



The National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

How we can help states and tribes with the CFSR:

Kicking off the CFSR Process. In collaboration with other Resource Centers, we can help states begin their CFSR process. We can help identify and engage all the most appropriate legal system participants and can help ensure they will stay involved throughout the entire process – from statewide assessment through implementation of the PIP.

Collecting and Analyzing Data. We can help analyze data the state is collecting to determine how effectively the courts are achieving safety, permanence, and well-being for children.

Our staff can also help coordinate focus groups as a method for collecting data from judges, lawyers and other stakeholders for the CFSR.

Legal and Judicial Issue Analysis. Our staff take requests to review CFSR statewide assessments, final reports, and program improvement plans and then help identify underlying legal barriers to best practice and recommend strategies to overcome these barriers.

Involving the Court Improvement Project in the Process. We can help the state identify who in the state's Court Improvement Project (CIP) to involve and help the CIP understand the potential scope of involvement and the importance of collaborating with the agency in the CFSR process.

Legal Detective Work. We can meet with the agency and/or court to track down the *real* causes of legal system issues. Often, there are a number of potential reasons for a problem, and we can help pinpoint underlying causes in a particular jurisdiction.

Action Planning. In coordination with the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement, we can meet with the agency and/or court to help develop specific, realistic strategies to address issues identified in the final report. This can happen before or after the creation of the PIP.

PIP Implementation. The Resource Center offers training and technical assistance tailored to your needs as determined by the PIP. Examples include: Improving Agency Legal Representation; ASFA Nuts and Bolts Implementation for Judges; Analysis of State Statutes and Court Rules; Analysis of Judicial and Attorney Workloads with Strategies for Improvement.

Changing the Nature of Child Welfare Agency and Court Collaboration.

The courts need to feel they are part of the child welfare system and the agency needs to be able to approach the court and work with them. We can assist in making these connections and in fostering more of a team attitude.

Other Training and TA Responses in Development.

The Resource Center provides a wide range of legal and judicial training and technical assistance. We are currently developing some new types of assistance that may be helpful to states and tribes in the CFSR process, including:

- ◆ **Best Practices to Implement ASFA: Creative Strategies for Practitioners.** This full-day program combines discussion of substantive topics such as concurrent planning, permanency for adolescents, substance abuse treatment, mediation and medical treatment for children in foster care with an interactive exercise based on a complex case scenario. As a result of the program, practitioners, especially attorneys and judges, will learn about their role in ASFA implementation and best practices. The program is done in collaboration with the Resource Center on Foster Care and Permanency Planning and the Resource Center on Youth Development.
- ◆ **Making it Permanent: Efforts to Finalize Permanency Plans for Foster Children.** Through this session judges, attorneys, and agency staff will gain practical guidance for determining the best permanency plan for a child and finalizing the plan when the goal is: reunification, adoption, guardianship, relative placement, and another planned permanent living arrangement. For judges, the session includes a discussion of best practices in judicial decision-making in selecting and monitoring permanency goals, and assessing reasonable efforts in finalizing permanency plans for children in foster care. This session is based on an article series and book of the same name.
- ◆ **Meeting Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care.** Participants in this session will gain an understanding of laws related to education and methods to best meet the educational well-being of children in foster care. This program is based on an upcoming article series.

For more information, and a complete description of how our center can assist your state or tribe, visit www.abanet.org/child/rc/iji or contact **Mimi Laver** (202) 662-1736; laverm@staff.abanet.org

