal staffing, OTA helps staff identify active efforts and how to meet these obligations. OTA assists in identifying culturally responsive remedial services to prevent the removal of the child from their home, to reunify if removed, and to license relatives for the Native child (relative placement).

McKinley County Protective Services Office is the only county that has a designated Indian Child Welfare Unit, meaning active efforts are implemented for all cases, even those that are not protected under ICWA or IFPA. The Indian Child Welfare Consultant provides weekly training and coaching support to all staff in the implementation of ICWA/IFPA regulations, policy and procedures.

ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Supervision, Support, and Safety

Evident Change, the contractor providing Safety Organized Practice and the Structured Decision-Making tool and training content, will offer this training series at least once a year. All supervisors and managers are required to complete. This training offers research-based strategies to enhance trust-based relationships and support for staff as their ability to use the SDM safety assessment grows. Participants will have opportunities to practice the strategies in small groups. A review of the key concepts used in assessing safety, danger indicators, and complicating factors, as well as the relationship of these to risk as they are assessed in the SDM system, and how to apply these principles in supervision and coaching with staff. Research-based strategies will be reviewed to address staff's technical challenges in using the safety assessment and how supervisors can support them with adaptive solutions.

State Personal Office Leadership Series

The New Mexico State Personell Office (SPO) has developed the Essentials of Supervision and Management (ESM) series, which is a program of study consisting of ten eLearning modules and two instructor-led trainings. The series is intended for those new to supervision and management, those aspiring to supervision and management, and for supervisors and managers who wish to review foundational skills and enhance their professional growth and development. Courses included in the series cover key supervisory/managerial topics such as transitioning from peer to manager, managing a team, delegating work, holding productive meetings, motivating employees, giving feedback, handling conflict, interviewing job candidates, promoting diversity and avoiding bias, and performance management. The series will provide each learner with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to practice their application through scenarios and discussion. After completing the final course and assessment, each learner will receive a certificate of completion of the Essentials of Supervision and Management series. New supervisors and managers who have completed CYFD's Leadership Development Program will be required to complete the ESM series within their first year of appointment. New supervisors and managers will work with their one-up leader to determine additional SPO courses beyond the ESM series that align with their learning needs.

RESOURCE PARENT TRAINING

Pre-service READi NM Hybrid Training Model Overview

To ensure clear, supportive communication and tracking of Resource Foster Parents' training, the Hybrid model for training READi NM will be rolled out in strategic phases. The goals are to reduce the training burden on Protective Service workers, ensure Resource Foster Parents are supported to complete

training within certification timeframes, hold fidelity to the READi NM curriculum, and build capacity for centralized dissemination of training by the Resource Parent Training Unit. Over time, this will increase Resource Foster Parents' retention and CYFD's mutual trust and relationship with Resource Foster Parents'. The READi NM curriculum includes:

READi Module: Welcome

READi Module 1: Who are our Children and Families?

READi Module 2: Reunification as the Role of the Resource Foster Parent

READi Module 3: Foundational Beliefs and Values of Foster Care

READi Module 4: Child and Youth Identity and Family Connection

READi Module 5: Care from a Place of Wholeness

READi Module 6: Navigating Services for Children and Youth

READi Module 7: Resource Foster Parent Resilience and Self-Care

READi Module 8: Supporting Transitions

READi Module 9: Providing Unconditional Care

READi Module 10: Trauma Informed Support

READi Module 11: Trauma Responsive Discipline

READi Module: Closing

Prior to attending the first day of training, interested community member applicants will attend an Introductory Meeting with CYFD staff to review the process and view Frequently Asked Questions videos. Communications will be sent to all new Resource Foster Parent applicants to instruct them on how to navigate the learning management system and attend live, trainer led, sessions and on-demand modules. All on-demand training will be created to be highly interactive and will include end of module assessments to ensure learning has occurred as well as collect data required for federal reporting in the Child and Family State Plan.

Phase 1: Phase 1 will be rolled out in September 2024 and will include re-branded materials.

Implementation will include an updated refresher training for all current READi NM Trainers (both Spanish and English) to ensure fidelity to training models as well as review of changes due to the hybrid structure. The current modules are provided as 35 hours of live training which will be replaced by 14 hours self-paced E-Learning and 16.5 hours of live training, usually provided virtually.

Phase 2: Phase 2 is projected to roll out January 2025 in Spanish and English. It includes 10.5 hours of live synchronous training provided by regional Resource Foster Parent Training Unit Trainers and 21 hours of self-paced e-learning. Although Resource Foster Parent Training Unit Trainers will provide the live synchronous training sessions, Protective Service Workers will attend part of the live Welcome and Closing sessions to build relationships with their Resource Foster Parents'. The live sessions will be staggered to enable Resource Foster Parents to complete sessions with different cohorts to meet their scheduling needs.

Over the five years Resource Parent Training Unit staff will continue to design interactive customized training that reflects the culture and norms of New Mexico and build the technology infrastructure to allow tracking of a more flexible Resource Foster Parents centric training model. Paths will be developed in the Learning Management System for both pre-service and on-going training to prompt Resource Foster Parents to complete e-learning modules and live sessions in the intended order, but also allow flexibility to support expedited completion of training and thus certification of Resource Foster Parents. In addition, Resource Parent Training Unit staff will vet nationally recognized courses from other

organizations and companies to ensure any course selected to support IRTP/on-going learning opportunities for Resource Foster Parents is aligned with the trauma-informed, culturally humility, diverse and strength-based values of CYFD.

CYFD will continue to work with Community Partners who provide topic specific training support for Adoptive families. Over the five years the agency will also develop a robust Treatment Foster Care program to support the learning needs of any Resource Foster Parent who elects to enhance their level of care to children/youth of New Mexico in need of a higher level of care support.

Annual Foster Parent Conference and Recertification Training

The CYFD Resource Family Conference took place as an online event April 1 through 30, 2023. The Conference featured four live, webinar sessions (the Virtual Webinar Series) each Thursday during April, and included live keynote presentations, question and answer periods, and community panel discussions. The event app Whova was used as an engagement and team builder tool. In addition to providing the platform for event registration, live streams and recordings of the sessions, and session evaluation tools, Whova provided attendees with opportunities to network, create discussion groups, ask questions of the presenter and about the presentation topics, and more, all within the app.

The Conference invitation was offered through email, in-person, and mailed flier to all licensed Relative Foster Parent. It is important to note though that since this was a fully virtual event, more than one resource family member per household may have attended the live sessions. Session attendees also had the opportunity to complete online feedback forms following each session, as well as request Certificates of Completion for each session that they attended.

The Protective Services Placement Pillar is currently working on the 2024 Resource Family Conference and anticipate it being another virtual event.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Title IV-B, Subpart 1

New Mexico is not spending more Title IV-B Subpart 1 funds than the state expended for childcare, foster care maintenance, and adoption assistance payments.

New Mexico's IV-B Subpart 1 funds for childcare, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments for FY 2023 does not exceed the amount expended in FY 2005, \$454,505.

New Mexico's expenditure of non-Federal funds used as a match for Title IV-B Subpart 1 funds for foster care maintenance for FY 2023 does not exceed the amount expended in FY 2005, \$3,152,282. New Mexico's current federal spending on Title IV-B Subpart 1 – Child Welfare Social Services \$1,493,799. The difference in spending in FY2023 and FY 2005 is \$1,039,294.

Title IV-B, Subpart 2

New Mexico's expenditure for Title IV-B Subpart 2 funds for FY 2022 of \$3,362,954.00 exceeds the FY 1992 base year amount expended of \$2,148,100.

CYFD provides PSSF funding to contracted community providers for all four allowable services: (Family Support Services, Family Preservation Services, Time-Limited Reunification Services, and Adoption Promotion and Support). In addition, a portion of PSSF funds is allocated for administrative costs which include the salaries and operating costs of program managers who are administering the delivery of these services statewide. Other service-related activities are allocated for program support costs which includes training, evaluation, CQI, CFSR and staff recruitment and retention.

CYFD wrapped Family Support Services, Time Limited Reunification, and Family Preservation services into the state's Community Based Prevention, Intervention, and Reunification. This provides a one stop shop for children and families in need of these services. With the development of the state's IV-E prevention plan, a focus on primary and secondary prevention has been added to the CBPIR contracts. The primary prevention components of CBPIR contracts are to promote and increase child abuse prevention awareness in all 33 counties across the state through activities such as active participation in community-wide public awareness events and campaigns, educational presentations, and coordinating at least three child abuse prevention awareness events each year with at least one occurring in April. Secondary prevention components of the CBPIR contracts are designed to safely maintain children in the home, alleviate the need for removal and to prevent disruption from their home and families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families). Placement Prevention Service Models consist of Secondary Prevention Services (SPS), which are primarily supported by CBCAP funds, Family Support Services (FSS), and Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS). All services performed by providers must meet the linguistic needs of each family. All providers are given the required forms by CYFD, including versions in Spanish, allowing for Spanish-only speakers an easier time in reviewing their family file, should they wish to do so. This focus on primary and secondary prevention has seen an increase in Family Support Services funded referrals through CBPIR contractors, making utilization of Family Support Services higher than the 20% allocation recommendation and exceeding referrals to Family Preservation and Time Limited Reunification Services in the state.

CYFD referrals for adoption and promotions support have decreased, possibly due to vacancies within CYFD and contracted agencies themselves. With the reorganization of CYFD Protective Services into Investigation, Permanency, and Placement Pillars; the Placement Pillar will be able to provide better

support to a cohesive unit that provides adoption and guardianship support across the state. Lack of referral and a major reorganization has most likely contributed performing under the 20% standard.

CYFD CFSP/APSR INFORMATION

To view CYFD's current Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP - Five Year Plan) or the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) please visit: <https://www.cyfd.nm.gov/resources/publications-reports/>.

For more information about the CFSP or APSR, please contact Milissa Soto, CYFD Deputy Director Office of Performance and Accountability at milissa.soto@cyfd.nm.gov or (505) 257-8759.