

## **State Court Improvement Program 2022 Annual Self-Assessment Report**

### **I. CQI Analyses of Required Projects**

#### **Joint Project with the Child Welfare Agency:**

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

CIP collaborated with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) on two projects:

A. Adoption Call to Action and B. Kinship Navigator.

**A. Adoption Call to Action** is a collaboration between CIP, DCF, the Juvenile Court, Children and Family Law (CAFL), and two community adoption agencies: The Cambridge Family and Children's Services, and the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE).

**Identify the specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcomes this project is intended to address.** The committee meets regularly to identify and reduce barriers to timely permanency with the goal of increasing adoptions, especially of teens and children who are non-white and to improve timely permanency for children by identifying and eliminating barriers to adoption.

**Approximate date that the project began:** The project began in July 2019 when CIP staff identified key stakeholders to participate in the Adoption Call to Action Conference in Washington, D.C.

**Stage of Project:** Implementation.

**How was the need for the project identified?** The committee analyzed data from DCF, the courts and the CFSR federal report. These reports indicated serious delays in reaching permanency, in particular adoption for children in care more than 12 months. DCF data revealed that the rates of adoption within 24 months of home removal had declined between 2015 and 2019. Juvenile Court data indicated that adoption finalizations had decreased to 664 in FY17. By FY18, the number of children adopted increased to 826 and after initiation of the DCF program to track cases weekly, by FY19, the number grew to 962. As the project progressed the attorneys and social workers expressed a need for a tool to educate potential caregivers on the different rights and responsibilities of guardianship compared to adoption.

**What is the theory of change?** By identifying and reducing barriers to adoption through the development and implementing of collaborative interventions, the time to permanency would decrease and the number of adoptions and guardianships would increase.

**Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement?** During the COVID pandemic, we implemented the following:

1. Virtual trainings as a valuable tool for recruiting and training adoptive parents and adoption social workers
2. Alternative adoption venues
3. Creating materials on guardianship and adoption
4. DCF innovative interventions
5. CIP sponsored adoption training

**What has been done to implement the projects?**

Virtual training became a valuable tool during the pandemic for recruiting and training foster parents, adoptive parents, and adoption social workers. For example, MARE/CIP sponsored Trust-based Relational Intervention Training for forty-five pre-adoptive and adoptive parents to help stabilize the adoption placements.

MARE works in contract with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to recruit, support and educate adoptive families for youth waiting in foster care for permanency through adoption. MARE specializes in finding adoptive families for the youth who typically wait the longest, including sibling groups, children of color, teens, and those with complex medical or development needs.

In line with their mission of supporting and educating families to parent the Commonwealth's most vulnerable youth, MARE obtained Court Improvement Funds to provide access to Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training to pre-adoptive and adoptive families. TBRI is an evidence based therapeutic model that trains caregivers to provide effective support and treatment for at-risk children. TBRI has been applied in courts, residential treatment facilities, group homes, foster and adoptive homes, churches, and schools. It is a nationally recognized model and has been used effectively with children and youth of all ages and all risk levels.

One goal of CIP's permanency project with the Department of Children and Families is to improve the number and timeliness of adoptions. Our theory of change is that by providing this training to pre-adoptive and adoptive families they will develop parenting skills which stabilize the placement and provide stability and permanency to the most vulnerable children and youth.

1. Out of this group a peer-to-peer support group has been established.

2. The committee supported creative adoption venues and a virtual National Adoption Day, hosted by the Governor and adoptive families.

3. Materials were created explaining rights and supports for kin caregivers and distinctions between rights and responsibilities in adoption and guardianship for children in foster care. The materials were translated into several languages, printed, placed on the CIP website, and continue to be reprinted and distributed.

4. DCF projects include a 6-week case review which focuses on the safety issues that led to removal of the child, additional services which support reunification, as well as concurrent permanency plans. The pilot project was expanded to all DCF offices. The second DCF project conducts weekly review of cases where children are legally freed for adoption and placed in an adoptive home. Barriers to finalizing the adoption are addressed until no barriers remain and the adoption can be finalized, decreasing the time to adoption, and increasing the number of adoptions.

5. DCF permanency initiatives include DCF holding a permanency conference; developing a permanency tool for managers to supervise staff; hiring a permanency manager; hiring 3-5 permanency specialists; holding permanency round tables; and hiring a manager of adoption, kinship, and search. The committee supports these initiatives.

**How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project?** The Adoption Committee continues to look at the data: number of adoptions, guardianships, and their timeliness. Despite limitations imposed by the pandemic, the committee continues to meet to improve the number of adoptions especially of teen and non-white children. CIP surveyed the committee in early 2022 and found that the meetings stimulated all members to be more creative and collaborative in working together toward the goals of the committee.

**Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?** The pandemic and the closing of courts impacted all court operations through FY21, as well as recruitment and matches. By the middle of FY22, courts were opening, and the backlog of termination cases became a priority. Some court events are still held virtually which takes more time. As a result, there has been a delay in termination of parental rights cases and adoptions. In FY22 there was a goal of over 1,000 adoptions, but due to the pandemic, 740 were finalized by May 31, 2022. The collaborative will continue to examine data from CFSR, DCF and Juvenile Court to measure progress and to identify areas needing more focus.

**What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?** National webinars on this topic, especially as pertains

to encouraging adoption of youth, are quite helpful. Identifying effective models of recruiting non-white families would be helpful.

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

**B. The Kinship Navigator Program**, a part of DCF, works collaboratively with CIP and the Grandparent's Commission to develop and expand the Kinship Navigator Program. This pilot project is designed to help stabilize placements with kin caregivers, especially those seeking guardianship in Probate and Family Court, by providing information on court process and referrals to needed services.

**Identify the specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome(s) this project is intended to address. If this effort is linked to any agency measures, e. g. CFSR measures, please note those.** The collaboration is intended to provide safety, stability, and permanency to children and to offer support to kin.

**Approximate date that the project began:** CIP began collaborating with Kinship Navigator in September 2020, following the Department of Children and Families receiving a Kinship Navigator grant from the Children's Bureau.

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

**How was need for this project identified?** CIP and DCF analyzed a 2019 study which indicated approximately 10,000 children lived with their grandparents. CIP met with the Grandparents Commission caregiver focus groups to determine what supports they needed to stabilize placement.

**Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? Yes. If yes, what is it?**

1. Development of pilot kinship navigator programs
2. Development of a guide for relative caregivers
3. Data collection and analysis

**What is the theory of change for the project?** Developing a Kinship Navigator Program would provide court process information, referrals to needed supports and services for kinship caregivers, and more placement stability for children. The Custody Guide for Child Caregivers will help potential guardians understand how to complete the legal process for obtaining guardianship.

**What has been done to implement the project?**

1. DCF received a federal grant to establish a Kinship Navigator program to support relative caregivers. CIP was invited to participate in this project. CIP staff meets

about once a month with the director of the Kinship Navigator Program and the director of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Commission to develop court process operations and review progress in implementing Kinship Navigator programs especially in four pilot counties, Barnstable, Bristol, Essex, and Worcester. The staff of the Kinship Navigator was expanded to include a bi-lingual social worker. DCF is applying for continued funding and additional staff.

2. The legal guide CIP staff developed for kinship caregivers, Guide for Relative Caregivers, printed in three languages in spring of 2021 and again in 2022, is being distributed statewide. It is also distributed through other agencies such as the Family Resource Centers and is on the CIP website in three languages.
3. Data collection and analysis: Kinship Navigator worked with Mathematica to identify data points needed for evaluation. DCF then contracted with Salesforce so that data could be collected to help analyze the program's success. As Kinship Navigator added bilingual staff, the program was extended to Worcester County. The director of the Grandparents Commission serves on the CIP Child Welfare Task Force. The director of the Grandparents Commission and the director of the Kinship Navigator will make presentations to the CIP Child Welfare Task Force on September 29, 2022.

**How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project?** Monitoring referrals: Probate and Family Court data provides information on number of guardianships filed in each county and the number of referrals to the Kinship Navigator Program. While data indicates that referral numbers have been low compared to the number of guardianship petitions filed, numbers are increasing. Thus far, over 60% of referrals come from Court or from the court website. Since October 2021, the program has served 182 kinship cases. Monitoring supports and services: Salesforce data will provide detailed information for Kinship Navigator including needs of families and service referrals.

**Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?** The pandemic delayed implementation of Kinship Navigator. Courts were closed to the public, hearings were virtual, court staff were overwhelmed with additional workload and were unable to provide needed assistance in implementing the Kinship Caregiver referral system.

**What assistance or support would be helpful from the Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC) or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?** Continued funding of program is essential. CIP is working on court/agency collaboration and is learning from CBCC and Children's Bureau webinars on Kinship Navigator.

#### **Hearing Quality Project:**

**Provide a concise description of the hearing quality project selected in your jurisdiction.** CIP supports efforts designed to improve permanency for children by

ensuring quality court hearings through: funding extensive training required for child welfare attorney certification; implementation and expansion of Pathways, a statewide differential case management system; training on child safety criteria and reasonable efforts; development, printing and distribution of a court process guide for caregivers in Probate and Family Court; publication and distribution of permanency, education and safety bench cards; and planning training on Qualified Expert Witnesses on ICWA cases.

**Approximate date that the project began:** The Quality Hearing Projects have had different start dates. In December 2018, court data revealed delays in initial hearings due to a shortage of child welfare attorneys in western and central Massachusetts. In the Spring of 2019, the Juvenile Court convened a stakeholder conference to announce implementation of Pathways, a differentiated case management system. Planning for in-person child safety trainings for attorneys, social workers and judges began in FY20, but was delayed and converted into virtual training in FY21 because of the pandemic. When the pandemic ended in-person trainings, CIP supported staff to transition to develop and implement virtual trainings. Kinship Navigator program initially reached out to CIP in September 2020 for assistance in providing court process information for kin caregivers. In 2021-22 Juvenile Court judges began using permanency, safety, and education bench cards to facilitate discussions on child well-being in court hearings.

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

**How was the need for this project identified?**

**Ensuring excellent legal representation:** Four years ago, data on timely appointment of attorneys indicated there were insufficient attorneys in Central and Western Massachusetts to hold every temporary custody hearing within 72 hours of the child's removal as required by law. CIP staff interviewed approximately 40 lawyers and 5 judges in Western Massachusetts to determine factors leading to the shortage.

**Incorporating a statewide differential case management system:** Federal AFCARS data indicates that Massachusetts is in the bottom third of the nation on achieving permanency for children who are in care for more than twelve months. State data indicates that the court is unable to comply with their permanency timeliness standards on many cases. Court hearings are often delayed, especially during the pandemic.

**Improving time to permanency:** Reviewing and analyzing timeliness data from the DCF 2021 Annual Report, indicated that median time in months to permanency through reunification had increased during the pandemic from 7.1 months in FY20 to 8.1 months in FY21; and for completing adoption: from 37.1 mos. in FY20 to 42.9 mos. in FY21.

**Developing a court process guide for Kinship Navigator:** Interviews with kinship caregivers revealed a lack of information about the process for obtaining a guardianship in Probate and Family Court, especially during the pandemic when filing was done through

new virtual court service centers and the virtual registry. Courts are now fully open to the public and some have maintained virtual filing.

**What is the theory of change for the project?** Quality court hearings will improve the time to permanency. Fully implementing the Pathways model will improve the timeliness and quality of court hearings. Utilizing the safety, permanency and education bench cards will provide a framework for substantive hearings. Understanding safety considerations and the effective use of reasonable efforts should lead to a decrease in time to permanency.

**Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? YES**

**If yes, what is it?** Improve the quality of court hearings by: supporting trainings for lawyers and social workers; provide excellent legal representation for parents and children immediately following the children's removal; incorporating a statewide differential case management system to ensure timely permanency; training lawyers, social workers and judges on using objective criteria to assess the safety of children; educating kinship caregivers in the legal guardianship process by developing, printing and distributing a Custody Guide for Child Caregivers; printing and distributing bench cards on permanency, safety and education to support substantive court hearings.

CIP has funded a full-time manager of Pathways in the Administrative Office of the Juvenile Court to develop and implement a differentiated case management system designed to improve court hearings and their timeliness to improve permanency for children. One aspect of the work focuses on supporting judges and court participants to meaningfully engage in court hearings. Bench cards with essential questions on permanency, risk/safety and educational stability have been distributed to all judges and are being printed and distributed statewide to attorneys and social workers. The Pathways manager reports that using the bench cards as a framework for discussion, has facilitated clearer expectations, parties are better prepared, and there is more effective use of court time. The Child Welfare Data Analyst developed dashboards on timeliness which allow judges and clerks to identify barriers to timeliness in each jurisdiction. Additionally, the Juvenile Court offered judicial training on safety and utilized the safety bench cards to frame court discussions.

CIP organized and funded a four-part state-wide virtual training on the ABA Child Safety Guide to incorporate objective, safety decision making as part of all court proceedings. About three hundred practitioners participated including attorneys and social workers. CIP purchased the Child Safety Guide for all judges in the Commonwealth and for the CAFL attorneys.

CIP developed and printed a Custody Guide for Child Caregivers to assist caregivers in understanding the court hearing process for obtaining a guardianship. It explains how to file a petition for guardianship and participate in hearings remotely by accessing the Court Service Center or the Virtual Registry. A handy two-page chart explains the legal, financial, and other differences between going through Juvenile Court and Probate and Family Court.

The Guide and the chart are published in three languages, are being re-printed, distributed statewide and are available for caregivers on the CIP website.

To reach the general goal of improving hearing quality and the timeliness of hearings, CIP purchased compact disk DVD ram drives, voice recorders and scanners for DCF to reduce delays with case updates and discovery. CIP purchased laptops, software and scanners for the Probate and Family Courts which were used this year to allow judges to hear child welfare cases remotely during the pandemic.

**How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project?** CIP continues to analyze the time to permanency and to monitor the dashboard on attorney time to first appointment to gauge improvement on timely appointments, especially in western and central Massachusetts. In addition, CIP will measure the increase in qualified CAFL attorneys to determine the success of the Fellows program in western Massachusetts. The Child Welfare Data Analyst provided CIP with data on the timeliness of permanency hearings as well as time to reunification, adoption, and guardianship. Improving timeliness measures will indicate success of the Pathways model. CIP monitors distribution of the Custody Guide for Child Caregivers in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. CIP will measure the distribution of the bench cards.

**Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?** Court closings and virtual court hearings have impacted the quality of court hearings. Many cases were continued due to court closings. Virtual hearings take longer to complete than in-person hearings. The pandemic has impacted the parent's ability to complete their action plans and the Department's ability to make reasonable efforts. This causes trials to be continued, and time to permanency to be delayed. Courts are now open, and most hearings are in person. Backlogs are being addressed.

**What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?** Developing and implementing evaluation tools for all projects.

### **Quality Legal Representation Project:**

**Provide a concise description of the quality legal representation project in your jurisdiction.** Through interdisciplinary, collaborative trainings CIP works to support efforts to provide excellent legal counsel to all children and indigent parents upon the filing of a care and protection petition. The **COVID Supplemental Funds** supported the Family Preservation Project (pre-petition) to prevent children from entering foster care by disentangling poverty from neglect and providing legal and service supports.

**Approximate date when projects began:** CIP historically has supported robust legal training for child welfare attorneys. The Family Preservation Program located in the



Community Legal Aid Office in Springfield, MA, was funded by CIP (with COVID Supplemental Funds) in December 2021.

**Stage of Project:** Implementation

**How was the need identified?** Massachusetts law requires that all children and indigent parents in Care and Protection cases and Probate and Family Court guardianships of minor cases be appointed legal counsel. CAFL has certification and training requirements. Attorneys who provide representation must be trained for initial certification and continue to keep updated through ongoing training. Data demonstrates that there is an insufficient supply of child welfare attorneys to meet the demand, especially in Western, Massachusetts. CIP analyzed DCF and court data which indicated the high number of Care and Protection cases filed in this geographic area and the racial disproportionality of removals.

**What is the Theory of Change?** Providing ongoing legal training on such issues as procedural and substantive law, engagement of clients, trauma, racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparity, substance use disorder, LGBTQ challenges, DCF policies and procedures is essential to providing quality legal representation. Expanding the child welfare legal pool especially in Western Massachusetts will provide timely appointment of attorneys. Developing, sustaining, and expanding Family Preservation Programs will prevent removals by assisting families with collateral legal issues, while providing needed supports and services

**Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? YES**

**If yes, what is it?** CIP works collaboratively with a diverse group of child welfare stakeholders to develop, fund, and produce multi-disciplinary webinars for child welfare lawyers and social workers. The seven-part series on Racial Equity and Inclusion included workshops on: Cultural Humility; Voices of Youth; Theory into Practice; Child Welfare and White Supremacy; Racial Trauma; Revolutionary Change in Child Welfare: An Antiracist Framework; and Implementing Change. Approximately 200 plus lawyers/social workers attended each session. CIP funds three training consultants who develop and implement trainings for certification and quality representation. CIP funds participation in conferences such as NICWA, NACC, MCLE, and Children's Trust.

The CIP funded child welfare data analyst developed dashboards to indicate the timeliness of initial appointments. The dashboard presents appointment data from every county which assists in identifying gaps in legal resources. The dashboard is shared with court personnel and CAFL, the appointing authority, to improve the timelines of appointment of counsel. Data consistently demonstrates a shortage of child welfare lawyers in Western Massachusetts.

CIP supports expanding the legal pool in Western Massachusetts by developing and funding a fellowship program with Western New England School of Law. Upon the completion of a child welfare curriculum, an internship and graduation, fellows work under the supervision of a child welfare attorney until they pass the bar exam. During that time, they complete course work and receive certification to practice child welfare law. After passing the bar they are prepared to accept child welfare cases

CIP continues to encourage DCF and CPCS to work with the legislature to reach an agreement on the drawing down of IV-E funds for expanded legal representation of children and families. It is expected that providing pre-filing representation, a proposed use of the funds, will decrease the number of Care and Protection filings. This will enable the court to deal with the backlog created by the pandemic.

**What has been done to implement the project?** The Family Preservation Program, funded by CIP COVID Supplemental Funds, is up and running. There are three staff members: a staff attorney who is also a social worker, a case manager who is a lawyer and a social worker, and a parent partner with lived experience. The legal aid office is available to handle specialized challenges. CLA received 30 referrals and assisted 25 families. It is expected that the program will lead to better outcomes for families, a reduction in care and protection filings and a decrease in demand for care and protection attorneys. Two fellows completed the program this year becoming certified CAFL attorneys practicing in Western Massachusetts. Three fellows are currently participating in the program and will be interning this summer/fall.

**How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project?** Assessment of the Family Preservation Program is essential to its sustainability and expansion. Basic data is being recorded in the Springfield office on number of referrals, ethnicity, service needs, and services provided. CIP is working with a diverse group of stakeholders to explore alternative funding sources.

**Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?** COVID Supplemental Funding required CIP to implement the program and spend the funds within the fiscal year. CIP prepared the RFP for bids in the Fall and had the program implemented by December. The groundswell for establishing such a program, especially in Springfield where the need was so great, encouraged CIP to move ahead as quickly as possible.

**What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?** Needs include additional funding for family preservation programs, webinars on pre-petition representation, and assistance in drawing down Title IV-E funding.



**II. Trainings, Projects, and Activities** For questions 1-12, provide a *concise* description of work completed or underway to date in FY 2022 (October 2021-June 2022) in the topical subcategories below. For question 1, focus on significant training events or initiatives held or developed in FY 2022.

**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	Child welfare stakeholders	10	Webinar, meeting	Understanding data	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	attorneys		webinars		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input 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	Pre-adoptive parents	80	webinar series	Increase adoptions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Quality legal representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Attorneys, social workers	200	webinars	Improve legal representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input 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	Attorneys, social workers, child welfare stakeholders		webinars		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input 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	Adoptive and pre-adoptive parents	80	webinars	Stabilize adoptive placements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Statewide child welfare stakeholders	1000 (250+ at 4 trainings)	4 webinars	Understanding trauma, cultural humility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
ICWA/Tribal collaboration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	NICWA conference	9	conference webinars	Expand knowledge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input 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
Normalcy/Reason. Prudent Parent	<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

<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>
Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Attorneys, social workers	200			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Safety	<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: NACC, MCLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Attorneys, social workers	300	conferences		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

**On average, how many training events do you hold per year?** 15

**What is your best prediction for the number of attorneys, judges, or other legal system stakeholders that will participate in training annually?** Over 1000

**The Family First Prevention Services Act amended 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)<sup>1</sup> IN GENERAL. In order to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a highest State court ... 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...–*

**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.**

**Have you developed/been developing your Family First judicial training plan?** ☐ Yes ☒ No. Massachusetts is not providing Q RTP placements for children in care. As a result, CIP has not developed judicial trainings.

**If yes, please describe what you have done.**

<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 629h(b); Social Security Act § 438(b)

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

Do you have a data project/activity? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Review <i>AFCARS</i>	Use of AFCARS or CCWIS data	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Disproportionality and disparity data in Massachusetts	Fostering Court Improvement data projects	Identifying/Assessing Needs

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

(b) How are these reports used to support your work? Data informs theories of change and measures progress towards goals. We are analyzing data on racial, ethnic, and geographic disproportionality and disparity to develop a theory of change.

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

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Printing and distribution of Permanency, safety and education bench cards	Process Improvements	Implementation
Pathways	Process Improvements	Implementation
Judicial Reasonable Efforts Training	Courts Orders/Title IV-E	Implementation

- 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 improvement in specific outcomes such as around reunification, guardianship, adoption or a focus on APPLA and older youth.*

*Do you have a timeliness or permanency project/activity?* ☒ Yes ☐ No

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>How would you categorize this project?</b>	<b>Work Stage (if applicable)</b>
Pathways	Continuances/Delays	Implementation
Publications on adoption and guardianship	Adoption	Implementation
Adoption Call to Action Committee	Adoption	Implementation

- 5. Engagement & Participation of Parties.** *Engagement and participation of parties includes any efforts centered around youth, parent, foster family or caregiver, or relative engagement, 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

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>How would you categorize this project?</b>	<b>Work Stage (if applicable)</b>
Publications on court process in several languages	Relative Engagement	Implementation

- 6. Well-Being.** *Well-being projects include any efforts related to improving the well-being of children and youth. Projects could focus on education, early childhood development, psychotropic medication, trauma, social network support, cultural connections, or other well-being related topics.*

*Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being?* ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Training on trauma	Trauma	Implementation
Diversity/inclusion webinars	Cultural connections	Implementation
Training projects on well-being	Cultural connections	Implementation
Published, distributed education bench cards	Education	Implementation

**7. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA).** *These projects include any efforts related to improving equity in child welfare systems around race, sexual orientation or gender identity, national origin or immigration status, religion, persons with disabilities, geographic or otherwise.*

*Do you have any projects/activities focused on DEIA?* ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
DEIA training series	Race	Implementation

**8. ICWA/Tribal collaboration.** *These projects could include any efforts to enhance state and tribal collaboration, state and tribal court agreements, data collection and analysis including of ICWA practice.*

*Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA or tribal collaboration?* ☐ Yes ☐ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
NICWA training	Hearing Quality	Implementation



- 9. Preventing Sex Trafficking.** *These projects could include work around domestic child sex trafficking, a focus on runaway youth, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement these sections of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act into practice.*

Do you have any projects/activities focused on preventing sex trafficking/runaways? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

- 10. Normalcy/Reasonable and Prudent Parent.** *These projects could include any work around normalcy or the reasonable and prudent parent standard or practices, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement these sections of the Preventing Sex and Strengthening Families Act into practice.*

Do you have any projects/activities focused on normalcy/reasonable prudent parenting? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

- 11. Prevention.** *Prevention projects include work around preventing child maltreatment including primary prevention (preventing maltreatment from occurring in the first place), secondary, and tertiary prevention.*

Do you have any projects/activities focused on prevention? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Family Preservation Program	Primary prevention	Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Mini grants to service providers in two communities committed to helping child welfare families: One Can Help and Debbie's Treasure Chest. They used <b>COVID Supplemental Funds</b> to provide supports to parents, children, and youth in Juvenile Court for Care and Protection, to address challenges resulting from the pandemic that prevented them from completing their action plans and led to delays in court hearings and reunification. Supports included such items as transportation, chromebooks, emergency rent, beds, etc.	Secondary or tertiary prevention	Implementation

**12. Safety.** *Safety projects are those that focus on decision-making around safety including decision-making practices in substantiation, removal, family time/visitation, and decisions about safety in out of home placements.*

*Do you have any projects/activities focused on safety?* ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Publish, distribute safety bench cards	Removal/Return	Implementation

**13. Project materials.** From any of the work described above, do you have any documents or other materials that feel would be helpful to share with the national CIP community? For example, rigorous research, innovative approaches, compelling outcome data, etc. Please link here or note and include in your submission.

### 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, 2022. CIP collaborative projects with DCF are included in the CFSP.*

*Does the CFSP include any of the following:*

☒ the CIP/Agency Joint Project

- ☒ the Hearing Quality Project
- ☒ the Legal Representation Project
- ☐ other judicial strategies
- ☐ other attorney strategies

If yes, please describe.

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.** CIP has not been involved in this.
3. **Please describe how the CIP was or will be involved in preparing and completing round 4 of the CFSR and PIP.** CIP is already involved in participating in Round 4 CFSR training.

*Only states that will be participating in round 4 of the CFSR and PIP in your state this reporting year need to complete these questions. However, working to organize meaningful engagement of a broad array of legal and judicial stakeholders and to support collaboration with other system partners is useful for other major CIP projects as well, so others may wish to consider these with your teams. See the PI at page 9 for further explanation.*

**a. Regarding engaging the legal and judicial stakeholders with a broad representation of perspectives in CFSR/PIP processes:**

- i) **What barriers do you foresee in engaging stakeholders at an appropriate breadth and depth?** With continued support from federal experts, we do not expect to have barriers.
- ii) **What do you believe will facilitate engaging stakeholders at an appropriate breadth and depth?** Continued outreach and support from CFSR review team.

**b. Are there other leadership structures for legal and judicial stakeholders and how can those facilitate the processes around the CFSR/PIP?**

CIP Task Force

**c. How will legal stakeholder involvement in the CFSR/PIP be managed?** e. g. CIP is the lead, via the Multi-Disciplinary Task force, a sub-committee established by the child welfare agency, etc.

In Massachusetts DCF has a multidisciplinary CFSR subcommittee.

- d. **What court, judicial, or attorney data could be integrated into the CFSR/PIP process?** MassCourts data.
  - e. **How might participation vary in stages of the process?** Unknown
  - f. **What feedback loops will be needed to keep stakeholders informed?** Unknown
  - g. **What supports do you need from the Children's Bureau or Capacity Building Centers for participating in the CFSR/PIP?** Unknown
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?** Statewide child welfare stakeholder collaboration on: The CIP Steering Committee; CIP Child Welfare Task Force, CIP Training Committee, Adoption Call to Action Committee.
5. **What barriers exist in your state that make effective joint child welfare program planning and improvement challenging?**  
Agency/court silos
6. **Regarding collaboration on training with the child welfare agency...**
- a. **Regarding training needs across the child welfare system, what is your process to work with the agency to consider how to maximize the impact of complementary resources and ensure there is no undue duplication of efforts?** There is a CIP training committee composed of a diverse group of stakeholders including DCF and the courts. This committee works collaboratively to identify training needs and to design and implement projects.
  - b. **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?** NO  
*If yes, please provide a brief description of what is provided and how.*  
  
*If no, have you met with child welfare agency leadership to discuss and explore utilizing professional partner training for judges, attorneys, and court personnel?* Yes
7. **Have you talked with your agency about accessing Title IV-E funding for legal representation for parents or for children?** YES. **Is your state currently planning to seek or currently receiving reimbursement? If yes, describe any plans, approaches, or models that are under consideration or underway.** Massachusetts is working on receiving Title IV-E funding for legal representation.

#### IV. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

1. **Has your ability to integrate CQI into practice changed this year?** If yes, what do you attribute the change to? Access to data has enhanced our ability to integrate CQI into practice.

2. **Which of the following CBCC Events/Services have you/your staff engaged in this past year?**

- ☐ Attorney Academy
- ☒ Judicial Academy
- ☒ CIPShare 2.0
- ☒ CQI Consult (*Topic: Racial Equity* \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☒ CQI Workshop
- ☒ Constituency Group - Data/Evaluation
- ☒ Constituency Group - Family First Prevention Services Act
- ☒ Constituency Group - Hearing Quality
- ☒ Constituency Group - ICWA
- ☒ Constituency Group - Legal Representation
- ☒ Constituency Group - New Directors
- ☒ Constituency Group - Race Equity
- ☒ Constituency Group – Regional CIP Calls
- ☒ Constituency Group - Virtual Hearings/Court Processes
- ☒ Constituency Group - Other Pre-petition representation \_\_\_\_\_
  
- ☒ 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 data expertise
- ☐ CIP staff with evaluation expertise
- ☐ CIP staff 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

If yes, are they ☒ audio ☐ video

b. Can you remotely access your court case management system? *For example, Odyssey systems often allow remote access to case files.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

c. What court case management software does your state use? If multiple, please indicate the most common: MassCourts which is an Oracle system.

d. Have you employed any new technology or applications to strengthen your work? Virtual meetings and trainings

e. Do any of these systems include an electronic filing system? no

**4. Please describe any continuity planning the CIP has led or has been involved in if not noted above. Continuity planning includes prevention and recovery planning for threats such as public health crises, natural disasters, or cyber-attacks. This may include, for example, technology support for remote hearings or legal representation, developing guidance, coordinating with other agencies, or otherwise ensuring back-up approaches are in place to ensure needed services are able to continue.** Backup procedures were drafted in preparation of a state audit, and checklists for continuity planning were developed.

**5. Considering 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?** Assessment/evaluation

**6. 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.)** Assistance in drafting a Requests for Proposals in evaluation project in family preservation programs.

## 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 CQI Phases

***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.

**Paperwork Reduction Act**

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control Number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-0307 and it expires 11/30/2022. The estimated time to complete the CIP Complete Application is 92 hours