

Strategic Plan Template

State Name: Wyoming

Date Strategic Plan Submitted: June 30, 2017

Timeframe Covered by Strategic Plan: Federal Fiscal Years 17-21

Overall Goal/Mission of CIP: *To partner and collaborate with the child welfare agency to improve the quality of child welfare hearings and audit case files to identify timeliness issues that need intervention and training areas needed. The purpose of CIP is to (1) promote the continuous quality improvement of court proceedings in child welfare proceedings and (2) enhance and expand collaboration between the judicial branch of state government, the title IV-E/IV-B agency and tribes to improve child welfare outcomes.*

June 30, 2017 Update (marked in orange): *With the data grant funding for FFY17, Wyoming plans to complete a more robust data analysis for the court observation project (under quality hearings, priority area #1). With the training grant funding for FFY17, Wyoming will be able to host more Blog Talk Radio sessions, more regional trainings, and more local action planning sessions than can be supported with the basic grant (under data, priority area #2).*

Priority Area #1: Quality Court Hearings

Outcome #1: To improve the quality of hearings in Wyoming child welfare proceedings.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state? Based on the 2016 Children and Family Service Review (CFSR) and various stakeholder reports, the CIP has learned that many child welfare hearings have timeliness issues, inconsistent notice practices, and varying rates of key party involvement.*

Theory of Change: *If the overall quality of hearings will improve, time to permanency and outcomes for children and families in juvenile court will improve. Utilizing a court observation tool to gather data on child welfare hearings will allow the child welfare agency and CIP to identify root causes for issues initially identified in the CFSR and IV-E Review.*

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Project 1 – Court Observation Project							
CJP will develop a court observation project utilizing agency supervisors who are attending court proceedings.	CJP, Agency, CJP Advisory Council	<p>Short Term: Gather data to measure timeliness and quality indicators at child welfare hearings.</p> <p>Long Term: Increase the timeliness and quality of child welfare hearings across Wyoming.</p>	<p>Data will be captured by DFS supervisors utilizing a Court Observation Tool (tool) (See Appendix A). The tool is a one-page form designed to capture the content and process of each hearing. The tool captures the following data: judicial district, removal date, petition date, parties participating in hearing, parties present, hearing type, witness being sworn and testifying, foster parent perspective, ICWA considerations and exhibits.</p> <p>DFS supervisors will be trained on how to use the tool, and they will also have a training manual with detailed instructions on how to properly use the tool.</p> <p>The tool will be utilized in 23 counties, over a span of three months. All fields of the court observation tool will be entered into a database. In addition, the WY USER system will be used to determine whether parties had notice to the hearing, and that</p>	Project Plan and observation tool completed in FFY 2017, initial data analyzed in FY 2018, interventions planned in FFY 2019, interventions in FFY 2020, and review of process and next steps in FFY 2021.	Agency supervisors to use the tool. Representatives from Agency and CJP to review and analyze the data.	The data will be tracked yearly and compared to previous year to track progress and identify issues.	Ongoing

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			<p>information will be entered into the database.</p> <p>Data analysis will be conducted and a report with initial findings will be published and shared with the project support team. The initial findings will be used by the project support team in the development of interventions detailing next steps such as: trainings, stakeholder outreach, revised notice practices, etc.</p>				
Project 2 – Juvenile Court Judges Training							
CJP will work with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) expert to offer training for juvenile court judges (district court judges) in Wyoming. CJP has more than 5 new district court judges and a training like this has not been held in Wyoming before.	CJP, judges	Improve compliance with state and federal law. Improve quality of hearings. Improve outcomes for youth and families in juvenile court.	Hold a multiple day training for judges in a central location utilizing consultants from NCJFCJ and an ICWA consultant.	Fall, 2017	CJP, consultants	CJP will conduct a pre- and post-test to measure increased knowledge.	Ongoing

Priority Area #2: Data

Outcome #2: Collaboratively partner with the child welfare agency to improve the quality of hearings, review data, and implement interventions.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* These are areas identified as needing improvement in the recent CFSR and IV-E Review. Identified as a need by both the child welfare agency and CIP.

Theory of Change: When issues are identified collaboratively using the data Wyoming has access to, interventions are more appropriately applied. Wyoming will collect data, analyze data, and be used to update and distribute publications in needed areas, as well as local and reasonable interventions and trainings.

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Project 3 – CQI Activities							
<p><u>TPR Audit</u>—The following quality measures within abuse and neglect cases will be collected and reviewed annually: Number of continuances, number of judges per abuse and neglect case; time to appointment of a guardian ad litem; and time to appointment of an attorney for the parent. CJP will be developing a court observation tool to collect additional quality data (see Priority Area #1 above). <u>Timeliness measures</u>— Wyoming will continue to track and report on timeliness measures for</p>	CJP, DFS, GAL Division	CJP will develop a CQI/Data Plan to continually monitor and improve the timeliness and quality of abuse and neglect hearings. This plan will 1) strengthen the existing CQI process; 2) integrate CJP/CQI process with DFS services and the GAL Division; and 3) provide a mechanism by which consistent, comprehensive abuse and neglect data may be collected, validated, reported, and used to make changes at a statewide and individual judicial district level.	<p>CJP will audit all TPR cases filed each federal fiscal year (FFY) to generate and distribute quality hearing results (annually). Individual judicial district case file reviews will be conducted if further analysis is needed. GAL Division data may also be used to track this measure. As a result of the tracking, CJP will identify areas of concern and conduct targeted outreach to improve outcomes moving forward.</p> <p>CJP will develop a menu of interventions based on the data collected (e.g. pre-setting hearings, continuances granted, DFS case plan processes, thorough shelter care hearings, etc.).</p>	Ongoing	Representatives from DFS, CJP, and attorneys to review and analyze the data. Consultant to help pre-review the data.	The data will be tracked yearly, entered into the tracking sheet, and compared to previous year to track progress and identify issues.	Ongoing

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each judicial district and the state as part of its CQI activities.							
CJP will explore developing a mechanism to collect and track data related to notice of hearings and notice to caregivers and work to improve notice provided to parties. <i>CFSR Item 24.</i>	CJP, DFS, GAL Division, CASA	Ensure appropriate notice and opportunity to be heard for relative and foster caregivers.	CJP will add caregiver notice to the TRP audit or court observation tool. As a result of the tracking, CJP will identify areas of concern and conduct targeted outreach to improve data moving forward. CJP will provide the Wyoming Permanent Rules Advisory Committee, Juvenile Division, with suggested changes related to improved notice.	Plan completed in FFY 2017, data collected and analyzed in FFY 2018.	Representatives from DFS, CJP, and attorneys to review and analyze the data.	The data will be tracked yearly, entered into Excel, and compared to previous year to track progress and identify issues.	Ongoing
Develop a new juvenile court module within the district court case management system (Justice System Inc. (JSI))	CJP/ Supreme Court/IT staff/court automation committee	Develop a mechanism to better track juvenile court data and generate canned reports related to timeliness and notice.	CJP will work with the Supreme Court to develop a juvenile court module within the new JSI case management system.	FY2017 and FY2018	TBD	TBD	Ongoing
Project 4 – Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan Support							
CJP will support the child welfare agency on activities outlined in the CFSR PIP, specifically Item 5 (Permanency Goal for Child), Item 6 (Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption of OPPLA), Item 21	CJP, DFS	Improve permanency outcomes and time to permanency for children in child welfare cases in Wyoming.	CJP will participate in PIP meetings and implement needed activities. Individual action plans for each item listed will be developed.	PIP activities completed by FFY 2021.	Representatives from DFS and CJP to review and analyze the data.	Measured by improvement on next CFSR review.	Ongoing

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(Periodic Reviews), Item 22 (Permanency Hearings), Item 23 (Termination of Parental Rights), Item 24 (Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers) and Item 32 (Coordination of CFSP Services with other Federal Programs) as these areas identified as "Areas Needing Improvement."							
Project 5 – IV-E Review							
CJP will continually update and distribute "Hearing Checklists" that include required IV-E court ordered language.	CJP, DFS, GAL Division, active attorneys, judges	Ensure required language under IV-E is in court orders and improve Wyoming's penetration rate.	CJP strives to provide attorneys and judges with a quick checklist to ensure all necessary steps are covered during each required hearing.	New checklists and forms in FFY 2017.	Representatives from CJP and active attorneys.	Next IV-E Review.	Ongoing
Project 6 – Update & Distribute Existing Handbooks & Publications							
CJP will continually update, market, and distribute existing CJP publications based on issues identified in data project and audit (CQI Activities).	CJP, DFS, GAL Division, active attorneys, judges, MDT members, other stakeholders	Improve compliance with state and federal law. Improve outcomes for youth and families in juvenile court.	CJP strives to provide stakeholders with information to guide them through the child welfare court process. The goal is to have updated publications that are applicable to all stakeholders from attorneys to the child.	Ongoing	CJP, consultant	CJP will seek feedback yearly regarding the usefulness of the publications and ways to improve.	Ongoing
Project 7 – Regional Trainings, Action Planning Sessions and Statewide Conference							

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<p>CJP will hold targeted regional trainings, including trainings for parent attorneys and prosecutors. Additionally, CJP may continue to partner with the Attorney General's Office to host a statewide conference.</p>	<p>CJP, DFS, active attorneys, CASA, judges, Attorney General's Office.</p>	<p>Address issues found during CQI activities by hosting juvenile court refresher trainings or specific trainings for prosecutors or parent attorneys (based on new handbooks).</p>	<p>The trainings are an opportunity to inform stakeholders of changes to the law, discuss issues throughout the State, and strategize on ways to improve. Primarily the trainings focus on deficiencies as identified through data analysis. The goal is to provide people working in child welfare with practical tools to improve outcomes and meet goals.</p> <p>CJP, DFS and the Attorney General's Office hosted the following juvenile court refresher trainings: April 18, 2016 (8th judicial district), August 22, 2016 (5th judicial district), October 11 and 12, 2017 (1st judicial district), November 17, 2016 (3rd judicial district), January 4, 2017 (2nd judicial district), May 8, 2017 (3rd judicial district) and June 2, 2017 (4th judicial district).</p> <p>CJP, in collaboration with the Attorney General's Office hosted the Joint Symposium on Children and Youth and may continue to host similar statewide conferences in the</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>CJP, DFS, active attorneys, CASA, judges, Attorney General's Office</p>	<p>CJP will seek feedback regarding the usefulness of the trainings and ways to improve.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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