

State Court Improvement Program 2019 Annual Self-Assessment Report

This self-assessment is intended as an opportunity for Court Improvement Programs (CIPs) to review progress on required CIP projects, joint program planning and improvement efforts with the child welfare agency, and ability to integrate CQI successfully into practice. Questions are designed to solicit candid responses that help CIPs apply CQI and identify support that may be helpful.

- I. **CQI Analyses of Required CIP Projects** (Joint Project with Agency and Hearing Quality Project) *It is ok to cut and paste responses from last year, but please update according to where you currently are in the process.*

Joint Project with the Child Welfare Agency:

Provide a concise description of the joint project selected in your jurisdiction.

The CINA Court Improvement Program has selected Fairbanks as the pilot site for a multi-agency collaborative project to improve hearing quality and reduce time to permanency for children in Child in Need of Aid cases. A committee of representatives from the Alaska Court System, Office of Children’s Services (OCS), Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender Agency, and Office of Public Advocacy are working together to plan and implement the project. Key elements of the project include:

- CINA cases to never go longer than 6 months without a hearing.
- Judges to use national best practices models to encourage parental engagement, identify relatives early, and monitor case progress.
- Judges to use bench cards based on national best practices to improve CINA hearing quality.
- OCS to provide staff training and mentoring on timely filing of petitions, reports, and proposed orders.
- OCS to develop targeted staffing process for Permanency Planning Specialists to track potential barriers to permanency on individual cases, and find ways to remove barriers for cohorts. (See OCS PIP 3.2.2)
- The CIP subcommittee to monitor CINA case data and make recommendations for project improvements as needed.

The goal of the project is to improve permanency outcomes for children by focusing on case progress at regularly scheduled and more frequent intervals. Improved hearing quality and a focus on timely filing of petitions, reports and orders should lead to fewer continuances and reduce the overall number of hearings, improving time to permanency.

Identify the specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome this project is intended to address.

Timeliness of permanency.

Approximate date that the project began:

Planning began in August 2016 with implementation currently scheduled for the Fall 2019. The scope of the project was broadened after discussions during CIP's collaboration with OCS on the PIP, and following feedback from the Children's Bureau.

Which stage of the CQI process best describes the current status of project work?

Moving from final stages of Develop/Select Solution to Implementation.

How was the need for this project identified? (Phase I)

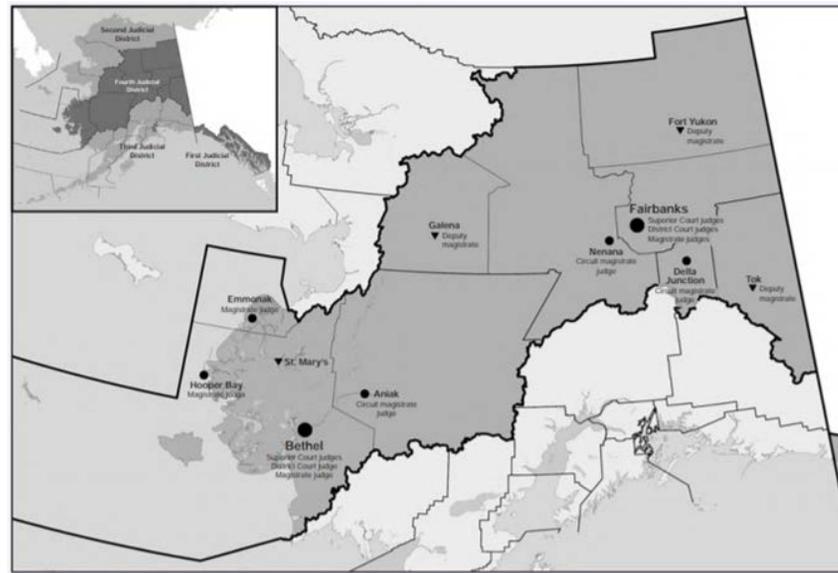
CIP discussions with OCS management and CINA stakeholders that included review of available data demonstrating the need for improvement.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II) *If you do not yet have a theory of change and/or would like assistance, please indicate such in the space below.*

Increased judicial leadership and oversight of CINA cases will decrease time to permanency and provide better outcomes for children and families. Increasing judicial urgency regarding permanency and increasing understanding by OCS field staff of the court's role in promoting permanency so that children do not remain in foster care longer than is necessary is the focus. There will also be an increased focus on engaging parents and identifying relatives early on.

Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? If yes, what is it? (Phase III)

We have selected Fairbanks as the pilot site. Factors considered when selecting this court included: the third largest number of CINA cases statewide which is large enough for meaningful data collection, but small enough to implement change more easily, case file and data review, culture of readiness for change, and data quality due to clerical staff knowledge of CINA cases. Additionally, we have a Presiding Judge in our 4th Judicial District who is championing this project, and we are piloting a new Case Management Order for CINA cases. The 4th Judicial District is the largest state trial court district in the U.S., extending from the Canadian border to the Bering Sea. There will be an emphasis on locating fathers and parents' relatives earlier on in cases through increased judicial inquiry into the topic. Judges in the pilot site will also use a modified therapeutic court model in CINA cases to increase parental engagement. In addition, we are working to update a bench card/judicial checklist on permanency for judges to utilize in our pilot/test site. Plans are also in the works to provide additional training to judges on permanency/timelines.



What has been done to implement the project? (Phase IV)

A multi-disciplinary committee of representatives from the Alaska Court System, Office of Children’s Services, Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender Agency, and Office of Public Advocacy are meeting regularly to finalize planning and implement the project. We have identified a pilot site to implement the project, and have a presiding judge who is championing the project in the pilot site. Practices will be adapted through increased judicial oversight, engagement of parents, use of the new Case Management Order, revised bench cards, and the addition of a 6-month review hearing. A multi-disciplinary bench/bar meeting and training is planned in Fairbanks and will be attended by judges, lawyers, OCS workers, GALs, and other legal personnel. Casey Family JET will be providing the multi-disciplinary permanency training

What is being done or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V). *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) or data efforts you have in place or plan to have in place to assess your efforts. If you have already evaluated your effort, how did you use this data to modify or expand the project?*

Quarterly meetings of project committee and participants, development of court observation and data review tools to compare pre-and post-implementation data are planned. Feedback will also be provided to judges and participants as we track progress.

What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or Children’s Bureau to help move the project forward?

Assistance from the CBCC has been extremely helpful and will be appreciated going forward as we implement, collect data, and evaluate the project.

Hearing Quality Project:

Provide a concise description of the joint project selected in your jurisdiction.

The CINA Core Curriculum project complements well with the project to continuously improve the quality of CINA court proceedings, with the concept that high-quality, multi-disciplinary training for all CINA practitioners will assist in ensuring the provision of high-quality CINA hearings and reviews.

In 2011, the CIP's Education Subcommittee formed a work group to develop a multi-disciplinary core training curriculum for CINA attorneys, tribal and child advocates, caseworkers, and judges. The philosophy of the work group was that, in order to understand the child welfare process as a whole, CINA case participants should have a foundation of core knowledge in a broad array of legal and other subject areas relevant to CINA cases. After some research, the work group discovered Colorado's Training Wheel Curricula, which was very close to what we envisioned. With Colorado CIP's permission, the work group and private contractors adapted or – in many instances – completely rewrote Colorado's training modules to reflect Alaska law, culture and practice. All of Alaska's training modules have been piloted to statewide multi-disciplinary groups and finalized with feedback from the pilot groups. In all, the curriculum project took six years to complete.

Training Modules

Alaska's CINA Curriculum consists of 10 training modules. The legal modules (CINA Laws, Roles & Responsibilities, Practices & Procedures) have been combined into a three-day training; the other modules including the Indian Child Welfare Act, Community & Culture, Family Well-Being, Services & Resources, Creative Advocacy, Information-Sharing, and Education Law & Advocacy are each one-day trainings.

The training modules are a combination of lecture and interactive discussions. A case about a hypothetical family runs through all of the modules so that participants can apply their knowledge to practical case situations. The opportunity for meaningful discussions with CINA participants from different disciplines and from different areas of the state has proved to be one of the most important benefits of this training format.

Approximate date that the project began:

October 2016

Which stage of the CQI process best describes the current status of project work?

Implementation and Evaluation/Assessment

How was the need for this project identified? (Phase I)

CIP CINA Education subcommittee discussions, with input from the CIP steering committee.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II) *If you do not yet have a theory of change and/or would like assistance, please indicate such in the space below.*

Increased overall baseline skills, knowledge and competency of all CINA practitioners (including judges) will lead to better quality court hearings and reviews, raising the bar for child protection and advocacy by all professionals in the child welfare system.

Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? If yes, what is it? (Phase III)

Yes, we have provided components of the CINA curriculum to approximately 170 multi-disciplinary practitioners in CINA cases in Southeast, Interior, and Southcentral in conjunction with the annual Regional Tribal/State meeting. Additional trainings for approximately 100 practitioners are planned in Southcentral, Western and Southeast Alaska. We will continue to provide trainings on the modules throughout the state going forward.

What has been done to implement the project? (Phase IV)

CINA Interdisciplinary Training Curriculum

<https://public.courts.alaska.gov/web/cip/docs/cina-curriculum.pdf>

We provided a three-day training, "*Forging Relationships to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes for Children and Families in Southeast Alaska.*" It was a collaboration between the Alaska Court Improvement Program and the Sitka Tribal Court Improvement Project. It took place in our 1st Judicial District in Sitka in the Fall of 2017. Three of our CINA Curriculum modules were presented: Community & Culture, Family Well-Being, and Services & Resources. We had approximately 60 participants from Southeast Alaska, including state court judges, tribal court judges, ICWA workers, tribal attorneys, Sitka Tribe administration and child protection workers, attorneys general, Child Welfare (OCS) social workers, guardians ad litem (GALs), and parents' attorneys.

We provided a three day training on “*Child in Need of Aid Laws, Roles & Responsibilities, Practices & Procedures,*” May 30 – June 1, 2018. It took place in our 4th Judicial District in Fairbanks. We had approximately 30 participants from interior Alaska including Aniak, Fairbanks, Bethel, Barrow, Golovin, Kotzebue, and Unalakleet. Participants included judges, assistant attorneys general, Office of Children’s Services social workers, guardians ad litem, ICWA workers, tribal attorneys, and parents’ attorneys.

In collaboration with the Southcentral Regional Tribal-State Group, CIP provided a two day training on two of the modules from the CINA Curriculum Project: “*Community and Culture in the Child Welfare System,*” and on the “*Indian Child Welfare Act: History, Law & Practice.*” The Community and Culture training covered the dynamics of culture in the child welfare system, the building blocks of culturally competent practice, and managing the dynamics of difference and practice strategies. The ICWA training provided an overview of the historical context leading to the passage of ICWA, substantive provisions of the ICWA and federal regulations, and strategies to ensure ICWA implementation. There were over 80 participants from throughout the Southcentral region of Alaska, including Anchorage, Homer, Kenai, Kodiak, Palmer, Wasilla, and many of the smaller rural areas and villages including: Manokotak, Dillingham, Mentasta Lake, Kokhanok, Egegik, New Stuyahok, Ekwok, Eyak, Ninilchick, King Salmon, St. Paul, Koliganek, Chickaloon, and Copper Center.

Trainings on the CINA Curriculum Project’s signature three day training “*Child in Need of Aid Laws, Roles & Responsibilities, Practices & Procedures,*” are planned for August of 2019 in Kenai in Southcentral Alaska, for the Fall of 2019 in Bethel in Western Alaska, and in the winter of 2020 in Juneau in Southeast Alaska. This training is an intensive interdisciplinary training over three days that provides an overview of law and court processes, roles and responsibilities of CINA participants, CINA law – state and federal – including CINA grounds, removal findings, placement preferences, active and reasonable efforts, as well as an overview of all the CINA court proceeds, the CINA case chronology from temporary custody through permanency, and implementing the permanent plan. The training also includes practice sessions in court.

What is being done or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V) *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) or data efforts you have in place or plan to have in place to assess your efforts. If you have already evaluated your effort, how did you use this data to modify or expand the project?*

For all trainings, we use a "**Satisfaction**" evaluation - an in-person paper survey given at the end of each training day. Participants are asked to rank each topic covered on a scale from 1-5 (low-high) as to whether their thinking was stimulated; whether the session was relevant to their work; whether the session increased their knowledge and understanding; and whether the presenter was effective. There are also blank lines for written comments. Participants are also asked about satisfaction with training format, group activities, pace and level of training information, and the facility; and there are several open-ended questions about what they liked most about the training and what changes they recommend. Although participants do not write their names on the evaluation forms, they are asked their role and the length of time they have been practicing.

After each training, the evaluation forms are reviewed by the curriculum work group as part of our debriefing process. The input from the participants is extremely useful in determining what revisions are necessary to improve the content of the training and the amount of time devoted to each topic. We are using Survey Monkey to compile the data from recent training evaluation forms in a way that will allow us to sort the answers based on the participants' role and length of time practicing. We hope this will assist us in identifying our best target audiences, and/or in determining how to adapt the content to be more effective to a broader audience.

Normally, we also use a "**Learning Acquisition**" evaluation - a content-based pre-test and post-test, either on paper or electronically. We take time at the end of the training day to discuss the correct answers to the tests. The test scores are always much higher on the post-tests than the pre-tests. If a particular question causes problems for participants, we know we need to either rephrase the question or spend more time discussing the topic during the training. We have discussed following up several months after the training to see whether the participants have retained the knowledge they gained during the training, but we have not yet done so.

We do not have a "**Behavior**" evaluation tool. However, we have received many comments from participants or their peers illustrating behavior changes. Some examples include the following: From an Assistant Attorney General, "*Ever since Judge ___ went to the Legal module, he has taken a real interest in CINA cases and has been asking probing substantive questions of the parties and making better decisions.*" From a parent attorney, "*Since attending the Information Sharing module, our attorneys have been more proactive in protecting the confidential records of our clients.*" From a GAL, "*After attending the Education Law & Advocacy module, Judge ___ always asks GALs to report on the educational status of each child, so we now know we need to be prepared and do a better job of advocating for the child's educational needs.*"

What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or Children’s Bureau to help move the project forward?

Assistance from the CBCC thus far has been extremely helpful and would be very appreciated going forward. Assistance developing additional evaluation tools for our trainings, and moving portions of our trainings to an online format would be appreciated.

For example, while attending the CBCC’s CQI Workshop on Designing and Evaluating Effective Trainings in Seattle, CBCC assisted us in developing a pre-and post-test for the ICWA training module that was used at the next training in Wasilla.

II. Trainings, Projects, and Activities For questions 1-9, provide a *concise* description of work completed or underway to date in FY 2019 (October 2018-June 2019) in the below topical subcategories.

For question 1, focus on significant training events or initiatives held or developed in FY 2019 and answer the corresponding questions.

1. Trainings

<i>Topical Area</i>	<i>Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, training curriculum/program, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CIP Steering Committee		Court and OCS data are presented at each meeting	Data-driven decision making	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)		Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Improving timeliness/permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)		Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy and Time to Permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

<i>Topical Area</i>	<i>Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, training curriculum/program, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
Quality legal representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)		Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy and Time to Permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Engagement & participation of parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)		Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)		Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
ICWA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	CINA practitioners (incl. judges)		Curriculum/Program	Improved Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Sex Trafficking	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

On average, with ordinary funding levels, how many training events do you hold per year? 6

What is your best prediction for the number of attorneys and judges that attend a training annually? 150

The Family First Prevention Services Act amends the Social Security Act adding an eligibility criterion for the training of judges and attorneys on the congregate care provisions of the Act. See the highlighted portion below.

(1)¹ IN GENERAL.— In order to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a highest State court shall have in effect a rule requiring State courts to ensure that foster parents, pre- adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of a child in foster care under the responsibility of the State are notified of any proceeding to be held with respect to the child, *shall provide for the training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on Federal child welfare policies and payment limitations with respect to children in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home*, and shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such form, and including such information and assurances as the Secretary may require, including—

Child in Need of Aid (CINA) Rule 3(a) – Hearings - provides in part that “*Notice of each hearing must be given to all parties and any foster parent or other out-of-home care provider within a reasonable time before the hearings.*”

States have an option to delay implementation of the congregate care provisions by two years. The decision will have a direct impact on when judicial determinations and CIP training requirements must begin.

Do you know when your state plans to implement Family First? Yes No

If yes, when?

Alaska intends to pursue the prevention claiming opportunities made available by the Act by submitting a title IV-E Prevention Program Plan on or before December 30, 2019 with a targeted implementation date of October 2020.

Due to low numbers of children in foster care in Alaska placed in congregate care settings, the State of Alaska will not be implementing the Qualified Residential Treatment Program provisions of the FFPSA. Alaska is choosing to not claim Title IV-E funds for youth in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home. Therefore it is not necessary in our jurisdiction to provide training for judges, attorneys and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on the new Federal child welfare policies requiring new judicial determination and oversight related to children in congregate care settings. The review requirements and timing for hearings outlined in Alaska Statute 47.10.087 ensure that youth who are in residential treatment facilities have their placements reviewed every 90 days.

¹ Sec. 50741(c) of P.L. 115-123 revised sec. 438(b)(1) to add language regarding training. Effective as if enacted on 1/1/18 (sec. 50746(a)(1) of P.L. 115-123).

Have you been involved in planning with the agency on implementing Family First? Yes No

If yes, please describe how the CIP has been involved.

CIP will be an active participant in the planning and input into the five year Title IV-E Prevention Plan for approval to pursue the reimbursement opportunity for prevention services available under the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Have you been developing your Family First judicial training plan? Yes No

If yes, please describe what you have done.

CIP has been very involved with the Office of Children’s Services in planning for, developing, and presenting training that provides a general overview of the FFPSA, emphasizing the key themes of the act which include promoting prevention of entries into foster care and promoting placement in family settings for children who must be removed. A PowerPoint training “*Understanding FFPSA for Alaska*” was presented to the CIP at the two last steering committee meetings (these steering committee meetings include judges, presiding judges, and legal personnel including leaders at the Public Defender Agency, Attorneys General, Social Workers, Guardians ad Litem, ICWA workers and Tribal representatives, and experts in the fields of behavioral and mental health) the power point training will continue to be provided to judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel. Upcoming trainings will target the importance of meaningful parental engagement by judges and attorneys in child welfare cases as well as other strategies to enhance and promote timely permanency.

CIP also plans to have the CIP co-chair, our First District Presiding Judge, present a version of the PowerPoint at an Alaska NCJFCJ training in the fall where the majority of Alaska CINA judges will be in attendance.

2. Data Projects. Data projects include any work with administrative data sets (e.g., AFCARS, SACWIS), data dashboards, data reports, fostering court improvement data, case management systems, and data sharing efforts.

Do you have a data project/activity? Yes No (skip to #3)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Joint Project	Agency Data Sharing Efforts	Implementation
Court and OCS data presentations at each CIP meeting	Fostering Court Improvement data projects	Implementation
CIP created a new Data/Technology Subcommittee	Fostering Court Improvement data projects	Identifying/Assessing Needs

(a) Do you have data reports that you consistently view? Yes No

Time to First Permanency Order; Time to Permanent Placement; Time to Termination of Parental Rights; Time to Subsequent Permanency Hearings Held/Continued; Time to First Permanency Hearing Held/Continued; Time to Termination of Parental Rights Petition.

(b) How are these reports used to support your work?

They are used for the Joint Project, to examine and improve hearing quality, and to inform decision-making.

3. Hearing Quality. Hearing quality projects include any efforts you have made to improve the quality of dependency hearings, including court observation/assessment projects, process improvements, specialty/pilot court projects, projects related to court orders or title IV-E determinations, mediation, or appeals.

Do you have a hearing quality project/activity? Yes No (skip to #4)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Complementing CIP's CINA Core Curriculum project, a project to continuously improve the quality of CINA hearings and review by conducting file reviews of CINA cases in the Joint Project and by listening to hearings to better understand what is influencing permanency delays.	Court Observation/Assessment	Implementation
NCJFCJ Enhanced Resource Guidelines training for judges to be held in Alaska September 6, 2019	Process Improvements	Implementation
Joint Permanency Project has a hearing quality component that includes multi-disciplinary training, revised bench cards, and a hearing model based on national best practices	Specialty/Pilot Courts	Selecting Solution

4. Improving Timeliness of Hearings or Permanency Outcomes. Timeliness and permanency projects include any activities or projects meant to improve the timeliness of case processing or achievement of timely permanency. This could include general timeliness, focus on continuances or appeals, working on permanency goals other than APPLA, or focus on APPLA and older youth.

Do you have a Timeliness or permanency project/activity? Yes No (skip to #5)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
(See #2 above re: Data Project and Joint Project)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

5. Quality of Legal Representation. Quality of legal representation projects may include any activities/efforts related to improvement of representation for parents, youth, or the agency. This might include assessments or analyzing current practice, implementing new practice models, working with law school clinics, or other activities in this area.

Do you have a quality legal representation project/activity? Yes No (skip to #6)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
(See #3 above re: Hearing Quality Project)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
Casey Family (JET) multi-disciplinary training in Fairbanks to support Joint Project	Other	Identifying/Assessing Needs

6. Engagement & Participation of Parties. Engagement and participation of parties includes any efforts centered around youth, parent, foster family, or caregiver engagement, as well as projects related to notice to relatives, limited English proficiency, or other efforts to increase presence and engagement at the hearing.

Do you have an engagement or participation of parties project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Youth engagement in court and Youth Bill of Rights.	Youth Engagement	Implementation
Youth Handbook including such topics as: Independent living services, financial assistance with college or vocational school, exiting foster care, extending or re-entering foster care, rights and responsibilities of 18-21 year old youth in care, Medicaid, mentoring programs, Alaska Native resources and cultural connections.	Youth Engagement	Selecting Solution
Court provides interpreters at hearings for those with limited English proficiency	Limited English Proficiency	Evaluation/Assessment
The Court and OCS are developing an orientation video for Parents in CINA cases.	Parent Engagement	Selecting Solution and Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
<p>The Court System provides two CINA Therapeutic Courts. The Anchorage Court’s mission is to accelerate permanency by providing enhanced court oversight for parents or custodians in need of recovery services. The mission of the Palmer Families with Infants & Toddlers (FIT) court is to recognize the unique developmental needs of young children. The primary goals are to achieve permanency within 12 months and to reunify young children with their families of origin.</p>	<p>Parent Engagement</p>	<p>Implementation and Evaluation / Assessment</p>

7. Well-Being. Well-being projects include any efforts related to improving the well-being of youth. Projects could focus on education, early childhood development, psychotropic medication, LGBTQ youth, trauma, racial disproportionality/disparity, immigration, or other well-being related topics.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being? Yes No (skip to #8)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
<p>The Psychotropic Medications Subcommittee comprised of CINA practitioners and Behavioral Health experts has been meeting to address issues related to psychotropic medications including possible CINA Rule updates and changes. They are also in the process of developing an updated bench card for the AS 47.10.087 hearing reviews for children placed in residential treatment.</p>	<p>Psychotropic Medication</p>	<p>Selecting Solution</p>

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
<p>The ESSA subcommittee of CIP comprised of CINA practitioners and education leaders has been meeting during the reporting period and working in partnership to maintain children in their “home” schools. The subcommittee revised their referral process, clarified expectations of best interest meetings, continued monthly meetings to problem solve issues, and ensured that more students in foster care remained in their same schools. Anchorage School District communicates with OCS daily to resolve smaller issues.</p> <p>333 students in foster care in Anchorage (Alaska’s largest city) were transported to their school of origin with assistance from the Anchorage School District. This number does not include students that were placed in their school zone of origin. Total cost of transportation was \$423,945 with ASD contributing \$50,000.</p>	Education	Selecting Solution
<p>An updated judicial checklist was created for judges conducting hearings for Youth 16 and Older including permanency hearings, post-permanency review hearings, extension of custody hearings, and requests to release custody. Also created was a Reference Guide of the relevant laws for older foster youth in Alaska.</p> <p>https://public.courts.alaska.gov/web/cip/docs/youth16.pdf</p>	Other	Implementation
<p>NCJFCJ will be conducting trauma audits at two of Alaska’s largest court locations in the upcoming year.</p>	Trauma	Identifying/ Assessing Needs

8. ICWA. ICWA projects could include any efforts to enhance state and tribal collaboration, state and tribal court agreements, data collection and analysis of ICWA compliance, or ICWA notice projects.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA? Yes No (skip to #9)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
<p>Reformulation of ICWA Subcommittee of CIP comprised of judges, CINA practitioners (attorneys, CASA, ICWA specialists) and Alaska Native Leaders. The Subcommittee is working on generating new bench cards for CINA hearings. There has been a large influx of new judges in the Alaska Court System and the Subcommittee aims to improve the bench cards so that they are more user-friendly to judges and practitioners throughout the child welfare system. The subcommittee revised a permanency hearing bench card and will next complete a disposition hearing bench card and also will be working on a checklist for registering tribal court orders.</p> <p>The Subcommittee is identifying inconsistencies in court processes from one judicial district to another and aims to work with presiding judges of each judicial district on efforts to standardize court processes. This will help to alleviate confusion for practitioners, specifically tribal ICWA workers.</p>	Other	Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Alaska Tribal Welfare Compact – a government –to- government agreement between the State and Tribes and Tribal Organizations establishing a framework for Tribes to provide child welfare services on behalf of the state. Tribes will provide intakes, screenings, investigations, relative searches; developing and managing safety and case plans, foster care licensing and support, supervised visitation and transportation; and adoption and guardianship home studies.	State/Tribal Court Agreements	Planning
An ICWA training was presented by the CINA Core Curriculum Workgroup to 80 multi-disciplinary legal practitioners in collaboration with the Southcentral Regional Tribal – State Group. (See description of training in the Hearing Quality section above).	Tribal Collaboration	Implementation

9. Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PSTFSA). PSTFSA projects could include any work around domestic child sex trafficking, the reasonable and prudent parent standard, a focus on runaway youth, focus on normalcy, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement the act into practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on PSTSFA? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
The State of Alaska amended AS 47.10.084 to add a new “reasonable and prudent parent standard” subsection (d).	Reasonable & Prudent Parent	Evaluation/Assessment

III. CIP Collaboration in Child Welfare Program Planning and Improvement Efforts

1. Please describe how the CIP was involved with the state's CFSP due June 30, 2019.

CIP was involved in Alaska's CFSP by participating in the State Team meeting in D.C. where the primary focus was how to use federal tools for bold changes. We worked with OCS on the design challenge for bold thinking and the CFSP, and contributed ideas for projects to be included in the CFSP, including enhanced quality legal representation. We worked together to create vision toward "*Empowering Communities to Strengthen Families to Prevent Child Abuse.*" CIP participated in several Web-Ex and teleconference meetings to further partner with OCS on the finalization of the State's Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The Children's Bureau recommends significant CIP involvement with the strategies for improving outcomes for children. Several strategies from the PIP cross over into the CFSP.

a. Does the CFSP include any of the following:

legal/judicial strategies the CIP/Agency Joint Project the CIP Hearing Quality Project

Joint court and OCS strategies facilitated with the support of CIP, which is comprised of judges, agency leads from the Public Defender Agency, Office of the Attorney General, Office of Public Advocacy Guardian ad Litem section, OCS Deputy Director, and other court personnel, focus on increased attention to data tracking, increased parental engagement from the first court hearing; and increased court oversight for cases with children in care.

Judicial and legal stakeholders on CIP have reviewed, and are supportive of this pilot project. The judicial and legal stakeholders in Fairbanks will also have this same opportunity.

Alaska judges currently utilize bench cards as a tool for ensuring required State and Federal findings are made for each hearing. These bench cards will be updated for use in the Fairbanks pilot to include tools for parent engagement and permanency timeframes. The addition of the 6 month hearing holds all parties accountable to timely permanency and ensures no case goes longer than 6 months between hearings.

Attorneys involved with the pilot will participate in the kick off, review permanency data, and provide stakeholder feedback.

OCS will develop a targeted staffing process for Permanency Planning Specialists to track potential barriers to permanency on individual cases, and find ways to remove barriers for the following cohorts: children in care > 12 months that continue to have a primary goal of reunification, children in care > 24 months that have been placed with a relative for 6 months or longer, legally free children who are not placed in a permanent home, and children on THV longer than 180 days as this is a cohort that was found to be languishing in custody past 180 days due to lack of court order to dismiss. (PIP Goal 3, Strategy 2, Activity 3.2.2)

Should the employed strategies demonstrate improved outcomes; the new innovations will be rolled out based on a schedule that takes regional stability and court receptivity into consideration. (PIP Goal 3, Strategy 2)

While the CIP Hearing Quality Project does not specifically appear in the CFSP, there are joint activities aimed at hearing quality improvement. There is a hearing quality component included in the CIP/Agency Joint Project and the agency is also very involved in the CINA Core Curriculum project to continuously improve the quality of CINA court proceedings, with the concept that high-quality, multi-disciplinary training for all CINA practitioners will assist in ensuring the provision of high-quality CINA hearings and reviews.

2. Please describe how the CIP was or will be involved in the most recent/upcoming title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review in your state.

The prior CIP Coordinator was a case reviewer for the Title IV-E reviews which occur every three years. The new CIP Coordinator attempted to ensure that a court staff person affiliated with CIP was available to be a case reviewer at the legal review in November of 2018, but the spaces on the audit team were filled before we were able to finalize which court personnel could attend. We look forward to participating in the future.

3. **Please describe how the CIP is or was involved in preparing and completing round 3 of the CFSR and PIP, if required, in your state.** *Please check all the ways that the CIP or Court Personnel were involved (or plan to be involved) in the CFSR and PIP Process. Feel free to add additional narrative to explain your involvement in the process.*

- were not involved at all
- were involved in planning the statewide assessment
- were CFSR reviewers
- were interviewed for CFSR
- were invited to the exit conference at the close of the CFSR review
- were invited to the final CFSR results session at the conclusion of the report
- Final CFSR report was shared with you
- Final CFSR report shared with courts broadly across the state
- were a part of a large group of stakeholders engaged to assist in design of the PIP
- high level of inclusion during the entire PIP process
- made suggestions for inclusion in the PIP
- suggestions made by CIP for inclusion in the PIP were put forward by the child welfare agency
- had an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the PIP before it was submitted
- meet (or plan to meet) ongoing with the child welfare agency to monitor PIP Implementation

The current version of the PIP includes (check all that apply):

- court strategies court/agency shared strategies
- the court/agency joint project described above the CIP hearing quality project
- specific practice changes that judges will make
- specific practice changes that attorneys will make

4. **What strategies or processes are in place in your state that you feel are particularly effective in supporting joint child welfare program planning and improvement?**

Regional CIP meeting, with CBCC technical assistance.

5. What barriers exist in your state that make effective joint child welfare program planning and improvement challenging?

Geographic size, travel time and costs to and from remote areas only accessible by plane or boat; scheduling training time.

6. Does the state child welfare agency currently offer professional partner training to judges, attorneys, and court personnel as part of its Title IV-E Training Plan? Yes

If yes, please provide a brief description of what is provided and how.

Training is offered to Assistant Attorneys General who represent the agency.

If no, have you met with child welfare agency leadership to discuss and explore utilizing professional partner training for judges, attorneys and court personnel?

7. Have you talked with your agency about accessing Title IV-E funding for legal representation for parents or for children? Is the agency planning to seek reimbursement? If yes, describe any plans, approaches, or models that are under consideration or underway.

We have had discussions with the agency regarding this topic, and the agency is aware of the request to include this in the upcoming CFSP. CIP Director coordinated communication between the Child Welfare Agency and the agencies that represent parents in Alaska.

III. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

1. Has your ability to integrate CQI into practice changed this year? If yes, what do you attribute the increase in ability to? Yes, attending CBCC in-person trainings, meetings, and teleconferences. CBCC on-line resources.

2. Which of the following CBCC Events/Services have you/your staff engaged in in the 2019 Fiscal Year?

- Designing & Evaluating Effective Trainings Workshop
- CQI Consult (*Topic:* _____)
- Constituency Group- Hearing Quality Constituency Group- Safety Decision Making
- Constituency Group- CFSR Constituency Group- Quality Legal Rep
- Constituency Group – ICWA Constituency Group – Anti-Trafficking
- Constituency Group – New Directors Constituency Group – APPLA/Older Youth
- CIP All Call — *What % of All Calls does your CIP participate in? 100%*

3. Do you have any of the following resources to help you integrate CQI into practice?

- CIP staff with CQI (e.g., data, evaluation) expertise Consultants with CQI expertise
- a University partnership A statewide court case management system
- Contracts with external individuals or organizations to assist with CQI efforts
- Other resources: CBCC State Liaison_____

3a. Do you record your child welfare court hearings? Yes No

If yes, are they audio video

3b. Can you remotely access your court case management system? *For example, Odyssey systems often allow remote access to case files.* Yes No

4. Consider the phases of change management and how you integrate these into practice. Are there phases of the process (e.g., Phase I-need assessment, Phase II-theory of change) that you struggle with integrating more than others?

Yes, evaluation/assessment

5. Is there a topic or practice area that you would find useful from the Capacity Building Center for Courts? Be as specific as possible (e.g., data analysis, how to evaluate trainings, more information on research about quality legal representation, how to facilitate group meetings, etc.)

Yes, data analysis and using data to inform next steps at evaluation/assessment phase of projects.

Self-Assessment – Capacity Continued

We would like you to assess your current capacities related to knowledge, skills, resources, and collaboration by responding to the following 2 sets of questions. In questions 6 and 7, we ask about CQI. When we say CQI we mean the entire change management process including root cause analysis, theory of change, strategy selection, implementation and evaluation.

6. Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a good understanding of CQI.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to integrate CQI into all our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am familiar with the available data relevant to our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to interpret and apply the available data.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The CIP and the state child welfare agency have shared goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The CIP and the state child welfare agency collaborate around program planning and improvement efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have the resources we need to fully integrate CQI into practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have staff, consultants, or partners who can answer my CQI questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. How frequently do you engage in the following activities?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
We use data to make decisions about where to focus our efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We meet with representatives of the child welfare agency to engage in collaborative systems change efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We create theories of change around systems change projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We use evaluation/assessment findings to make changes to programs/practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We evaluate (beyond monitoring outputs) our efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Evidence

Evidence-based practice – evidence-based practices are practice that have been empirically tested in a rigorous way (involving random assignment to groups), have demonstrated effectiveness related to specific outcomes, have been replicated in practice at least one, and have findings published in peer reviewed journal articles.

Empirically-supported- less rigorous than evidence-based practices are empirically-supported practices. To be empirically supported, a program must have been evaluated in some way and have demonstrated some relationship to a positive outcome. This may not meet the rigor of evidence-base, but still has some support for effectiveness.

Best-practices – best practices are often those widely accepted in the field as good practice. They may or may not have empirical support as to effectiveness, but are often derived from teams of experts in the field.

Definitions for Work Stages

Identifying and Assessing Needs – This phase is the earliest phase in the process, where you are identifying a need to be addressed. The assessing needs phase includes identifying the need, determining if there is available data demonstrating that this a problem, forming teams to address the issue.

Develop theory of change—This phase focuses on the theorizing the causes of a problem. In this phase you would identify what you think might be causing the problem and develop a “theory of change”. The theory of change is essentially how you think your activities (or intervention) will improve outcomes.

Develop/select solution—This phase includes developing or selecting a solution. In this phase, you might be exploring potential best-practices or evidence-based practices that you may want to implement as a solution to the identified need. You might also be developing a specific training, program, or practice that you want to implement.

Implementation – the implementation phase of work is when an intervention is being piloted or tested. This includes adapting programs or practices to meet your needs, and developing implementation supports.

Evaluation/assessment – the evaluation and assessment phase includes any efforts to collect data about the fidelity (process measures: was it implemented as planned?) or effectiveness (outcome measures: is the intervention making a difference?) of the project. The evaluation assessment phase also includes post-evaluation efforts to apply findings, such as making changes to the program/practice and using the data to inform next steps.