

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES, IF ANY, THAT STATES ACROSS THE NATION EMPLOY WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE FAMILY COURTS TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN IN CARE?

STATE SUMMARY: PENNSYLVANIA

State CFSR

The CFSR committee was composed of several dozen people from child welfare agencies in the state, and included the CIP Director (as a representative of dependency court), the Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC), and some representatives from probation departments. During the onsite review, court representatives, including judges, from all three on-site counties (Philadelphia, Montgomery, Lancaster) were interviewed. The federal report was submitted to the state in November 2002.

The PIP committee was a smaller, more focused group. The CIP Director was the main court representative who was involved from the start of the CSFR through the PIP drafting process, and during the current implementation. The CIP Director has been involved in several areas of the CFSR and PIP in which the courts play a major role, including permanency and case review system. It is also important to note that Pennsylvania has a county operated, state supervised system.

Collaboration Following the Release of the PIP

Once the PIP was approved, the priority was to create committees that didn't already exist to address various sections of the PIP. For example, the PIP called for the formation of a Court Relations Committee (CRC). Soon after the PIP was approved, agency and court representatives formed this committee, with the purpose of working with the CIP Director, JCJC, and individual county courts to achieve the PIP.

Some areas of the PIP, such as training and policy development, existed before the PIP, and continued after the PIP was drafted and accepted. For example, a policy development team was already working to revise state regulations when the PIP was accepted.

Please see Appendix A for a list of areas of the PIP, which entail agency and court collaboration.

Ongoing Collaboration

Court Improvement Project: The PIP called for expansion of the CIP to 12 counties. The CIP is currently being expanded to 15 counties outside Philadelphia, three more than what the PIP called for. These 15 counties plus Philadelphia have 80% of all the children in foster care and dependency court dispositions per year. Once the CIP is successfully implemented in these 15 new counties, the CIP will expand to the remaining 52 counties.

The Philadelphia CIP Committee has been in operation since 1998. In November 2003, this model will expand to 15 other counties. The goal of the county CIP Committee team is to pursue the PIP goals and other court improvement projects.

Annual conference. This year's annual conference was held on November 13-14 in Harrisburg, PA. This meeting included the 15 counties outside Philadelphia who are currently implementing the CIP. In addition, county agency executives, judges, and masters were invited to attend this conference.

The meeting included discussions about the CFSR, the PIP, and the AFCARS data for each county regarding factors, such as time for TPR and rate of re-entry into foster care. The goal was to develop local CIP plans to improve the court outcomes in the child welfare system. The conference members will hold regular local meetings to pursue the CIP and PIP goals, and ask for technical assistance from the CIP Director and National Resource Centers based on local needs and plans. Each county will send a six-person team that will form a permanent local CIP team consisting of a judge, court administrator, CPA Director, agency attorney, child's attorney, and parent's attorney.

After the conference, a Steering Committee, with court and agency representatives, was formed to address statewide court improvement issues, such as automation of records and reports.

Conclusion

Although the state CIP plan was not finalized until a few months after the PIP was drafted and submitted, the PIP and CIP plans parallel each other. CIP members are working to implement the CIP with the help of PIP members, and vice versa. This collaboration is working well so far.

APPENDIX A: PENNSYLVANIA PIP EXTRACT

OBJECTIVES

To ensure that these objectives are met, OCYF will utilize the same process that was used to prepare for the CFSR. OCYF will establish a committee consisting of its own staff, representatives from county children and youth agencies, juvenile probation offices, private agencies, the Juvenile Court Judges Commission and consultants. This committee will serve as a governing body for implementation of the PIP.

Defining Standards

OCYF also intends to release two new bulletins: one on Permanent Legal Custodianship and one on Kinship Care. New practice standards are likely to be needed in relation to permanency issues, especially in relation to youth entering the system through the juvenile court. In addition, OCYF will review and revise the Self-assessment Tool for counties regarding practice standards which have an impact on permanency.

PERMANENCY¹

Outcome: Children will have permanency and stability in their living situation.

Outcome Goal:51%

Action Steps	Benchmarks	Benchmark Achievement Periods	Tasks
<p>1. <u>Expand the audience for relevant training to include county and private agency teams, cross-system county-based teams and county and juvenile court teams.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First county teams trained 	<p>2004A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops identified that support key practice standards and are relevant to cross-system stakeholders (3/03 and ongoing) ▪ <u>Identify other training resources through the Court Improvement Project for judges in dependency courts and develop curriculum (3/03)</u> ▪ Through input from counties and private providers, identify relevant permanency topics (6/03) ▪ County teams identified to attend relevant trainings (6/03 and ongoing)

¹ The activities and benchmarks listed here are applicable to several of the CFSR/PIP items in both the permanency and well-being areas. To avoid repetition, they are listed here without reference to a specific item.

Action Steps	Benchmarks	Benchmark Achievement Periods	Tasks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CBT training data used, as one source, to identify the number of county teams attending relevant training (6/03 and ongoing) ▪ Impact of team training assessed by partners (7/04) ▪ Recommendations for FY04-05 team training made (7/04)

ITEM 7.	PERMANENCY GOAL FOR CHILD
Measurement method:	Qualitative case review
CFSR Performance:	68%
Performance Goal:	71%

Action Steps	Benchmarks	Benchmark Achievement Periods	Tasks
<p>1. <u>Expand the Court Improvement Project beyond Philadelphia County to 12 counties.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Court Improvement Project implemented 12 counties 	2004B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Meet with Philadelphia Family Court and Juvenile Court Judges Commission to establish JCJC as a statewide sponsor of the Court Improvement Project (5/03)</u> ▪ <u>Establish a statewide steering committee for court related aspects of the Program Improvement Plan to be jointly chaired by OCYF and JCJC (6/03)</u> ▪ <u>CFSR review findings and AFCARS data sent to juvenile court judges in all counties with information regarding plans for training conferences (6/03)</u> ▪ <u>Identify national models to be</u>

Action Steps	Benchmarks	Benchmark Achievement Periods	Tasks
			<p><u>presented to PA judges and masters through statewide training conferences (6/03)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Conduct a survey of all counties to identify the areas of court improvement needed statewide (7/03)</u> ▪ Complete continuation proposal and submit to ACF (8/03) ▪ Establish technical assistance support structure and provide technical assistance to respond to county needs calling on the federal resources centers related to legal issues and permanency (10/03) ▪ Training conferences occur (3/04) ▪ Follow-up with counties to assure implementation (9/04) ▪ Sample case reviews (9/04)
<p>2. <u>Develop practice standards for cases involved in juvenile court, especially around the issues of permanency goals for children.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New practice standards disseminated to counties and private agencies 	<p>2004B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Develop appropriate practice standards for child welfare agencies to guide their work with cases involved in juvenile court to assure timely and appropriate goals for children (7/04)</u>

ITEM 9.	ADOPTION
Measurement method:	Qualitative case review and analysis of AFCARS data
CFSR Performance:	43% from qualitative case review; 19.1% from analysis of AFCARS data
Performance Goal:	46% from qualitative case review; 22% from analysis of AFCARS data

Action Steps	Benchmarks	Benchmark Achievement Periods	Tasks
<p>1. <u>Expand the Court Improvement</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Data disseminated to juvenile</u> 	<p>2003B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National models for inclusion in the

Action Steps	Benchmarks	Benchmark Achievement Periods	Tasks
<u>Project beyond Philadelphia to 12 counties with a focus on 2nd and 3rd class counties.</u>	<u>judges</u>		conference identified and invitations to participate made (4/03) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>CFSR review data and AFCARS data disseminated to juvenile judges of all counties with an invitation to attend the conference in the Spring of 2004 (7/03)</u>
2. <u>Conduct forums for judges and masters to highlight the results of the Court Improvement Project as well as other successful court reform projects in Pennsylvania.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forums held 	2004B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda, leadership, locations and dates for forums identified (9/03) ▪ <u>County children and youth agency executives, judges and masters invited (9/03)</u> ▪ Forums held (4/04)

ITEM 28.	PROVIDES A PROCESS FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS PROCEEDINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ASFA
Measurement method:	Introduction of legislation to amend Adoption Act

Action Steps	Benchmarks	Benchmark Achievement Periods	Tasks
1. <u>The PIP Committee, with input from the SWAN Advisory Committee and the JCJC will develop a strategy for effective adoption planning and education, including training of judges.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan developed 	2003B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>The PIP Committee, with input from the SWAN Advisory Committee and the JCJC will develop a strategy for effective adoption planning and education, including training of judges. The strategy will build on and incorporate the work of the Court Improvement and the Barriers to Termination (09/03)</u> ▪ <u>Design curriculum for training judges consistent with the strategy for effective adoption planning and education (03/04)</u> ▪ <u>Provide first training session for judges (09/04)</u>

