



2022 ANNUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICES REPORT

2020-2024 CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN



COLORADO
Office of Children,
Youth & Families
Division of Child Welfare

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Glossary of Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 12 CCR 2509 | Colorado Code of Regulations |
| ACA | Assistant County Attorneys |
| ACE | Adverse Childhood Experiences |
| ACF | Administration for Children and Families |
| ACHY | Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth |
| AFCARS | The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System |
| AI/AN | American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| APSR | Annual Progress and Services Report |
| ARCH | Applied Research in Child Welfare |
| ARD | Administrative Review Division |
| ASO | Administrative Services Organization |
| BACW | Black Administrators of Child Welfare |
| BIPOC | Black, Indigenous, People Of Color |
| BPCT | Best Practice Court Teams |
| CANS | Child and Adolescent Need and Strengths |
| CAPTA | Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act |
| CASA | Court Appointed Special Advocate |
| CBCAP | Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention |
| CCB | Community Centered Boards |
| CCIA | Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs |
| CCR | Colorado Community Response |
| CCTF | Colorado Children's Trust Fund |
| CCWIS | Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System |
| CDE | Colorado Department of Education |
| CDHE | Colorado Department of Higher Education |
| CDHS | Colorado Department of Human Services |
| CDPHE | Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment |
| CEEX | Celebration of Educational Excellence |
| CFPS | Child Fatality Prevention System |
| CFRT | Child Fatality Review Team |
| CFSA | Colorado Family Support Assessment |
| CFSP | Child and Family Services Plan |
| CFSR | Child and Family Services Review |
| CHSDA | Colorado Human Services Directors Association |
| CIP | Court Improvement Program |
| CMP | Collaborative Management Program |
| COYLN | Colorado Youth Leadership Network |
| COP | Community of Practice |
| COPE | Circle of Parents Expanded |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus Disease 2019 |
| CPA | Child Placement Agency |
| CPE | Certified Public Expenditures |
| CPR | Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation |
| CPS | Child Protective Services |
| CWEL | Child Welfare Education Liaisons |
| CWELC | Child Welfare Executive Leadership Council |
| CPTF | Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families |
| CSU | Colorado State University |
| CWTS | Child Welfare Training System |
| CY | Calendar Year |
| CYMHTA | Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act |
| DANSR | Dependency and Neglect System Reform |
| DCW | Division of Child Welfare |

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|--------------|--|
| DIFRC | Denver Indian Family Resource Center |
| DIHFS | Denver Indian Health and Family Services |
| DOLA | Department of Local Affairs |
| DR | Differential Response |
| DRLC | Differential Response Leadership Council |
| DRLE | Differential Response Learning Exchange |
| DYS | Division of Youth Services |
| ECHO | Enhanced Community Health Outcomes |
| EDI | Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion |
| EPIC | Evidence-based Practices Implementation for Capacity |
| EPP | Expedited Permanency Planning |
| ETO | Efforts to Outcomes |
| ETP | Emancipation Transition Plan |
| ETV | Education and Training Vouchers |
| Family First | Family First Prevention Services Act |
| FASD | Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder |
| FEM | Family Engagement Meetings |
| FFE | Facilitated Family Engagement |
| FFPSA-IT | Family First Prevention Services Act - Implementation Team |
| FFCSC | Former Foster Care Steering Committee |
| FFY | Federal Fiscal Year |
| FSE | Family Search and Engagement |
| FSP | Family Service Plans |
| FYI | Foster Youth to Independence |
| GAL | Guardian ad Litem |
| HB | House Bill |
| HCPF | Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing |
| HIPPY | Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters |
| HUD | Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| ICAMA | Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance |
| ICPC | Interstate Compact for Placement of Children |
| ICWA | Indian Child Welfare Act |
| IDD | Intellectual or developmental disabilities |
| ILA | Independent Living Arrangement |
| ISST | Integrated Service and Support Teams |
| LGBTQ+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning + |
| MAPP | Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting |
| MCV | Monthly Caseworker Visit |
| MEPA | Multi-Ethnic Placement Act |
| MIECHV | Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MSO | Managed Service Organizations |
| MST | Multi-Systemic Therapy |
| MSU | Metropolitan State University |
| NEICE | National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise |
| NFP | Nurse-Family Partnership |
| NSTRC | National SafeCare® Training and Research Center |
| NYTD | National Youth in Transition Database |
| OB/GYN | Obstetrics and Gynecology |
| OBH | Office of Behavioral Health |
| OCR | Office of the Child's Representative |
| OCYF | Office of Children, Youth and Families |
| OEC | Office of Early Childhood |
| OES | Office of Economic Security |
| OOH | Out-of-Home |

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| ORPC | Office of the Respondent Parent Counsel |
| OSRI | Onsite Review Instrument |
| PA3 | Program Area 3 |
| PAC | Policy Advisory Committee |
| PAT | Parents as Teachers |
| PHOM | Permanent Home |
| PIP | Program Improvement Plan |
| PIT | Point in Time |
| PPH | Planned Permanency Hearing |
| PPSS | Post-Permanency Services |
| PRIDE | Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education |
| PSSF | Promoting Safe and Stable Families |
| PTG | Permanency Task Group |
| QRTF | Qualified Residential Treatment Program |
| RCHY | Rural Collaborative on Homeless Youth |
| RCT | Randomized Control Trial |
| RFA | Request for Authorization |
| RFP | Request for Proposal |
| RGAP | Relative Guardianship Assistance Program |
| ROM | Results Oriented Management |
| RPC | Respondent Parent Counsel |
| RTS | Roadmap to Success |
| SB | Senate Bill |
| SCC | SafeCare® Colorado |
| SEN | Substance Exposed Newborn |
| SILP | Supervised Independent Living Placement |
| SOMB | Sex Offender Management Board |
| SPP | Sustained Permanency Project |
| Sub-PAC | Sub-Policy Advisory Committee |
| SUD | Substance Use Disorder |
| SUIT | Southern Ute Indian Tribe |
| TANF | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families |
| TBRI | Trust-Based Relational Intervention |
| TOL | Transfer of Learning |
| TPR | Termination of Parental Rights |
| UMUT | Ute Mountain Ute Tribe |
| USCIS | United States Citizenship and Immigration Services |
| WIC | Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children |
| WIG | Wildly Important Goal |
| WWK | Wendy's Wonderful Kids |
| YARH | Youth at Risk of Homelessness |

Introduction

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is pleased to submit the second Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). This report documents CDHS's progress towards accomplishing the goals, objectives, and interventions in the 2020-2024 CFSP, in addition to the requirements set forth in the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) most recent program instruction (ACYF-CB-PI-20-13¹) related to the 2022 APSR.

In recognizing that achieving the goals and objectives established in the CFSP is a collaborative effort, CDHS works closely with a variety of stakeholders in alignment with the CFSP vision statement "Stakeholders collaborate to achieve bold systems change, ensuring safety, permanency and well-being for Colorado's children, youth and families".

Colorado has a state-supervised, county-administered human/social services system, and county departments are the main provider of direct services to Colorado's families. The State's responsibility includes rule promulgation, guidance, program oversight and monitoring of county performance and practice, which is done by working closely with counties in collaborative workgroups. CDHS also works closely with other Colorado state agencies, service providers and community stakeholders to coordinate services and programs that serve the State's children, youth, and families. It is important to emphasize that these collaborations are not only important in the provision of services to children, youth, and families, but also to prevent children, youth, and families from being involved in the child welfare system altogether. Last year's APSR highlighted a selection of collaborators due to their impact on the implementation of major initiatives. This list included the Family First Prevention Services Act - Implementation Team (FFPSA-IT), the Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA), the Collaborative Management Program (CMP), Judicial Partners, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), the Former Foster Care Steering Committee (FFCSC), Tribes, County Staff/Frontline Workers, and Stakeholders. Ongoing collaboration continues today with these collaborators.

While this is not a comprehensive list of all collaborators CDHS partners with to achieve the goals and objectives in the CFSP, this year's APSR seeks to highlight the following collaborators:

- Family First Prevention Services Act - Implementation Team (FFPSA-IT)
- Office of Early Childhood (OEC)
- Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)
- Judicial Partners
- Collaborative Management Program (CMP)
- Collaboration with the Tribes
- Collaboration with County Staff/Frontline Workers
- Prevention Task Group
- Stakeholder Feedback

This report will be publicly available on the following CDHS website upon submission to the Children's Bureau, and a copy will be sent to the two federally recognized Tribes in Colorado.

¹ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pi2013.pdf>

Collaboration

Family First Prevention Services Act - Implementation Team (FFPSA-IT)

The Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) is an important piece of a broader strategy to further evolve Colorado's child welfare system into one that truly improves the safety, permanency, and well-being of all children, youth, and families through a continuum of community-based services and supports. From the beginning, Colorado's approach to planning for Family First implementation has been an inclusive and integrated one that fully leverages the interest, experience, and expertise of a broad-based and diverse group of state and county staff and stakeholders, including youth and family voices. To this end, Colorado continues to utilize a collaborative implementation structure designed to ensure direction, oversight, and accountability of the work required to successfully implement Family First.

A primary component of this structure is the FFPSA-IT and associated workgroups. The FFPSA-IT is comprised of representatives from multiple county departments of human services (reflecting diversity of regions and sizes across the state), CDHS and other state agencies, judicial/legal partners, providers, constituents, and research/evaluation groups. The FFPSA-IT strives toward the goal of system transformation, while attending to the technical details of implementation requirements. To add to the progress reported in the last APSR, the following additional accomplishments have been made toward Family First implementation in Colorado:

- Created a map of existing Family First-eligible services throughout the state.
- Completed a nationwide scan and review of prevention services that are culturally relevant to Tribal populations.
- Launched a study to develop a prevention services expansion strategy that both meets the needs of local communities while also maximizes federal drawdown opportunities.
- Created a flowchart of the intersections of Family First with the juvenile justice system in Colorado.
- Completed a survey of prevention services that are most relevant for the juvenile justice population.
- Created process maps and a comprehensive toolkit for the independent assessor process.
- Independent assessor process has begun initial rollout.
- Development and training on a judicial bench card for Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs).
- Development of a web-based Family First 101 training for a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Received federal feedback on the first draft of the prevention services plan and are revising and refining it for a second submission.

CDHS is currently engaging in discussions with the FFPSA-IT and workgroup members to transition the structure of these groups as CDHS moves toward the next phase of implementation. The goal is to fully integrate Family First into the ongoing work of the child welfare system.

Collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC)

SafeCare® Colorado

SafeCare® is a nationally recognized, evidence-based, in-home parent education program that provides direct skills training to parents and caregivers in the areas of parenting, home safety and child health. This program is implemented in Colorado as a voluntary service for families in an effort to prevent entry or re-entry into the child welfare system. SafeCare® Colorado (SCC) is delivered by trained providers in a parent's home or another convenient location and has been available virtually since March 2020. Families are referred to SCC through a partnership with child welfare and other organizations such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), other home visiting programs, schools, churches and faith-based organizations, community groups and organizations, public health agencies, family resource centers and medical providers. Parents and caregivers can also refer themselves directly to the SCC program. Eligible families include:

- Families with children ages five and under.

- Must reside in one of the 40 counties or two tribal nations currently offering the program in the state.
- Must meet certain high-risk eligibility criteria.
- Families with non-court-involved child welfare cases.

The SSC program is funded and managed through the OEC and is currently implemented in partnership with the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect (the Kempe Center). The program is supported by the National SafeCare® Training and Research Center (NSTRC) at Georgia State University. NSTRC, in collaboration with the Kempe Center and OEC, oversees the implementation and fidelity for this manualized, structured home visiting program. The FY 2021 appropriation for SCC programming is \$5,100,556. Sites are selected through competitive procurement solicitations, with a new five-year grant cycle starting July 1, 2021. Currently, 13 sites provide SCC programming to residents of 40 Colorado counties, and two American Indian Tribes.

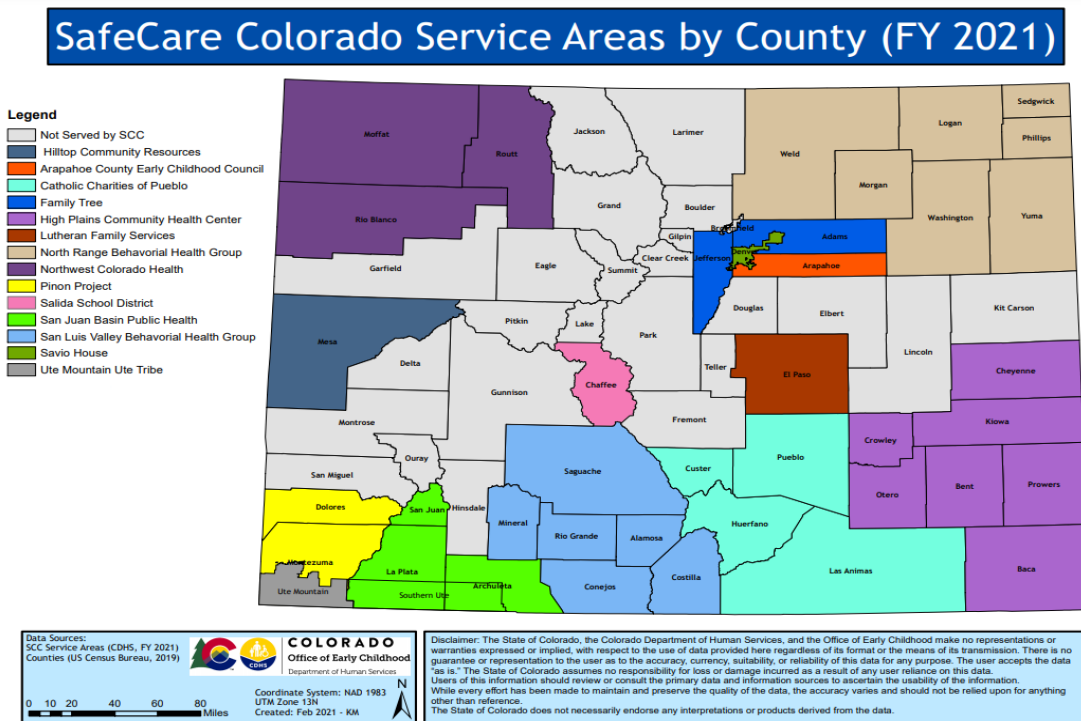


Figure 1: Map of SafeCare® Colorado Service Areas.

The Social Work Research Center in the School of Social Work at Colorado State University (CSU) has been the independent evaluator of the SCC program since 2013, measuring the implementation process, program outcomes and service delivery costs from 2014 to 2019. According to evaluation findings the rate of children placed into foster care one year following program completion were lower for families who completed SCC (0%) than for families in the comparison group who did not complete SCC (6%). Overall findings also showed home safety hazards decreased and knowledge of child health and parent infant/child interaction increased for participating families.

After an intentional pause in SFY 2020 to integrate the wealth of findings from six years of evaluation and to translate research into practice, CSU created a rigorous two-year evaluation plan for SFY 2021-2022, which includes two components. First, a descriptive evaluation will assess implementation activities, proximal impacts, and participant populations reached for

families served by SCC in SFY 2019, SFY 2020, and SFY 2021. The second component of the evaluation is a quasi-experimental study, to rigorously evaluate the program's effectiveness at improving outcomes in four broad domains: child well-being, adult well-being, parenting practices, and protective factors. In partnership with SCC stakeholders, including the SCC family participants. The current rigorous evaluation will further build the evidence-base for SCC, comprehensively demonstrate the holistic impact of SCC for Colorado families, and pioneer new directions in child maltreatment prevention.

In March of 2020, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic caused SCC to quickly adapt from in-person home visits to providing sessions through virtual home visits. With guidance from the NSTRC, the Kempe Center and OEC, SCC sites were able to continue providing services to families. However, there were many challenges, such as families under tremendous amounts of stress with children home from school, loss of employment, sick family members, and other effects of the pandemic. Stable internet access, access to computers, tablets and webcams, lack of software for interactive video conferencing, and families uncomfortable with virtual home visits caused a drop in participation. Outreach and marketing SCC was also difficult, as in-person events were cancelled. However, providers at SCC sites were creative, resilient, and extremely dedicated in finding solutions for families. For example, virtual outreach events were utilized to create and/or continue partnerships with community-based organizations that provided referrals. Providers created small gift bags with SCC information, given out to families waiting in long food bank lines. Other providers conducted sessions safely distanced outside to families without internet. Although referrals to SCC declined at the start of the pandemic, the overall program rate increased to 50.5% in SFY 2020. Output across SCC's 13 sites serving 40 counties and two tribes included 1,583 total families served, program providers participated in 12,378 home visits, with 1,284 SafeCare® topics completed in SFY 2020. During this same time, home safety hazards decreased, knowledge of child health increased, and there was an improvement in the observed quality of parent infant/child interactions for participating families.

Colorado Community Response (CCR)

Colorado Community Response (CCR) is a community-based voluntary prevention program working with families who have been reported to county child protective services (CPS) for alleged child abuse or neglect, but who are not receiving services because the referral was screened out and does not require CPS involvement. CCR is designed to be a two-generation strategy providing opportunities to prevent child neglect and strengthen family functioning by providing access to needed concrete services and enhancing support networks to meet families identified needs.

The program is state-funded within CDHS's OEC. Sites were selected through competitive procurement solicitations, and the chosen sites are primarily collaborations between county departments of human services and local family resource centers. In SFY 2020, CCR served 703 families in 24 sites providing services across 36 counties.

The Social Work Research Center in the School of Social Work at CSU and the Kempe Center completed an independent evaluation of CCR. Please see the 2021 APSR for the results and findings from the evaluation.

In December 2018, CCR began conducting a randomized control trial (RCT) in partnership with the Governor's Office and the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab). The purpose of the RCT is to determine whether CCR reduces future incidences of child welfare involvement, thereby establishing an evidence base for the program to inform future expansion and funding decisions. The evaluation will also look at the impact of goal setting and positive movement in family economic security. CCR is still in the evaluation period and has a projected end date of June 30, 2021 for data collection.

In August 2018, CCR began working with the Evidence-based Practices Implementation for Capacity (EPIC) Resource Center to develop a consistent practice for implementation and to identify program fidelity markers. CCR is currently in the installation phase of implementation, the second of four stages within the implementation model being used. Over the course of the past two years EPIC, CDHS, and the CCR Implementation Team have worked to develop an implementation process to support evidence-based practice and provide a consistent process for delivering the program. Significant milestones were achieved during 2020, including:

- Community of Practice (COP) - The program has created five regional hubs to be used as a COP for the program. Regional hubs will be used to enhance skills around the program model with an emphasis on motivational interviewing, financial well-being, and case management skill development.
- Model Training - CCR program model training was created to onboard new staff and is required annually for all current family advocates. The self-paced training is divided into three modules taking approximately 2 hours per module to complete and includes a participant guide.
- Communication - Timely communication is a key factor for ensuring consistency in the delivery of the model. Information is communicated using the OEC/CCR data system as needed. This allows advocates to have one place to receive new information and be used as a repository for storing CCR communications over time. This provides the mechanism for providing consistent information related to the program.
- Staff Onboarding - The process of onboarding new staff to the program is essential for ensuring model fidelity and to achieve the desired outcomes identified by the program. The program has developed an onboarding process to ensure all training is completed and recorded prior to meeting with a family for the first time. Training is tracked in the OEC/CCR data system.

There were significant impacts to CCR due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Families are referred to the program through a collaborative process between the provider agency and the local child welfare agency. Beginning in March 2020, referrals to the program declined by nearly 60% and referrals continue to be significantly lower than in previous years. The reduction in referrals correlates with a decrease in overall reports of child abuse and neglect during the pandemic. To closely monitor referrals, CCR provider site agencies receive a weekly report to show the number of referrals sent to the program the prior week. Provider site agencies utilize this information to engage county child welfare partners in discussions about the availability of the CCR service to appropriate families.

Potential impacts of COVID-19 on the RCT have not yet been determined. The CCR program requires advocates to meet families face to face during the administration of the Child and Family Safety Assessment (CFSA). The program has followed both state and federal guidance related to social distancing and supported removing the face-to-face requirement. CCR sites have been supported in delivering the program using a secure virtual platform. This is a shift in practice that will need to be accounted for during program evaluation findings. Additionally, the reduction in referrals may require an extension of the data collection period beyond June 30, 2021. The OEC, along with the program evaluator, will look at the number of families served to determine if the sample size is large enough to achieve statistical significance.

Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) Developmental Screening Workgroup

County departments of human/social services are responsible for referring children ages zero to three with founded abuse and neglect allegations for developmental screenings as directed in CAPTA. Colorado has extended referrals through age four. CDHS oversees both county welfare and local Community Centered Boards (CCB), which are agencies responsible for early intervention. For children under age three, the CCB must respond to referrals in conjunction with the local special education administrative unit, which is overseen by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Due to the complexity of the systems involved, Colorado had a very low level of families completing the screening processes after referral. To address this issue,

a multidisciplinary group was created which included state and local representation and key stakeholders. The work began with updating the state-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which laid the foundation for developing a common understanding of processes and shared language. Furthermore, this group has supported counties in innovative ways to increase the ease in which families are introduced to this process. Some counties have begun utilizing their local public health agency to do an initial screen and then refer all eligible children to the CCB. Colorado's Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), Trails, is also having functionality added to ensure this referral occurs prior to ending any child welfare involvement. In 2020, the workgroup has dedicated a significant amount of time to testing features in Trails and continuing ensuring positive movement in ongoing collaboration with the members of the workgroup.

Collaboration with the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)

OBH continues to support and monitor gender-responsive substance use disorder treatment by providing active contract management, programmatic oversight, and technical assistance to Managed Service Organizations (MSO) and sub-contracted residential and outpatient providers.

Through HB 19-1287², OBH has procured and been awarded a Request for Application (RFA) for the creation of seven co-located Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN) pilot sites which offer integrated and wrap-around services for pregnant women, thereby increasing chances of positive maternal and infant health outcomes.

In collaboration with the OEC and Illuminate Colorado, OBH continues to fund a mobile childcare pilot which will provide high quality childcare services at a number of residential and outpatient sites, thereby increasing treatment engagement and retention of pregnant and parenting people with SUD. One of these mobile units is currently operating in the metro Denver area and a second unit is being looked at for viability in a more rural region of Colorado. Additionally, HB 19-1193³ established the High-Risk Families Cash Fund, which will use reverted state and federal funds for capital expenditures for the purpose of increasing treatment capacity for pregnant and parenting people with SUD.

Lastly, OBH and DCW have collaborated closely in working to fully implement Family First throughout Colorado. OBH co-chairs several Family First subgroups with the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), and has full time dedicated staff to support the Family First roll-out in Colorado. OBH holds the contracts and programmatic direction of the Administrative Services Organization (ASO), who are completing the QRTP independent assessment process in Colorado.

Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act (CYMHTA)

The CYMHTA (C.R.S 27-67-101, et. seq.⁴) allows for families to access mental health treatment services for their child or youth, as an alternative to child welfare involvement when a dependency and neglect action is not warranted. CYMHTA grew by 27.9% from SFY 2018 to SFY 2019 and served 142 children/youth during this timeframe, which was the highest number of children/youth served in a fiscal year to date. FY 2020 data and reporting is still in the finalization process at the time of writing this APSR. The annual reports are published online at <https://cdhs.colorado.gov/behavioral-health/cymhta>.

Special Connections

Developed in 1992, Special Connections is a collaborative effort between OBH and OCYF in response to an increase in low birth weights, and data that suggested this was due to prenatal substance exposure. This resulted in a waiver to allow pregnant women a residential treatment benefit through Medicaid, specifically focusing on areas such as: the family unit, trauma services, childcare, primary care, prenatal care, pediatric care, and others. Colorado currently has six

² https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2019a_1287_signed.pdf

³ https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2019a_1193_signed.pdf

⁴ <https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/olls/crs2017-title-27.pdf>

residential treatment and five outpatient providers who are enrolled in Special Connections. The Manager of Gender Responsive Services, who oversees the Special Connections program, is involved in the Plans of Safe Care workgroup and the Substance Exposed Newborn (SEN) steering committee.

Collaboration with Judicial Partners

CHDS recognizes the importance and need for judicial and legal partners such as the Best Practice Court Teams (BPCTs), the Office of the Child’s Representative (OCR), the Office of the Respondent Parent Counsel (ORPC), and Assistant County Attorneys (ACA). CDHS worked diligently with judicial and legal partners to ensure that the CFSP, APSR and the Court Improvement Program (CIP) vision statements are aligned to work towards these goals and outcomes.

Through the continued partnership between the CIP and CDHS, ongoing collaboration focuses on continuous quality improvement of the child welfare system and specific focus on the six priority areas of the CIP:

1. Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Round 3 Program Improvement Plan (PIP)
2. Implementation of Family First
3. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
4. Dependency and Neglect System Reform (DANSR) and Circle of Parents Expanded (COPE)
5. Permanent Home (PHOM)
6. High Quality Legal Representation.

Much of the collaborative work is accomplished through local BPCTs. BPCTs are multidisciplinary teams created by lead Dependency & Neglect judges at the district court level. All twenty-two judicial districts in Colorado support BPCTs and some districts have more than one team. The CIP provides support to local BPCTs, which promotes consistency in goal setting processes across judicial districts. The BPCTs meet annually to determine areas of focus, and local teams meet regularly (as determined by the teams themselves) to set goals depending upon local needs, evaluate progress and identify barriers. Each local BPCT includes the representatives from the department of human/social services, dependency and neglect or family court judges, county/city attorneys, Guardian Ad-Litem (GALs), Respondent Parent Counsels (RPCs) and the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) office. Additional team members may be added as determined by the local team to include court staff and community members such as treatment providers and public health nurses.

CDHS continues to collaborate with OCR and ORPC. In 2021, the three agencies have committed to meeting quarterly to discuss worries, opportunities for improvements and what is working well.

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Round 3 Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

The work of the six Colorado CFSR Round 3 PIP counties continue to include specific elements for working directly with their judicial partners. The work on the following goals including specific engagement with the judicial officers, BPCT and other legal partners in the local county:

- Goal 3: Enhance and strengthen agency engagement with father and non-custodial parents, through timely identification and consistent engagement, consistent quality contacts, accurate assessments and provisions of services appropriately matched to meet the needs of child(ren)/youth and families.
- Goal 4: Improve timeliness of permanency through adoptions for child(ren)/youth and increase relative guardianship assistance program (RGAP) participation by qualified relatives/non-relative kin.

For these two goals, the six PIP counties’ BPCTs are completing local level plans for interventions to improve the data for their respective jurisdictions. These plans were submitted to DCW on March 31, 2021. These jurisdictions will share their plans at a virtual convening in June 2021, with an emphasis on what strategies they have found to be effective and collaborate to create comprehensive plans for how the state can move forward toward effective change. All these jurisdictions meet monthly to continue to look at how they are improving practice. For more

details on specific PIP activities, please see the PIP progress reports, which are submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

The CIP has continued to participate in the planning of PIP activities. CIP staff have provided technical assistance to the six BPCTs as they develop a plan to implement strategies related to the goals noted above.

Implementation of Family First

Members of the legal and judicial community have taken an active role in the implementation of Family First in Colorado. Colorado continues to work towards implementation and the CIP has served as members on the many implementation committees in Colorado. The CIP has worked closely with CDHS to ensure that judicial officers and other legal stakeholders are aware of the new requirements as it relates to the QRTPs and prevention services. The CIP supported the development of a bench card for judicial officers and other stakeholders that provides specifics about the QRTP review process. The CIP has hosted training for judicial officers, GALs, county attorneys, county department directors, juvenile justice stakeholders, CASAs, and other partners. The CIP continues to work with CDHS, local BPCTs and other stakeholders to ensure that the judicial and legal communities receive information related to the implementation of Family First. The Convening on Children, Youth and Families set in April of 2021 will have a focus on Family First in Colorado.

For more information on the bench card, see Appendix A. The Training and Family First Resources website is located at: <https://co4kids.org/training-and-family-first-resources>.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

The compliance of ICWA in Colorado continues to be a focus of the CIP and CDHS. Please see Intervention 3.3.2 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR.

Dependency and Neglect System Reform (DANSR) and Circle of Parents Expansion (COPE)

In 2019, the Colorado judicial department and CDHS were awarded a five-year Round 6 Regional Partnership Grant through the Children's Bureau. This grant will evaluate the effectiveness of the COPE intervention in increasing family well-being, improving permanency, and enhancing the safety of children who are in, or at risk of, an out-of-home (OOH) placement due to a parent's or caregiver's opioid or other substance abuse. The COPE intervention integrates Circle of Parents in Recovery, an evidence-informed model that strengthens families, prevents child maltreatment, and supports recovery through a prosocial peer network within counties that have implemented the DANSR program. The work of COPE includes those within the child welfare court system but may be utilized for prevention or as a support to help prevent re-entry.

The planning year ended in October 2020 and the following communities in Colorado have started or are set to start implementing COPE by July 1, 2021: Arapahoe, Baca, Cheyenne, Denver, Fremont, Garfield, Jefferson, Kiowa, Larimer, Montezuma, and Prowers.

Court of Appeals Workgroup

The CIP and CDHS continue to strive to improve permanency outcomes for children and youth. In April 2018, the Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court appointed a Colorado Judicial Department Child Welfare Appeals Workgroup. The purpose of the workgroup is to consider necessary changes to practice, rules, and statutes to ensure that appeals in cases concerning relinquishment, adoption, and dependency and neglect are resolved within six months after being filed. The workgroup is composed of legal and child welfare professionals, and met through February 2021 to recommend changes in practices, policies, and procedures to help alleviate details in the appellate process. A final report will be released in the Spring of 2021.

Permanent Home Hearings (PHOM)

In 2014, the CIP appointed the Permanent Home (PHOM) Workgroup to examine and issue recommendations regarding practices and procedures for determining when children have been placed in a permanent home. The PHOM workgroup struggled to interpret and agree on the meaning behind C.R.S. 19-3-703 and formed a PHOM legislative sub-committee in 2015 comprised of members from across child welfare legal practice, including a retired judge, respondent parent counsel, Guardians Ad Litem, and county attorneys.

After analyzing the permanency statutes, it was determined that they were confusing and needed to be re-written to comply with federal law and provide clarity. Below is a summary of the Colorado statutes that were revised in 2019 as a result of that work:

- Incorporated federal law changes from the Fostering Connections Act, and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act:
 - C.R.S. 19-3-702(4)(b)(II): Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard
 - C.R.S. 19-3-702(4)(c): Medicaid Advisement to youth before her/his 18th birthday
 - C.R.S. 19-3-702(4)(d): Vital documents requirement for emancipating youth.
- C.R.S. 19-3-702(1): Expedited Permanency Planning (EPP) timeframes for all children were extended; “all children, regardless of age, will have a Planned Permanency Hearing (PPH) set 90 days after the dispositional hearing and every six months thereafter”.
- C.R.S. 19-3-702(3) and (5)(b): Reworded to emphasize that a permanent home is first and foremost, the home of a parent while parental rights are intact.
- The statute was reordered to be clearer and more concise, using consistent language for Permanency, Permanent Plan, and Permanent Home throughout, and, improved easily understood timeframes for PPH.
- Repealed C.R.S. 19-3-703 (5) and replaced it with a clearer definition of the legislative intent of “permanent home”.
- C.R.S. 19-3-703(5)(a): Clarifies that preponderance is the burden of proof when a permanent home is not available for a child.

Colorado continues to improve permanency outcomes for children/youth that are served in the child welfare system. ORPC introduced HB 21-1101⁵ which will establish a workgroup to discuss visitation (parenting time) in Colorado. The bill also puts language to allow open adoptions into statute. This will allow Colorado to create legislative guidance around visitation for families involved in the child welfare system and will allow (when agreed upon) open adoptions, that may improve outcomes for timeliness to permanency when Adoption is the permanency goal.

High Quality Legal Representation

CIP and CDHS continue to recognize the importance of high quality legal representation of children/youth and parents involved in child welfare legal proceedings. The work to support high quality legal representation includes drawing down Title IV-E funding and the development of a High Quality Legal Representation CIP subcommittee.

Senate Bill (SB) 19-258⁶ authorized CDHS to draw down Title IV-E reimbursement funds for legal representation in foster care proceedings. A MOU was developed with the OCR and ORPC to draw down these funds. In 2020, the ORPC was able to draw down IV-E reimbursement. By June 2021, it is anticipated that both OCR and ORPC will have finalized processes to continue the drawdown of Title IV-E funds for legal representation in qualified cases.

The CIP subcommittee began in 2020 and includes representatives from CIP, county attorneys, OCR, ORPC, CDHS, judicial officers, and practicing attorneys. The goal of this group is to assess and identify a high quality legal representation project to be incorporated into the CIP Strategic

⁵ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1101>

⁶ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb19-258>

Plan. Much of the exploration has included the development of practice standards, the use of multidisciplinary representation, and training opportunities for county attorneys, parent's attorneys, and children's representatives.

Data

The CIP and CDHS executed a Master Data Sharing Agreement in 2019, which will continue to help pave the way for easy data exchange between CIP and CDHS on specific grants, projects and focus areas. The discussion of data is an important element for continuous quality improvement.

For further details, please see Appendix B for the State Court Improvement Program 2020 Annual Self-Assessment Report.

Work with CIP/COVID-19

The CIP took a leadership role in setting the opportunity for courts, legal professionals, and child welfare stakeholders to have discussions related to the impacts of COVID-19 on the child welfare system. Starting in March 2020, the CIP held regular meetings for stakeholders to discuss issues related to COVID-19, including the use of blanket orders, technology limitations and/or strategies to ensure access to court proceedings, and to discuss messaging from the Children's Bureau. This was also a time for each agency to provide updates on policy and practice changes. These meetings are continuing to be held monthly.

Collaborative Management Program (CMP)

The Collaborative Management Program (CMP) provides incentives for achieving positive outcomes for children, youth and families involved in multiple systems. CMP currently has 48 counties with active programs in Colorado. DCW is hiring a new CMP Administrator in Spring 2021 and plans to have this person assess the training and mentoring needs of coordinators. Coordinators have expressed needing more support with onboarding and in building opportunities for cross-jurisdictional peer-to-peer networking and support. Those will be top priorities for the administrator in 2021. Additionally, there is a stark policy shift in Colorado to reduce the use of pre-trial detention for youth unless necessary for community safety as well as to reduce the use of congregate care unless therapeutically indicated (SB 19-108⁷). Many CMP sites focus on older youth and will play an important role in shifting services to less restrictive and more upstream solutions.

CSU and 2M Research collaborated with the CMP Program Administrator on the revisions to the CMP Evaluation Plan, collection of CMP process measures, the preparation, completion, and clearance of the CMP Annual Evaluation Report, and the presentation of evaluation findings at the Executive Committee meeting. CSU and 2M Research also worked with the CMP site coordinators and the CMP Family Voice and Choice committee on the development and administration of the CMP Family Voice Survey. Lastly, CSU and 2M Research collaborated with the CDHS, the Colorado Judicial Department's Office of the State Court Administrator, the Division of Youth Services (DYS), and the OBH to obtain child welfare, juvenile justice, and health and mental health outcomes for CMP clients.

CSU, in collaboration with 2M Research, provides program evaluations for the CMP. In SFY 2020, the following evaluation activities were completed:

- Revised and updated the evaluation design plan and project work plan, providing any needed updates to CDHS.
- Gathered and analyzed indicators for process measures from the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database to address the question of whether CMPs are affecting positive changes throughout their delivery systems.
- Administered the Family Voice Survey to all CMP sites to measure engagement in Integrated Service and Support Teams (ISST) meetings, involvement in service planning, and communication between providers and caregivers.

⁷ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb19-108>

- Utilized a rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation design that provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of CMP for outcomes of multi-system involved children and families served by the program.
- Collected data from Trails and ETO to describe the characteristics of children and youth served through ISSTs. Utilized descriptive statistics to examine intermediate outcomes via performance measures within the child welfare, health/mental health, juvenile justice, and education domains.
- Implemented a quasi-experimental evaluation design (e.g., Coarsened Exact Matching) to examine the effect of the CMP program on the child welfare, juvenile justice, and health/mental health outcomes of children served by the program.
- Implemented a plan to address existing data silos and improve data collection and matching across the CMP outcome domains, specifically Health/Mental Health.
- Conducted additional exploratory analyses focusing on the program components associated with improved client outcomes and summarized within a capacity-building memo.
- Collected and analyzed data from Trails to estimate treatment (service and out-of-home placement) costs for youth who receive CMP services and otherwise eligible youth who do not receive CMP services.
- Participated with and provided support to CMP committees as assigned, including the Evaluation Subcommittee, Data Subcommittee, State Steering Committee, Family Voice Committee, and other groups that are intrinsic to CMP.
- Made informal reports at project leadership meetings.
- Prepared a draft and final report to determine whether and under what circumstances the CMP is achieving the statutory goals and make recommendations regarding program improvement.
- Made an evaluation presentation to the CMP Executive Committee describing the results of the evaluation.

For the SFY 2019 outcome evaluation, a statistically significant difference in favor of CMP clients was found in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and health/mental health domains with CMP clients being less likely to have a founded assessment, less likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system, and more likely to have established linkages to substance use and mental health providers. For more information on the CMP evaluation, please see Appendix C.

Collaboration with Tribes

See the *Consultation and Coordination between CDHS and Tribes* section of this APSR.

Collaboration with County Staff/Frontline Workers

Differential Response Leadership Council (DRLC)

The DRLC is a subcommittee of the Child Welfare Sub-Policy Advisory Committee (Sub-PAC). Since the initial implementation of Differential Response (DR), DRLC has continued to advise DR practice in Colorado at a director and manager level. DRLC has been involved in moving DR from a pilot program to a practice model incorporating organizational processes and social work practices. The DRLC receives regular data extracts from the Results Oriented Management (ROM) system to analyze the level of utilization of DR and DR's impact on outcomes such as recidivism.

DRLC plans to work on DR fidelity in 2021. Fidelity measures for DR could assist in additional funding streams and improve practice consistency across counties. DRLC will pinpoint strategies to measure and promote strong practice and encourage practice improvement.

Permanency Task Group

The Permanency Task Group (PTG) is a subcommittee of the Child Welfare Sub-PAC. The PTG works on various permanency-related issues and helps draft rule changes as assigned. In 2021, the PTG will be focused on completing the revisions to the Colorado Code of Regulations (12 CCR 2509), regarding adoption rules, and will be working on engaging more members of the group in leadership roles. The PTG is comprised of counties and stakeholders in the community including the OCR, adoption advocates, private attorneys, the Child Protection Ombudsman of Colorado,

the ORPC and Raise the Future. Other stakeholders, such as the CIP, participate in the PTG as needed based on projects being completed.

COVID-19 Consultation and Coordination

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DCW wanted to provide additional support for county partners. A plan was developed to address the concerns of all counties on a multitude of levels including caseworker, supervisor, manager, and director level responsibilities. A weekly statewide COVID-19 call was established for director-level personnel in March, and includes participation from the OBH, Office of Adult, Aging and Disability Services, OCYF, OEC, Office of Economic Security (OES), Health Care and Policy and Financing (HCPF), and other key offices within CDHS. A resource document was also created⁸ and available to the public. This call continues at the time of writing the APSR.

Additionally, OCYF and DCW also host town halls on a regular basis, offering an open forum for discussions around federal and state guidance, as well as specific situations that counties may be encountering. DCW administrators also created and hosted two groups to provide cross-county intake and ongoing practice support, held twice monthly to allow county supervisors/managers a dedicated time to check-in and share common successes and barriers. These meetings were hosted by DCW administrators and the first meeting was April 6th, 2020. The intake practice and supervision group focused on supervision during COVID-19 and managing the safety of children and staff during the pandemic. These meetings were well attended and transitioned to the Child Protection Task Group (CPTG) in September 2020. The ongoing practice and supervision group also initially focused on supervision during COVID-19 and other COVID-19-specific issues, and provided guidance for those returning to school and workplaces as it became more common in the later months of 2020. The ongoing practice and supervision meetings are no longer being held as counties felt comfortable reaching out to each other and DCW if specific issues arose.

DCW County Intermediaries (CI) were asked to meet with counties weekly from March through October to ensure support to county caseworkers and provide guidance with the federal face-to-face contact requirements. CIs were also asked to review county data more frequently, monitor trends and discuss them with the counties in a timely manner.

Prevention Task Group

Family First includes an opportunity to draw down federal Title IV-E funding for approved, evidence-based services to prevent out-of-home placement. In Colorado, Core Services dollars can be used for services that prevent out-of-home placement and/or entry into the child welfare system Program Area 3 (PA3). These opportunities, in addition to other funds and processes, make up a complex network of programs, services and funding streams to prevent involvement or deeper involvement with the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems. To coordinate and streamline these programs and services, and to develop processes for maximizing funding sources, the child welfare Sub-PAC has approved the creation of the Child Welfare Prevention Task Group (“Prevention Task Group”).

The purpose of the Prevention Task Group is to act as the child welfare prevention practice advisory group. The purpose of the first meeting is to define membership of the core group and to begin the development of a theory of change.

Stakeholder Feedback

A constituent engagement workgroup was formed in 2019 and met regularly to ensure stakeholder input was considered in decision-making processes of service development. This workgroup included CDHS staff, ORPC, a kinship caregiver, and a person with lived experience as a child in the system. This workgroup concluded in February 2021 and made recommendations on how to further engage families and youth in service development. The four recommendations are as follows:

⁸ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wMHgjITt_Rlrm_iNE0JfuNMOrs2KIZl68HuE9GwwDR8/edit

1. Embed family feedback loops into new practices from the very beginning.
2. Solicit and incorporate family input on the methods of gathering feedback.
3. Align the strategy for gathering family feedback to the nature of the information needed; collect feedback in a variety of ways.
4. Incorporate feedback into decisions to improve programming.

The concluding recommendations and further details can be found in Appendix D.

CDHS recognizes the value of family participation and engaging the voices of those with lived systems experience. The Family Voice Council is made up of 20 community members that meet monthly to learn, provide input and ultimately affect positive systems change by improving the quality and delivery of services for all Coloradans.

In January 2020, members of the Family Voice Council discussed confidentiality and consent in interactions with county human services departments. The members shared their experiences, and provided feedback and suggestions for better engagement, building trust with families, and cultural competence in the service delivery. In September 2020, OCYF was present to discuss the implementation of Family First, and the importance of incorporating family voice into the State's plan.

In 2021, the Family Voice Council will be focused on the following topics:

- OCYF's impact strategy, and ways to advance family and community engagement work.
- Gathering feedback on improving the child welfare system and family-facing initiatives
- Recurring conversations around Family First and continuing to include family voices on the implementation team.
- Interoperability, and the ability for families to see their own data in the data systems.

APSR

Over 25,000 stakeholders including state and county staff, interagency partners, service providers, youth advisory boards, current and former youth in foster care, foster parents, Chafee coordinators, Colorado's federally recognized tribes and organizations serving Colorado's American Indian communities were sent the 2022 APSR draft for their review and feedback. A copy of the approved report will be sent to both of Colorado's federally recognized tribes. Two teleconferences were held in April and May, to solicit feedback from internal and external partners. Stakeholders were encouraged to submit their feedback to CDHS's DCW. This report incorporates the feedback CDHS received from stakeholders and will be publicly available on the CDHS website (<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/publications-reports>) by September 30, 2021, or when final approval is received from the Children's Bureau, along with previous reports.

Update to the Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes

As part of the ongoing CFSR Round 3 PIP, Colorado hosted a virtual site visit with the Children's Bureau CFSR team in December 2020. The purpose of the visit was to check in on PIP progress, and to identify any areas of additional support that may be needed. One theme that emerged from ongoing discussions with the Children's Bureau is bridging the connections between the CFSR case review items, activities laid out in the PIP, and ongoing work by DCW and the PIP counties. As part of the ongoing work in the PIP, targeted efforts have been made to incorporate a stakeholder feedback loop. For updated information on how DCW is working to accomplish this, please see the PIP progress reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. Only 75% of reviewed cases indicated that Item 1 was a strength.

- Data pulled in 2021 for CY 2020 from ROM shows that initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment was timely 85.22% of the time, per Colorado's state standard.
- Data pulled in 2021 for CY 2020 from ROM shows that initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment was timely 66.58% of the time, per the Federal standard.

Data pulled in 2021 for CY 2020 from ROM shows that initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment was timely 85.22% of the time, per 12 CCR 2509. This measurement reflects when counties successfully complete face-to-face contact with an alleged victim within the initial dispositional timeframe or successfully complete contact during a timely subsequent attempt. These rules and regulations were promulgated after Colorado's Round 3 CFSR review.

Data pulled for CY 2020 from ROM, shows that initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment was timely 66.58% of the time, per the Federal standard. This measurement is based on Colorado's performance in Round 3 of the CFSR that took place in 2017 and is reflective of 12 CCR 2509 that were in place at that time. This measurement reflects when counties successfully complete face-to-face contact with an alleged victim in the initial dispositional timeframe and does not include any subsequent time frames nor does it include attempts during the initial time frame. 12 CCR 2509 has since been revised and updated. In discussions with the Children's Bureau during the Fall of 2020, it was determined for the purposes of the Colorado Performance Improvement Program, the Federal standard will be applied for Item 1. Therefore, all future Item 1 reporting methodologies in subsequent APSRs will reflect the Federal standard.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. 75% of reviewed cases found that Item 2 was a strength, and 62% of reviewed cases indicated that Item 3 was a strength. Data pulled in 2021 for CY 2020 shows that:

- According to ROM, 82.56% of children/youth eligible to re-enter care (within 12 months of discharge from foster care, Jan 2020 - Dec 2020) maintained permanency.
- According to ROM in-home counts, 8,822 children/youth entered in-home cases between January 2020 and December 2020. During this same time, 9,060 children/youth exited in-home cases resulting in an exit rate of 0.97. A rate above 1.0 indicates that more people come into in-home counts than exit.
- According to ROM, 96.25% of children/youth involved in in-home cases (January 2020 - December 2020) remained safe (did not have a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect) while the case was open.

Sustained Permanency Project

Please see the “Measures of Progress” under Goal 3 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision, and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR.

Colorado Family Safety and Risk Assessment

Please see “Safety and Risk Assessments” in the *Update on the Service Descriptions* section of this APSR.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Colorado’s CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. For Item 4, 73% of reviewed cases indicated that this was a strength. Item 5 found that 82% of reviewed cases indicated that this was a strength, and 55% of reviewed cases for Item 6 indicated that this was a strength. Data pulled in 2021 for CY 2020 from ROM shows that:

- The placement stability rate (moves per 1,000 days in care during a rolling 12-month period) from January 2020 to December 2020 was an average of 3.55 (all children/youth).
- The percentage of children/youth that entered care in the past 12 months who have achieved permanency is 56.77%.
- The percentage of children/youth that entered care in the past 12-23 months who have achieved permanency is 51.54%.
- The percentage of children/youth that entered care in the past 24 months or more who have achieved permanency is 43.14%.
- The percentage of children/youth adopted within 12 months of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is 51.6%.
- There were 150 youth who emancipated from foster care in 2020.

In Colorado, practice was shifted to address the COVID-19 pandemic in CY 2020. In March, emergency memorandums were issued that allowed for virtual contacts with children, youth, and parents when there was a concern regarding COVID-19. These memorandums were later followed with emergency rules that allowed for video contact with children, youth, and caretakers when a COVID-19 concern was identified. Colorado also issued directives for court hearings regarding Dependency and Neglect cases to be held virtually. These changes, although necessary, were seen to have added delays to permanency.

Placement stability continues to be an area of focus for Colorado. The Children’s Bureau identified missing placement settings for children in care in Colorado’s data profile (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Element 24), and Colorado will be working on improving data quality during placement setting changes. As part of the ongoing monitoring efforts, Colorado has a C-STAT goal for a placement stability rate of 3.90 per 1,000 days in foster care. DCW’s Youth Services Unit also tracks placement stability rates specifically for youth ages 12-18 and is working on increasing engagement with parents of youth in PA4 cases, as well as engaging youth in their Roadmaps to Success plans (see Objective 4.2 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR). DCW also anticipates that the statewide creation and expansion of a placement continuum, and the utilization of the Independent Assessment process when considering treatment at QRTPs, therapeutic, and treatment foster homes, will also impact the placement stability rate.

The COVID-19 pandemic and challenges with crossing households has affected this goal since testing for COVID-19 in the early months was not widely available. CDHS collaborated with the Children’s Hospital and was able to set up a testing site for foster children and parents to address this concern, and testing is now widely available across Colorado.

Colorado has consistently met the Federal goal for the percentage of children/youth that entered care in the past 12 months who have achieved permanency. Colorado has steadily seen local jurisdictions come into compliance due to the permanency statute that was passed in 2019, with counties having more

frequent and consistent court hearings. Colorado’s CIP also directed county attorneys and judicial partners to review C.R.S. 19-3-703⁹.

In addition, Colorado has been working diligently on three rule packets to update adoption practice rules to guide the workforce in Colorado. This will incorporate timeframes around practice for child welfare agencies to get adoptions completed timely. This also includes requirements around completing child presentations and child studies to potential adoptive parents so that the cases can move forward. It should be noted that in Colorado during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic that courts were directed to only hear emergency hearings thus this also caused a delay in adoption hearings across Colorado.

In CY 2020, 5,367 children/youth in foster care were reunited with their parents¹⁰, which was the highest number of reunifications in Colorado. Coupled with the decreasing number of children/youth entering foster care, this shows that the rate of reunification has increased through great efforts made by CDHS in prevention and intervention services. Colorado has developed a robust network of prevention services to families across Colorado to reduce the level of involvement in child welfare. These services are provided by Colorado counties and community providers. One of the funding streamers for services is CORE Service Program which allocates funds to counties for prevention and intervention services that cannot be paid for by other resources. CORE funding is included as a general funds from the State of Colorado that allows for counties to provide services to families to prevent out of home placement, to reunify children/youth and/or maintain the placement of a child/ youth. These funds are used as the payer of last resort. Colorado has also done work to promote maintaining children/youth in their home or in the home of a kinship provider.

| Calendar Year | PA3: Total Cases | PA3: Cases w/ Services | Total Children Entering OOH Care |
|---------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2015 | 2,002 | 1,578 | 5,025 |
| 2016 | 2,944 | 2,336 | 5,192 |
| 2017 | 3,064 | 2,335 | 5,062 |
| 2018 | 3,493 | 2,313 | 4,635 |
| 2019 | 3,310 | 2,010 | 4,149 |
| 2020 | 2,575 | 1,341 | 3,523 |

Table 1: Total PA3 cases (total and with services) and children entering out-of-home care, 01/01/2015 - 12/31/2020.

Please see Goal 3 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision, and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR for further information on how Colorado is working to improve performance in this outcome.

⁹ https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019A/bills/2019a_1219_rev.pdf

¹⁰ <https://co4kids.org/community/celebrate-reunification>

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships is preserved for children.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. While 90% of reviewed cases for Item 7 indicated that it was a strength, Items 8, 9, 10 and 11 were not found in substantial conformity. Data pulled in 2021 for CY 2020 from ROM shows that:

- Siblings are placed together 78.85% of the time.
- 42.38% of children/youth are placed with a relative as their initial placement and 44.06% are placed with a relative at any time across the case span.

Targeted activities set toward improving this outcome are detailed in Goal 3 of the CFSP and Goals 3 and 4 in Colorado's PIP. For further information, please see the PIP Progress Report, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau, and Goal 3 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was not in substantial conformity with this outcome. Data pulled in 2021 for CY 2020 from ROM shows:

- 91.54% of caseworker monthly visits with the child/youth were made as directed in rule.

Improved father engagement is a targeted goal of the PIP. PIP counties have convened workgroups of caseworkers and supervisors to uncover barriers to father engagement. Each county has also convened a panel of fathers to better understand the father's perspective of their involvement in child welfare. This information has been gathered by counties and the barriers to engagement identified have been the foundation for plans created to help improve father engagement. Each county has created an implementation plan to help outline next steps, including efforts at identifying fathers as early as possible, improving father attendance in family engagement meetings, and improving caseworker engagement with fathers. Counties have been meeting internally to develop and implement these plans and have been sharing progress in multiple venues, including in the Supervisor Learning Committee (SLC). These efforts are also being supplemented by data reports that have been created or will be available soon.

As one of the activities in the PIP, a monthly parent contact report was created in ROM and became available at the end of December 2020. This report was created with input from the 6 counties participating in the PIP, who helped to design the report and improve its functionality. November 2020 data shows that 26% of fathers required to be contacted face-to-face were seen and that 26% of fathers were not identified. This data in part reflects that additional data entry is required to improve the accuracy of the report. A job aide has been created and distributed to assist counties in data entry. Another report regarding the timely creation of 90-day Family Service Plans (FSP) reviews was also created and became available March 2021. This report identifies cases that are overdue for supervisor approved initial or follow up 90-day reviews.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Colorado's CFSR found that Colorado was in substantial conformity with this item, with 90% of reviewed cases indicating that this was a strength. While COVID-19 created complex challenges for this goal, counties who had school districts with in-person learning continued to use transportation services to maintain children/youth in their schools of origin. Colorado schools shut down for in-person learning due to COVID-19 in March 2020. Schools continue to provide virtual learning through the summer of 2020. School districts were able to provide access to remote learning technology to students in need, including children/youth in foster care. In the Fall of 2020, some school districts returned for in-person learning but after a few months many returned to virtual learning due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in Colorado.

Please see Intervention 4.1.2 in *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision, and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental needs. Colorado's CFSR found that while Colorado was in substantial conformity with Item 17, with 92% of reviewed cases indicating this as a strength, Colorado was not in substantial conformity with Item 18, with 63% of reviewed cases indicating this as a strength.

Efforts to ensure this outcome remains a strength in Colorado are detailed in Goal 3, Strategy 4 of the PIP. In 2020, DCW rolled out statewide trainings targeted towards caseworkers and supervisors to assess educational and mental/behavioral health needs and services. In another targeted activity, PIP counties developed processes for 90-day Supervisor case reviews, to ensure that educational and mental/behavioral health needs were assessed on a regular basis, and that adequate services were being delivered to the child/youth. For further information, please see the PIP progress reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

Statewide Information System

In Colorado's CFSR, this was rated as an area needing improvement.

Trails Modernization

The objective of the Trails Modernization project is to keep the concept of Trails as an enterprise-wide Human Services application using more modern technologies to meet current and future needs of CDHS. This multi-year project transitions the current Child Welfare system to a web-based application while also bringing the Trails system into compliance as a CCWIS.

The project has deployed two major releases in 2020, as well as an Oracle Upgrade and an additional release in early 2021:

- Release 5: January 2020 to deploy functionality related to Resource, Provider, Core Contracts & Incidents.
- Release 6: May 2020 to deploy functionality that supports Colorado's implementation of Family First.
- Oracle Upgrade: Spring 2021 to bring the Oracle database into the most recent Oracle version.
- Release 7: Spring 2021 to complete deployment of functionality related to the Division of Youth Services.

Additional releases will be released as the functionality is complete and ready. Future functionality will include:

- Fiscal
- Case
- Assessment

For Releases 5-7, implementation improvements have and will continue to include:

- More robust use of Super Users who are trained as trainers, deliver training to their end users and are the first stop for post-release support.
- Enhanced communications including weekly updates, notifications of bugs & workarounds, pre-release roadshows, and improved engagement of stakeholders throughout the pre- and post-release activities.
- Use of a "Command Center" for two-weeks after the deployment to offer one-stop support to Super Users, triage of issues, problem-solve issues and identify workarounds and/or offer guidance to end-users.
- Expansion of Trails-related materials on the Child Welfare training site with more extensive materials being produced for all end-user groups, including child welfare (county departments), DYS, Administrative Review Division (ARD), OEC, and the Placement Services Unit (public providers).

Case Review System

In Colorado's CFSR, Items 20, 21 and 22 were rated as a strength. Item 23 was rated as an area needing improvement, and according to data from ARD reviews, the percentage of adoption cases with terminated parental rights was 54.7% (2016). This is an area of focus in the PIP.

Quality Assurance System

Colorado's CFSR showed that this item was rated as a strength. Please see the *Quality Assurance* section of this APSR for further details.

Staff Training

The Colorado CFSR found that while Item 27 was a strength, both Items 26 and 28 were areas needing improvement.

Targeted activities for Items 26 and 27 can be found in Goals 4 and 5 of the PIP, and Goal 1 of the CFSP. For updates on how Colorado is addressing Item 28, see Intervention 3.3.3 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR.

Service Array

In Colorado's CFSR, this systemic factor was rated as areas needing improvement.

Pay for Success

In September 2018, Colorado launched "Fostering Opportunities", funding services in Jefferson County Public Schools to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care. Managed out of CDHS, the project leverages state and philanthropic dollars to fund five school-based specialists over the next four years to advocate for, support and mentor students using trauma-informed and evidence-based approaches, as well as ensure better coordination between teachers, families, foster parents, social workers, and other systems involved in the students' lives. 83 students were served through Fostering Opportunities in CY 2020, and the same number is expected to be served in CY 2021.

The Colorado Lab partnered with Jefferson county to develop a program manual¹¹ that helps practitioners implement the program with fidelity. The Colorado Lab also serves as the lead evaluator of the Fostering Opportunities program. Initial results of the randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of the program on attendance, behavior and course completion will be available at a later date and reported in future APSRs.

The Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) project was launched in January 2019 and supports underserved regions of Colorado. MST is an intensive family and community-based intervention program for at-risk youth to reduce criminal justice involvement. MST sites have been extended to underserved regions of Colorado, with therapists in Pueblo, Greeley, Grand Junction, Adams, and Broomfield counties. Two additional MST sites were added in CY 2020 for a second team in Pueblo, and another covering El Paso, Park, and Teller. 190 families were served through the MST project in CY 2020, and 250 families are expected to be served in CY 2021.

FFPSA-IT

Please see the *Collaboration* section of this APSR for information on FFPSA-IT.

To further address this systemic factor, activities in Goal 5 of the PIP directly address improvement in Items 29 and 30. Please see the PIP Progress Reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

¹¹ <https://coloradolab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Fostering-Opportunities-Manual.pdf>

Agency Responsiveness to Community

In Colorado's CFSR, this systemic factor was rated as a strength, and continues to be an area that Colorado values as reflected in the many collaborative and cross-system workgroups throughout the child welfare continuum.

DCW partners with Illuminate Colorado and coordinates the Colorado SEN Steering Committee. CAPTA funds were awarded to support Illuminate Colorado in continuing to facilitate a multidisciplinary group of participants from around Colorado to include hospitals, DCW, Colorado Attorney General's Office, OBH, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), private and non-profit agencies, and county partners in prioritizing action items around substance exposed newborns. Sub-committees of Data and Research, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Identification/Diagnosis, Policy, Provider Education, and Plans of Safe Care have continued. Sub-committee meetings continue to occur monthly with participation from stakeholders ranging from medical and behavioral health providers, child welfare professionals, public health experts, family program providers, and policy experts. Each subcommittee has moved their respective priority forward through the development of deliverables including the Colorado Perinatal Substance Exposure Data Linkage Project definitions (which align with CAPTA reporting requirements); a gap analysis of FASD supports for Colorado families; a policy matrix overlaying 11 potential strategies across three policy priorities; a searchable online toolkit for perinatal providers; and two regional dissemination events for the Plans of Safe Care Guidelines and Checklist and a hospital pilot of the tools. Please see Appendix E for the SFY 2019 SEN Steering Committee report.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)

As of September 2020, 22 communities submitted local child maltreatment prevention plans to CDHS that align with the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action, the State's child abuse and neglect prevention plan. The prevention framework, community planning toolkit, and the local priorities can all be found at www.CO4KIDS.org. Each community formed a leadership team including parents, developed a community profile to examine existing data, cataloged available resources and services and solicited new feedback from families through a survey and focus groups. The communities identified and prioritized strategies to meet the needs of families and prevent child maltreatment. The identified strategies fall across all levels of the social-ecological model including direct services to families as well as system change efforts. Resources will continue to be identified annually to support planning until all counties have had the opportunity. Parent leadership and involvement plays an integral role in the ongoing planning, implementation, and evaluation of child maltreatment programs in Colorado. Colorado will continue to support implementation strategies connected to parent leadership including weaving parent leadership throughout Colorado's Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework using CBCAP.

There are currently ten sites that have received CBCAP funding to implement strategies in their child maltreatment prevention plans. Many of the sites are family resource centers that provide comprehensive family case management and referral to resources. OEC has been intentional about allowing communities to identify strategies across the social ecology and allowing them to apply for CBCAP funding to implement some of these population level approaches. In FFY 2020, CBCAP funding supported direct services in communities through evidence based and evidence informed parenting programs:

- The Nurturing Parenting Programs™¹² are a family-centered, trauma-informed initiative designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child rearing practices.
- The Incredible Years®¹³ evidence-based parenting programs focus on strengthening parenting competencies and fostering parent involvement in children's school

¹² <http://www.nurturingparenting.com/>

¹³ <http://incredibleyears.com/programs/parent/>

experiences, to promote children’s academic, social, and emotional skills and reduce conduct problems.

- Circle of Parents®¹⁴ is an evidence-informed model shown to improve the resiliency in children by increasing the Protective Factors in their environment through a support group for caregivers.

Other activities implemented through the child maltreatment prevention plans funded in Colorado include increasing community and family awareness around Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to decrease intergenerational ACEs and maltreatment, two generational model of parent education and financial literacy, and the creation of a data sharing system to offer enhanced supportive services to families.

The Biennial Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities Conference was held in September 2020 utilizing CBCAP resources. Over 1,123 multi-disciplinary professionals from across Colorado attended the child abuse prevention conference representing county human services, child welfare, community-based organizations, county public health, education, medicine, mental health, and early childhood. Areas of training included Innovation Space, Anti-Racist Practice, Working Together to Maximize Resources, Best Practices, and Supporting Workforce Care. The next conference is planned for September of 2022 and will be jointly planned with DCW.

Collaboration with stakeholders is a fundamental part of Colorado’s delivery of prevention and early intervention services. The Colorado Children’s Trust Fund (CCTF) was created by Colorado statute in 1989 and exists to prevent the abuse and neglect of Colorado’s children. It acts as the advisory body for all primary and secondary prevention efforts including the CBCAP investments. The Colorado Children’s Trust Fund Board meets monthly and is governed by a nine-person advisory board of directors, appointed by the Governor, with unique backgrounds to support and guide the work supported by the trust fund dollars. Membership includes representation from the CDPHE, CDE, CDHS and a parent representative.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention:

Colorado’s CFSR found that Items 34 and 35 were rated as a strength, and Items 33 and 36 were rated as areas needing improvement.

COVID-19

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic an emergency Policy Memo (PM-CW-2020-0003¹⁵) was enacted until emergency foster care rule packages were promulgated in three different sections of rule in 12 CCR 2509, regarding county foster care, child placement agency foster care, and foster care certification/recertification requirements (for foster parents). Foster parents were unable to schedule medical and dental examinations, pet vaccinations, and classroom cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/First Aid training, causing some foster parents to be out of compliance with rules and therefore impacting the compliance of their certifying agencies. In addition, another Policy Memo (PM-CW-2020-0001¹⁶) was enacted and remains active, allowing monthly supervision in foster care homes to be completed virtually on a case-by-case basis when there is a documented health safety concern related to the foster parent, others in the foster care home, or the caseworker/placement worker. The policy also allows initial or update home study interviews to be completed virtually for the same health safety concerns documented case-by-case. However, no child/youth can be placed until a staff member makes a face-to-face visit in the foster care home. Emergency rules were not pursued for the monthly visits and home study interviews. The policy memo remains active until the national/local emergency is declared to be ended.

¹⁴ <https://www.circleofparentsco.org/>

¹⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wOxMgao3D-GP2HYphCJqohiy367nfbmH/view>

¹⁶ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oAAQmvZ9rLpSNfm1fQRoK2coQKh8Xu4q/view>

Rules intended to meet or be in reasonable compliance with the National Model Foster Care Standards were delayed due to pandemic activities, including the emergency rules listed above. Though the task group had ended in late 2019, there were several meetings to discuss concerns with some of the rules. There were 11 stakeholder meetings held in August and September 2020. The rules were introduced in Child Welfare Sub-PAC in August and December 2020. They were approved by Sub-PAC in January 2021 and by the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) in February 2021. The rules will be presented to the State Board of Human Services in March and April with an effective date of June 1, 2021. The second rule package related to immunizations and to be in reasonable accord with the National Model Foster Care Standards, are still under review/development. Six stakeholder meetings regarding the foster parents' and certifying agencies' requirements were held in November 2020. Four stakeholder meetings regarding child welfare pre-placement rules were held in January and February 2021. There is concern about a reduction in available foster care homes for placement when they are not fully vaccinated, especially in the rural areas. There are concerns about impacting the rights of foster families to make decisions about their own family, children/youth in or being placed in foster care being placed in foster care homes that are not fully immunized, and the parents' rights to make health related decisions for their children/youth in care. Rules are not anticipated to be promulgated until the second half of 2021.

Rules Regulating Therapeutic Foster Care

Family First was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018. This act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams, Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, to provide preventative services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system and to reduce placement of children/youth in congregate care settings. With the Family First funding changes, only specific populations will be eligible for placement in specialized group facilities and only children/youth with behavioral health needs on the severe end of the spectrum will be eligible for placement in residential childcare facilities. Currently, a significant portion of Colorado's children/youth that need behavioral health services are served by specialized group facilities and residential childcare facilities, and it is expected that there will be a gap in services when Colorado opts into Family First. Many of these children and youth have needs that cannot be adequately met in traditional foster care or they do not meet criteria for treatment foster care. This necessitates a level of care in between: therapeutic foster care.

Therapeutic Foster Care has long been defined in Colorado statute¹⁷, but has not had accompanying rules to support programming, services, or a rate structure. This rule set creates an opportunity for implementation of therapeutic foster care and offers a broader continuum of services to Colorado children and youth.

Sub-PAC assigned the drafting of the therapeutic foster care rules to the QRTP task group, a sub-committee of the FFPSA-IT. Representation on the task group includes: DCW's Provider Services Unit (PSU) and the Permanency Unit, the OBH, residential childcare facilities (RCCF) representatives, child placement agencies (CPA), county departments of human/social services, and the OCR. Additionally, the FFPSA-IT provided feedback and revisions on the draft recommendations presented by the QRTP task group. The draft was presented to the ARD on September 25, 2020. Public stakeholder conference calls were conducted on October 19, 2020, October 20, 2020, and October 21, 2020. The rules were presented for feedback at Fostering Colorado on October 22, 2020 and presented and approved by the Colorado State Board of Human Services in December 2020, January 2021, and February 2021.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

Please see the Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan in the *Updates to Targeted Plans* section of this APSR.

¹⁷ 26-6-102(39) C.R.S.

Foster Home Certification/Recertification Reviews

Please see the *Quality Assurance* section of this APSR for information on how ARD conducts Foster Home Certification Reviews. This is also detailed in Goal 5 of the CFSR Round 3 PIP, and details can be found in the PIP progress reports, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Colorado's engagement in the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC) ensures county departments of human services have access to cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements of waiting children and youth. In CY 2020, Colorado sent ICPS home study requests on behalf of 45 Colorado counties:

- Number of home studies requested by Colorado: 849.
- Number of home studies requested by Colorado and completed by other states: 432.
- Number of home studies resulting in approved requests for placement: 181.
- Number of out of state placements in an approved ICPC: 130.

For CY 2020, Colorado also received requests for ICPC home studies from other states:

- Number of ICPC home study requests from other states including requests that were withdrawn without a home study completed: 336.
- Number of ICPC home studies completed by Colorado completed: 210.
 - 56% of regular home studies were completed within the required timeframe of 60 days.
 - 28% of expedited home studies were completed within the 21-day required time frame.
- Number of ICPC home study requests that were withdrawn by the sending state or by the provider: 82.
- Number of ICPC requests that were pending at the end of CY 2020: 44.

COVID-19 impacted home study timeliness by delaying completion by 22% with most delays impacting expedited home study requests. Some examples of COVID-19 delays reported by counties were:

- Inability to meet with families due to lock down orders, limiting the ability of workers to respond to ICPC home study requests.
- Human Services/ Social Services staff and provider families were not able to engage in the home study process. This was especially true in the early phases of the pandemic when policies did not allow for home study completion without face-to-face interviews.
- Provider family members were unable to obtain health evaluations timely due to lack of available medical services.
- Home study staff could not go into the homes for the safety of the providers they were interviewing as well as their own safety.
- Scheduling of provider interviews was impacted by quarantine protocols and regulations.
- Reduction in the number of home study staff/contractors due to testing positive with COVID-19, or exposure to COVID-19 resulting in mandatory quarantine. This affected the timely completion of interviews and other home study requirements.
- Delays in background checks processing.
- Delays in mental health clearances due to lack of personnel and difficulty obtaining mental health records.
- Lack of staffing in the organizations to investigate allegations or issues that arise with the provider.
- Difficulty coordinating provider's schedule for foster care certification, online availability, and knowledge to navigate electronic data transfers.

Caseworkers have the ability in Trails to type reasons why a home study was not completed timely. These delays were primarily due to mitigation of concerns brought up during the home studies process, lack of employee resources, and general delays by the provider.

To mitigate timeliness issues, the CDHS ICPC Specialist and the Learning and Development Specialist and Coach provided numerous virtual county trainings for ICPC home study processes in CY 2020. The CDHS ICPC Specialist also hosted quarterly ICPC meetings with county ICPC liaisons, with a focus on best practices, procedures, and COVID-19 restrictions.

The CDHS ICPC Specialist provides ongoing training and technical assistance for residential facilities and CPAs on an as needed basis. This also included virtual reviews to ensure required ICPC paperwork was received for all approved placements when Colorado is the receiving state.

Data integrity and data entry errors have consistently been identified as areas for improvement to accurately track efforts to improve timeliness of completed home studies. Trails modifications (Crystal Reports) have been utilized to augment reports in order to track the number of ICPC requests Colorado receives and sends, as well as the number of children/youth involved in those ICPC requests. The CDHS ICPC Specialist also sent out communications to counties at the end of January 2021, to ensure all data entries for 2020 home studies were entered into Trails.

CDHS anticipates Trails Modernization, better document sharing processes using the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) Document Delivery Portal, and enhanced training on ICPC processing and data entry will lead to a more effective cross-jurisdictional facilitation of timely placements.

Update to the Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes

Goal 1: Colorado has a skilled, healthy and supported child welfare workforce.

Objective 1.1: Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) programs prepare workers to join the child welfare workforce.

Intervention 1.1.1: Increase the number of IV-E education stipends awarded each year in Colorado.
Across CDHS’s university partners, in SFY 2020-2021, 62 stipends were awarded across the state.

Metropolitan State University (MSU) awarded nine BSW stipends and 21 MSW stipends in SFY 2020. Of the 21 MSW stipend recipients, 18 are current county employees, with 3 employees representing rural counties.

The University of Denver (DU) awarded 19 MSW stipends in SFY 2020. Although most of these students are in the metro area, DU has distance programs in rural areas of the state, and students who attend the distance program and receive a stipend are in the surrounding rural counties.

Colorado State University - Fort Collins awarded two BSW stipends and one MSW stipend in SFY 2020. These students are typically located in Larimer or Weld county.

Colorado State University - Pueblo awarded 5 BSW and 5 MSW stipends in SFY 2020. The students who receive the stipends are with surrounding rural counties such as Fremont and Otero.

COVID-19 has impacted the ability for CDHS to allocate funding towards the stipend program at the same level as in previous years. Due to the pandemic, State funding for the stipend budget was reduced by 79%. CDHS is hoping to increase funding again, however further information is not available at the time of writing this APSR. In 2020, CDHS began drawing down Federal Title IV-E funding using the Certified Public Expenditures (CPE) from MSU Denver. This allowed the stipend program to continue its growth, put supports in place to help retain caseworkers, and enhance recruitment efforts to include equity, diversity, and inclusion. However, due to the reductions in the state budget, the number of stipends awarded for the 2021-2022 school year is anticipated to be a reduction from previous years.

Beginning July 1, 2021, the stipend program will shift to a consortium with other universities in the state of Colorado to offer stipends (Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium). DCW will be contracting with MSU Denver and they will be sub-contracting with the three other universities who will also be submitting their CPEs beginning July 1st, 2021. In the coming years, DCW is also anticipating bringing on 1-2 more universities to offer child welfare stipends, to expand the program across the whole state and provide outreach to underserved areas. The interview and selection process for the 2021-2022 stipend recipients is beginning at the time of writing this APSR and will be finalized by June 2021 and awarded in August 2021.

Intervention 1.1.2: Increase the proportion of education stipends awarded to students who live and work in small, rural and/or mid-sized counties.

By drawing down Title IV-E training dollars to expand the stipend program across the state, CDHS aims to increase the number of stipend recipients in Colorado rural communities. As mentioned in Intervention 1.1.1, DCW is anticipating adding additional universities to offer child welfare stipends, to expand the program across the state.

Objective 1.2: County departments of human/social services are equipped to retain caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and directors.

Intervention 1.2.1: DCW and CWTS will convene and facilitate regional communities of practice for county departments to design and implement strategies to increase worker retention.

Caseworker retention was an area of focus for the Training Steering Committee in 2020. Members of the Training Steering Committee discussed different strategies for counties to retain workers, such as creating county wellness groups to improve their hiring processes, and having a mentoring program incorporated during the orientation process.

During January to December 2020, CWTS also offered courses to better support caseworkers in promoting resiliency and coaching skills:

- Beat the Odds: a twelve-session series designed to promote resilience and provide peer support for child welfare work.
- Protecting Professional Resiliency: new caseworkers must complete this in the fiscal year following their certification. This course applies solution focused tools and skills to identify and reverse burn-out. There are a total of 27 courses scheduled throughout the fiscal year for learners to attend.
- Leading Organizational Change: a two-day course that provides valuable information and best practices from research to enrich leadership for any kind of change. Learners experience frameworks, models, and perspectives that can be applied immediately. Learners employ the Principles of Partnership, the power of parallel process, William Bridges' model of change, and the Social Styles model of interpersonal effectiveness to enrich relationships with those who follow.
- The Science of Positivity: Seeing Possibilities: where learners discover the science of positivity, which leads to better thinking, more creativity, substantial health benefits, and greater resilience. This is a seven-session virtual learning experience exploring worker resilience in their professional and personal life.
- Relationship Coaching: where coaching staff provide coaching in a group setting with leaders and their teams. Relationship coaching may involve enhancing the ability to demonstrate the following overarching leadership competencies: building a culture of collaboration, workforce development, accountability, and goal setting.
- Individual Coaching: one-on-one coaching for leaders, coaches, and trainers. Individual coaching may involve enhancing the ability to demonstrate the following overarching leadership competencies: building a culture of collaboration, workforce development, accountability, and goal setting.
- Coaches' College: for county coaches, which includes a conglomeration of facilitated online, virtual, and in-person learning experiences intended to cultivate coaches with the essential values, attitudes, skills, functions, and insights vital to coaching person-centered change within a child welfare system. Emerging coaches launch their learning with self-directed, online activities designed to ground them in a person-centered coaching approach and to help them consider how it compares with other professional development methods.

Intervention 1.2.2: The CWTS will expand offerings that support assessing and improving organizational health so that managers and leaders are equipped to support case workers and supervisors.

During January to December 2020, CWTS offered the following:

- An organizational assessment called the Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment, to one large county, interpreting results, and utilizing data in coaching. In the coming fiscal year, the CWTS plans to roll out a general staff survey to be taken annually. These responses will serve to better understand the varying needs of the Colorado Child Welfare workforce.
- Solution-Focused Supervision: where supervisors and managers are equipped with concrete tools to use with colleagues and in their supervision of caseworkers.
- Nurturing Professionals in a Challenging Environment: leaders, managers, and supervisors learn tools they need to protect, nurture, and support child welfare's most valuable resource, its workers. Leaders learn how to build upon Solution-Focused Practice principles to empower workers while motivating them to effectively complete required work tasks and gain the skills they need to build upon workers' capacity for compassion and empathy and their drive to make a difference in the lives of children and families.

- Relationship Coaching, where coaching staff provide coaching in a group setting with leaders and their teams. Relationship coaching may involve enhancing the ability to demonstrate the following overarching leadership competencies: building a culture of collaboration, workforce development, accountability, and goal setting.
- Individual Coaching, one-on-one coaching for leaders, coaches, and trainers. Individual coaching may involve enhancing the ability to demonstrate the following overarching leadership competencies: building a culture of collaboration, workforce development, accountability, and goal setting.
- Dare to Lead™: for developing brave leaders and courageous cultures. Daring leadership is a collection of four courage skill sets: Rumbling With Vulnerability, Living Into Your Values, Braving Trust, and Learning to Rise.

Measures of Progress for Goal 1

1. **By 2024, improve caseworker retention rate by decreasing caseworker turnover from a baseline of 26% to 24%.**
At the beginning of CY 2020, there were 1467 caseworkers across Colorado. Over the calendar year, 196 caseworkers were hired, and 306 caseworkers left their positions. This equates to a 20.9% retention rate, which is below the goal of 24%. COVID-19 appears to have impacted caseworker retention and turnover, however the exact extent of this is not yet known. Targeted activities in Intervention 1.2.1 may have also contributed to the decrease in caseworker turnover for this measure. CDHS will continue to work with counties to monitor caseworker retention and turnover data, identify trends and continue its efforts to support the county workforce.
2. **By 2024, increase the number of IV-E stipends awarded each year from 57 (SFY 2018-19) to 80.**
In SFY 2020-2021, Colorado awarded 62 stipends. For SFY 2021-2022, the goal is to award 65-70 stipends. Please see Intervention 1.1.1 on how CDHS plans to expand the number of stipends awarded by 2024.

Goal 2: Children, youth, families and communities are strengthened and thrive through ongoing prevention efforts.

Objective 2.1: Broaden knowledge, understanding and implementation of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework.

Intervention 2.1.1: DCW and CWTS will utilize a CQJ process to identify learning activities that help caseworkers, casework supervisors and child welfare leaders understand and utilize the protective factors in their work with families.

DCW and CWTS conducted a thorough review of the caseworker fundamentals and the supervisor's academy courses to ensure that trainings are up to date and matches current practice. Transfer of Learning (TOLs) activities are also reviewed against current practice. Inconsistencies were identified, and DCW is in the process of forming a workgroup with CWTS to update the TOLs. DCW and CWTS also identified that training around working with children and families with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) should also be included in the curriculum.

Through a partnership with CWTS and DCW's Learning and Development team, ongoing work is being done to better incorporate Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in practice. There was a need for CWTS and DCW to develop a survey and identify EDI training opportunities for counties. A framework has been built to help caseworkers and supervisors incorporate EDI in their work with families.

Objective 2.2: All counties are implementing local child abuse prevention plans.

Intervention 2.2.1: Support counties and Tribes in developing and implementing Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention plans.

There are currently 24 counties in Colorado covered by local child maltreatment prevention plans, that are aligned with the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action. CDHS was in the

process of securing TANF funding to support additional counties, however due to the pandemic, this has been put on hold. Currently, counties are receiving funding through CBCAP to support their planning efforts.

CDHS has released the opportunity for counties to apply for the fourth cohort of developing and completing their child maltreatment prevention plans. This was promoted to counties through the CDHS county email listserv, the CHSDA newsletter, and the weekly statewide COVID-19 call. Five counties will be receiving CBCAP funds to begin their child maltreatment prevention planning in April 2021 and will be completed in October 2021.

CDHS will be making efforts to specifically recruit Tribes in developing and implementing child maltreatment prevention plans. More information on this will be provided in future APSRs.

Objective 2.3: Explore and advocate for innovative ways to braid and blend funding for prevention strategies.

Intervention 2.3.1: Identify prevention services in the FFPSA clearinghouse and how they are funded in Colorado.

Family First includes an opportunity to draw down Federal IV-E funding for approved, evidenced based services to prevent out of home placement. In Colorado, Core Service dollars can be used for services that prevent out of home placement and /or entry into the child welfare system. These opportunities, in addition to other funds and processes, make up a complex network of programs, services and funding streams to prevent involvement or deeper involvement into the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. To coordinate and streamline these programs and services, and to develop processes for maximizing funding sources, the child welfare Sub-PAC has approved the creation of a Child Welfare Prevention Task Group. The purpose of the Prevention Task Group is to act as the child welfare prevention practice advisory group and the group is meeting to finalize the Family First Prevention Plan and create a theory of change as a basis for a prevention continuum. The first meeting of the newly formed group was held in May 2021.

The Colorado Family First Prevention Plan identifies thirteen programs and/or services with ratings in the clearinghouse, that are currently being provided in the state or are being developed for implementation in Colorado and these will be the foundations of the prevention continuum.

Objective 2.4: Coordinate efforts across systems.

Intervention 2.4.1: Modify the Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action to include the Child Fatality Prevention Plan.

The Colorado Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action was not modified in 2020. In 2021, the Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families (CPTF) requested technical assistance from the Thriving Families, Safer Children national initiative to revise the Framework through an equity lens. Colorado received notice that the request was approved, and the Black Administrators of Child Welfare (BACW) has been engaged to advise Colorado in this work over 2021. CDHS and CPTF will form a workgroup to complete this work, and the CPTF will engage cultural brokers to get community feedback on building family well-being. Additionally, this project will include building a clearinghouse of local plan strategies that will share what is working well to facilitate ongoing learning centered in equity work.

Intervention 2.4.2: Explore the need for statutory change to expand the CCTF Board to include representation from additional systems.

CDHS introduced and passed legislation to transform the CCTF statute in the 2021 session. HB 21-1248¹⁸ included expanding the board membership to include more board members with lived experience, and added the prevention of adverse childhood experiences and adverse community conditions to the purpose, including poverty reduction and housing availability.

¹⁸ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1248>

Intervention 2.4.3: Expand public access to services and resources.

The OEC created a Home Visiting Invest task force that will be putting forth recommendations to fund the expansion of home visiting services that will be shared with the Governor and the Colorado General Assembly. The OEC provided funding to create an evidence-based home visiting program, Child First, in Colorado that focuses on parent and mental health concerns in families. Child First will be launching in four sites across the state in Spring 2021. Additionally, the OEC secured a five-year federal fatherhood grant to support seven sites in providing fatherhood supports to prevent child maltreatment.

Due to budget cuts in 2021, many activities were limited in expansion efforts. Funding for the pilot to support women in substance use treatment with childcare was cut. Funding for the CCTF was reduced by 50%, thus several planned projects were put on hold. Despite the CCTF budget cuts, funding was used for an awareness campaign to increase public understanding of child sexual abuse prevention and allowed for a virtual child sexual abuse prevention training to continue across the state. Eligibility requirements for Early Intervention had to be modified, also due to budget cuts, resulting in services being ended for more than 2,000 children. As a result of this, the OEC is working to create a new program funded by other foundations, to provide services to these children.

Intervention 2.4.4: Revitalize the Child Welfare Executive Leadership Council (CWELC), creating an interagency oversight group of specifically identified state agencies, community stakeholders and constituents.

After close consideration of existing groups who are already focused on this work, CDHS has determined that this intervention is no longer necessary, and will be removed from the CFSP.

Measures of Progress for Goal 2

- 1. By 2024, the child maltreatment rate for children zero to five in Colorado will decrease from 15.7 per 1,000 (2017 baseline year) to 15 per 1,000.**

In 2020, the child maltreatment rate for children zero to five in Colorado is 11.94 per 1,000. Through ongoing collaboration with the CPTF, the Child Fatality Prevention System (CFPS), and the Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT), Colorado continuously monitors and evaluates factors in child maltreatment incidents that result in egregious, near fatalities or fatalities. The data is used to create recommendations for reducing child deaths. CDHS has convened a work group to review all past and current recommendations and has provided supports and resources to follow up on outstanding recommendations. This expanded layer of attention has resulted in streamlined processes and improved communications across the system.

- 2. By 2024, child maltreatment fatalities will decline from 2.77 per 100,000 (2017 baseline year) to 2.32 averaged over five (5) years.**

According to the Children's Bureau, child maltreatment fatality rates dropped to 1.98 in 2019¹⁹. Please see the previous Measure of Progress for how Colorado is decreasing child maltreatment rates, and subsequently child maltreatment fatalities.

- 3. By June 2024, all 64 Colorado counties will be represented by child abuse prevention plans and all plans will include a Child Maltreatment Fatality Prevention Plan.**

Currently, 26 counties in Colorado have child abuse prevention plan and five additional counties are in the process of developing their plans. The development of child abuse prevention plans is funded by CBCAP which allows for counties to develop a plan each year. CDHS continues to explore other funding mechanisms to help reach the June 2024 goal. CDHS participates in the CPTF, which is a collaborative of public, private, and non-profit organizations to prevent maltreatment and fatalities for children ages 0-1. Colorado data shows that this population represents the largest portion of child maltreatment deaths.

¹⁹ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cm2019.pdf>

Goal 3: Children and youth have safe, permanent, and stable living situations with appropriate support.

Objective 3.1: Families receive support to ensure that children/youth remain safely at home.

Intervention 3.1.1: Expand Differential Response (DR) as a statewide intervention.

As of 2020, 52 counties in Colorado have either implemented DR, or are in the process of doing so. The current landscape of DR implementation creates inconsistencies and inequities for families across county lines; the goal is to create a consistent response to allegations of abuse and neglect across the state without deference to responding counties.

Concerted efforts have been made towards the goal of statewide implementation by 2024. Counties work with the DCW Differential Response Specialist, an assigned training liaison, and the DCW Learning and Development Specialist to meet both county-specific needs, and to ensure fidelity to the DR model. Counties have a voice at each stage of implementation and frequently check in with their team to troubleshoot barriers and celebrate achievements.

Each of the core training components were converted to online offerings in 2020 to compensate for barriers related to COVID-19 and will be available to extend learning opportunities in the future. In 2020, DCW provided over 100 hours of training, over 140 hours of technical assistance, and over 100 hours of individualized county coaching. Targeted messaging has been provided to the 12 counties who have not yet begun DR implementation in the form of promotional and marketing materials and virtual meetings. Outreach has also been furthered through partnership with County Intermediaries. DCW has also facilitated partnership of peer counties to answer any questions and discuss their own experiences with DR. This strategy led to two additional counties beginning DR implementation in 2020.

For more information about DR, please see ‘Child Protective Services (CPS)’ in the *Update on the Service Descriptions* section of this APSR.

Intervention 3.1.2: Enhance the social history process and include families in identification of the child/youth/family needs.

In 2020, changes in the social history process have primarily taken place in counties participating in the CFSR Round 3 PIP. Counties participating in the PIP are reviewing and enhancing their social history process to include more focus on fathers as a part of goal 3 of the PIP, which looks to promote the identification and engagement of fathers. Counties will be finalizing their steps to enhance their social history process in March of 2021. DCW will conduct additional research into other models and practices to identify models that enhance the family social history process and build on Family Engagement Meetings (FEM) and Family Search and Engagement (FSE) practices already in place.

Objective 3.2: When children/youth must be temporarily removed, they are placed with kin, and kin receive support to maintain connections between the child/youth and family.

Intervention 3.2.1: Enhance the social history process and include families in identification of the child/youth/family needs.

Please see Intervention 3.1.2 above.

Intervention 3.2.2: Design, implement and evaluate the Kinship Navigator Model Pilot.

DCW is working with county partners to design, implement and evaluate the Kinship Navigator Model Pilot. This model is designed to support families by using their existing connections to support placement with kin caregivers, reunification efforts and a whole-family approach to prevent the need for future child welfare involvement. If existing connections do not exist, this model is also designed to assist the family in building a support network. This intervention includes an integrated approach using FSE activities, Facilitated Family Engagement (FFE) meetings and kinship support services to provide multiple layers of support. This will include assisting kinship caregivers in learning about, finding and using programs and services to meet the needs of the children/youth they are raising and their own needs. It will also promote effective partnerships among public and private agencies to ensure kinship caregiver families are served.

Colorado was awarded funding in 2018, 2019 and 2020 to develop, enhance and evaluate the kinship navigator program. \$291,249 was awarded in 2020, and additional funding will be allocated per Federal guidance that will be forthcoming. Colorado Kinected is now fully developed and manualized. Initial implementation began February 13, 2020 and full implementation began June 1, 2020 with seven pilot counties participating. Data collection is ongoing and is anticipated to go through early summer with a final evaluation report anticipated late Summer 2021. The goal is to submit Colorado Kinected to the Family First Clearinghouse for review and rating in Fall 2021.

As this intervention is relationship-based, COVID-19 had a significant impact on the county department's ability to complete in-person visits. The counties involved in the pilot were creative and were still able to support their kinship families. This was done through increased contact (phone, text, virtual), providing technology for kinship families; meeting with families outside; videoconferencing in the ongoing caseworker to reduce the number of staff making visits; and using virtual support groups. The pilot counties report that this creative engagement in supporting families is working and kin are reporting feeling more supported.

Intervention 3.2.3: Kinship assessments will be completed for all placements with kin.

Rule requires the kinship evaluation to be completed for all in-home and OOH placements with kin. Completion of this evaluation is monitored through the kinship review process. In CY 2020, 15 counties were reviewed and of those 73% passed. The cumulative score of all counties was 85%. DCW's intention was to raise the passing score to 90% starting in CY 2020, however, there were several limitations because of COVID-19. For example, during the height of COVID-19, there were less than 40% of fingerprinting offices operating and willing to complete fingerprinting necessary for placements. In addition, the fear of COVID made it difficult for some county departments to visit in person beyond the front porch before the visit turned virtual. These complications made it nearly impossible for counties to reach a score of 90%. The passing score was reduced to 85% for the entire 3-year cycle (CY 2020-2022) to accommodate the barriers caused by COVID-19. For CY 2020, completion of kinship assessments was a strength for some counties and an area of opportunity for others. At least a portion of a kin assessment was completed in every case in every county reviewed, however not necessarily every topic outlined in rule. Though improvements have been made, this is an area DCW will continue to monitor through the yearly review process.

Objective 3.3: Families are reunified with supports and services to ensure safety.

Intervention 3.3.1: Coordinate with CIP and BPCTs to develop processes to improve the timeliness of permanency hearings.

CDHS met with CIP monthly until the COVID-19 pandemic started in March of 2020. At that time, these meetings were moved to virtually every week to address how the system was going to keep meeting the needs of families and maintain safety. On March 16th, 2020, an order from the Chief Justice went out to all court jurisdictions in Colorado regarding court hearings including Dependency and Neglect hearings²⁰. Most courts were then issued technology to be able to resume court hearings in a virtual environment. The Colorado judicial department provided a variety of training and assistance to ensure judicial officers and court staff had the ability to use the technology provided to hold necessary court hearings. Additionally, the CIP was granted authority to use CIP funds toward technology upgrades. During Summer 2020, CIP allocated approximately \$50,000 towards technology upgrades in prioritized courts.

Colorado has worked with the 6 PIP counties to create individual county plans to improve this outcome. CDHS and CIP meet bi-monthly with the 6 PIP counties and each county will be submitting a county plan to DCW regarding this work. These plans will be reviewed in March 2021, and a symposium will be held in June of 2021 to share the plans with each other and discuss how the counties have improved timeliness to permanency.

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https://www.courts.state.co.us/userfiles/file/Court_Probation/Supreme_Court/Filing%20Information/COVID-19%20Order%2016Mar2020.pdf

Intervention 3.3.2: Improve ICWA compliance in Dependency and Neglect cases.

All supervisors certified prior to June 1, 2020 must complete an ICWA-specific Hybrid Enhanced Community Health Outcomes (ECHO) Series (with a pre-course webinar) by June 30, 2022. All supervisors certified after June 1, 2020 must complete the ICWA-specific ECHO Series within their first year of certification. The Colorado Court of Appeals continues to have an ICWA committee that meets quarterly and is planning to issue detailed guidance in 2021. More information will be provided in future APSRs.

Intervention 3.3.3: Redesign the foster care system in Colorado so foster/kinship providers provide ongoing support to the child/youth's family.

This goal was focused on a nationally driven theme of “foster parents as supports to families, not substitute parents”. Several teleconferences were held in November 2020 with foster parents referred by counties and CPAs due to their extensive work with supporting permanency and families.

A common theme for the foster parents was seeing the parents as people who are human and make mistakes. Foster parents saw this acceptance as important to the well-being of the child(ren)/youth in their care, reducing their need to defend or be loyal to their parents. The foster parents identified helpful activities like icebreakers, meeting the parents/legal custodians before visitation at the beginning of the case, inviting parents to community and school events as ways to reduce anxiety and fear for the parents/legal custodians and start/maintain communication. Foster parents acknowledged that each case is different and the progress with relationship building and safety factors are different. There were examples of foster parents mentoring by explaining the purpose of court hearings and procedures, providing transportation, ongoing video chats between the parents/legal custodian and the children/youth, ongoing photos shared and invitations to birthday parties.

Feedback from foster parents was that caseworkers set the tone for foster parents developing relationships with the family. They also said that it is important for foster parents to be included in family engagement meetings and that sometimes they are not invited or can only be in a small portion of the meetings. Foster parents said the positive relationships contribute to having a relationship after reunification and sometimes providing breaks for the parents or the parents feel safe to call them when they are frustrated.

To further ensure that foster parents can provide ongoing support to families, foster parents are invited to present at Foster Care quarterly meetings hosted by the foster care program and intended for county and CPA certification workers and supervisors.

Another area of change includes a PIP goal to increase the number of kinship foster care homes as additional resources and as possible resources for prospective guardians/legal custodians to access the Relative Guardianship Assistance Program (RGAP), so the child(ren)/youth achieve stable permanency and exit foster care, if appropriate. A time-limited Kinship Foster Care Task Group began meeting in February 2021 to identify certification barriers and strategies to address them, review rules to determine if there are additional rules that can be included in waivers of non-safety certification standards, decreasing barriers to certification. The task group began meeting in February 2021 and will meet twice a month for 4-5 months and make recommendations for rule revisions, as well as assist in drafting rules as needed. More information on this targeted activity can be found in the PIP progress report, submitted separately to the Children's Bureau.

Intervention 3.3.4: Family engagement meetings are held throughout the family's involvement and in a way that supports safety, permanency, and well-being.

Family engagement meetings continue to be an essential component of child welfare practice across Colorado. In 2020, 24,626 family engagement meetings were held. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter each saw over 6,000 meetings held, serving over 4,000 families. Counties saw a significant increase in meetings held during COVID-19, as teams relied on the structure of facilitated family engagement meetings to help navigate many of the challenges they were encountering, like changes to available services and parenting time. During the height of the pandemic, CDHS met with counties regularly to discuss how to hold family engagement meetings in virtual platforms. Facilitators shared barriers and solutions and helped to

develop tools to assist facilitators. CDHS and county facilitators also met virtually quarterly to discuss best practices and provide training opportunities for facilitators. CDHS held Introduction to Facilitation trainings several times over the course of 2020 to help equip new facilitators. CDHS also continued to provide counties with monthly performance data to help inform county practice. With county assistance, CDHS rolled out the introduction of a new C-STAT measure in November 2020, Family Engagement Meetings at Reunification, to promote the use of family engagement meetings to improve the transition of children into their parent's homes. This roll-out included the creation of a ROM report to provide easily accessible data, tools for facilitators to use in conducting reunification family engagement meetings, and a training to help prepare facilitators for the facilitation of reunification FEM's. Since the measure's introduction, the established goal of 42% of reunifications with a meeting held has been surpassed for four straight months. In 2021, CDHS is planning on expanding the training available regarding reunification family engagement meetings and developing a set of tools to assist counties in facilitating meetings regarding placement stability/transition.

Measures of Progress for Goal 3

1. By 2024, all 64 counties will implement DR.

At the time of the CFSP submission, there were 37 counties implementing the DR practice model when screening allegations of abuse and neglect and 12 counties were in the process of adopting this practice. In 2019, there was an increase to 41 counties utilizing the DR model and 9 counties in process. At the end of 2020, 42 counties have completed implementation, and 10 counties are in the process of implementation. These participating counties represent 82% of the counties in Colorado.

Please see Intervention 3.1.1 above, and "Child Protective Services" in the *Update on the Service Descriptions* section of this APSR.

2. Colorado will decrease the average daily OOH population per 1,000 from 4.2 (ROM average for CY 2018) to 3.8 by June 30, 2024.

The average daily OOH population per 1,000 has decreased from 4.075 in CY 2019 to 3.71 in CY 2020. This measure is a Wildly Important Goal (WIG) for DCW's accountability to the Governor's office. This measure is also closely tracked in C-STAT, and DCW's permanency specialist reviews any child under the age of 12, who is in residential care, on a quarterly basis, and works with counties to discuss how each individual child is working towards permanency.

All children who are legally free are identified via a Predictive Analytic report quarterly. This report shows children/youth at elevated or high risk of exiting child welfare involvement through emancipation rather than legal permanency. Once those elevated or high-risk children/youth are identified, DCW's Permanency Specialist overseeing the Predictive Analytics program notifies counties where those children/youth have open child welfare cases to support them towards achieving permanency. The overall goal of Predictive Analytics is to identify trends, themes, and/or systemic barriers that impede permanency efforts. Collaboration with counties can include discussing these barriers, obtaining updates on placements, and discussing any additional support that counties need from the Permanency Specialist.

Another initiative that Colorado utilizes is Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK). Please see "Permanency" in the *Updates on the Service Descriptions* section of this APSR for further details on WWK.

4. Colorado's five-year average of the number of children/youth who re-enter care will decrease from 1.0% (ROM, PIT data March 2019) to 0.5% by June 30, 2024. The state's re-entry measure monitors the percent of children/youth discharged to reunification, living with a relative, guardianship or adoption during the last 12 months who re-entered care during each month.

The five-year average of the number of children/youth who re-enter care is 0.87 in CY 2020.

In 2018, Colorado launched the Sustained Permanency Project (SPP) in partnership with Eckerd Connect to address re-entry to foster care. The SPP uses predictive analytics to identify children/youth at high risk of re-entry and support caseworkers in case decision making. The process incorporates a focused review of the individual case, a collaborative staffing and enhanced coaching with the assigned child welfare staff. Currently, there are three counties from different geographical locations and communities piloting SPP practice. The pilot counties have dedicated staff to conduct the focused case reviews, trained staff to use the review tool and provide coaching. The focused case review will occur every three months with the goal of returning home; unless the case is closed, or the permanency goal is no longer return home. The pilot counties are reviewed quarterly for fidelity by Eckerd. There are 22 coaches in the pilot counties, and 386 cases have been reviewed since the inception of the program.

- 5. By 2024, the rate of initial placement with relatives (of those entering care) will improve from 39.5% (ROM data CY 2018) to 50%.**

In CY 2020, the rate of initial placement with relatives (of those entering care) is 42.2%. See Intervention 3.2.2 above.

- 6. Redesign foster care recruitment processes and communications to align with the FFPSA philosophy that foster parents are supports, not substitutes, for families.**

DCW's current communications plan purposefully focuses on highlighting reunification and depicts foster parents as support to biological parents. When designing messaging to recruit foster parents, there are intentional efforts to frame conversations such as: "Foster parents don't just help kids - they help families. Learn how you can make a difference." DCW frequently highlights stories about local Colorado foster and adoptive families who have positive relationships with biological families and have supported reunification as well as families who maintained relationships with biological families even after adoption has occurred.

- 7. Develop a communication plan with internal and external stakeholders regarding messaging about the redesign in foster care recruitment processes.**

The foster care recruitment communication plan currently focuses on the importance of reunification and foster parents as a support to families for both internal and external audiences. DCW's current communication plan highlights resilience, the value of supporting families, and focuses on telling stories of foster parents who relate to and show empathy for biological family members: "We are just human, and we are all just one step from disaster or one step from success no matter who we are."

The Colorado Heart Gallery highlights children and youth who are waiting to be adopted. During a large portion of CY 2020, in-person photoshoots were not held due to health concerns related to COVID-19. However, website analytics indicate interest in the Colorado Heart Gallery remained consistent with previous years. In CY 2020, the Colorado Heart Gallery website was visited by 112,352 visitors who viewed more than 1.35 million pages and 70,000 videos. Additionally, child-specific videos on the Raise the Future website and county websites were viewed 59,000 times.

In CY 2020, the adoptions of 35 children and youth who had been on the Colorado Heart Gallery were finalized (48% of whom were youth of color), four children and youth were placed with families who had taken guardianship or permanent custody, and 31 children and youth were placed or matched with a pre-adoptive family (68% of whom were youth of color). Promoted (i.e. paid) Facebook posts for specific children and youth reached an average of 12,833 individuals, whereas all Facebook posts about specific children and youth reached an average of 5,060 individuals in CY 2020.

Social media and digital advertising continue to be a key awareness tactic for Colorado. In CY 2020, general foster care posts on the Colorado Foster Care Facebook page received an average

of 242,872 engagements per month, and posts on the Colorado Heart Gallery Facebook page received an average of 146,341 engagements per month.

In May of 2020, a traditional advertising campaign focused on targeting communities with the highest rates of removal. utilizing billboards and bus advertisements. These traditional media had a reach of 48.4 million impressions. In addition to traditional advertising, the May foster care campaign received an additional 5 million digital impressions. Throughout CY 2020 three digital advertising campaigns in May, July and November received a total of 21 million impressions across the state.

Campaigns also link to an inquiry form where interested parties can request a follow up from county departments of human/social services and child placement agencies in their area to get more information about the certification process. In July 2020, a digital campaign to raise awareness of the need for foster parents had 8.3 million impressions and 4.2 million video views. In November 2020, a digital campaign for the 15th Anniversary of the Colorado Heart Gallery had 7.5 million impressions and received 1.8 million video views.

Since 2018, CDHS has incorporated storytelling into digital advertising campaigns to educate the public about becoming a foster or adoptive parent. CDHS and select counties have identified Latinx, Black and LGBTQ+ individuals as important audiences for foster parent recruitment. Given this, digital ads developed specifically to reach these audiences are planned for the remainder of SFY 2020-2021. Using the demographics and online behaviors of current foster parents, CDHS can target ads to a “lookalike” audience that shares many of the same qualities as current foster parents.

The use of photos and stories from current foster and adoptive families is a key element of the recruitment communication strategy. Although many family videos had to be filmed remotely, during CY 2020 CDHS produced 10 new family videos that show foster parents as a support to biological families and address misconceptions, benefits, and perceived barriers around becoming a foster or adoptive parent. When selecting families to feature, CDHS considers the families’ race and ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity, location within the state, experience, dedication to foster care and adoption, and unique story. Five videos for National Foster Care Month, five videos for National Adoption Month and one video created for the 15th Anniversary of the Colorado Heart Gallery received 11,513 organic views on Facebook and CO4Kids.org. These views are in addition to video views from the paid digital advertising campaign.

Family videos are shared online at CO4Kids.org, on Facebook, and are made available to counties and CPAs. In addition to sharing stories through videos, CO4Kids.org hosts the Parent Partner blog, which provides a space for adoptive parents, foster families, and nontraditional families to share their experiences raising children and youth who have experienced abuse and neglect. The blog seeks to create an online platform to elevate the authentic voices of families involved in child welfare. CDHS publishes a monthly foster, adoptive and kinship parent email newsletter that aggregates the blog posts and provides additional information from the child welfare field. In CY 2020, the Parent Partner newsletter had an average open rate of 26%. CDHS also distributes a professional newsletter with information and resources about recruitment and retention. In CY 2020, the average open rate was 38.5%.

Community outreach is an integral part of Colorado’s recruitment and retention plan. In CY 2020 CDHS participated in Denver Pride Fest and Juneteenth virtually. CDHS will continue to collaborate with county departments of human/social services, CPAs, and community partners to participate in community events that reach targeted audiences at events such as the Denver Powwow, Cinco de Mayo, Denver Pride Fest and Juneteenth, when community events resume. The Department will also participate virtually when there is an opportunity to do so.

At the end of SFY 2019-2020, CDHS awarded \$68,400 of additional funding to 56 counties and child placement agencies to stabilize foster care placements and support foster parents. In addition, in SFY 2020-2021, CDHS awarded \$99,000 in recruitment and retention funding to 36 county departments of human/social services and CPAs. The funding is administered through the CDHS Recruitment and Retention Local Innovation Fund, which provides short-term funds for efforts or activities that align with each county or CPA's diligent recruitment plan. In previous years, requests for funding far exceeded the funding requests, so CDHS increased the total program budget. This year, funding was rewarded using a tiered system based on organization size. At least 50% of the funding awarded had to be focused on retention efforts.

In response to county and CPA requests for training to better recruit foster and adoptive parents using social media, CDHS developed a social media recruitment training in June of 2020. There were 50 attendees at the virtual training and 28 participating counties and CPAs received a \$1,000 incentive for social media recruitment.

Finally, appreciation remains a key element to Colorado's recruitment and retention strategy. CDHS hosts annual celebration events during National Foster Care Month and National Adoption Month to recognize families for their contribution to the community. In the past, this event was held at the Governor's Mansion; however, these events have been held virtually during the pandemic. CDHS recognized 10 families (five at each of the two events) from several Colorado counties at two virtual events attended by senior leaders at CDHS as well as the families' extended family members from around the country. During the events, each family was recognized, and their video was shown. All families were sent a fruit bouquet, gift certificates for a family meal and a family activity, and plaques in recognition of their exceptional dedication to foster care and adoption. These families' stories are leveraged to earn media coverage. In CY 2020, 15 news stories profiled these families and the individuals as well as the Colorado Heart Gallery's 15th Anniversary campaign.

Goal 4: Youth who leave foster care in Colorado have the tools necessary to be safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing young adults.

Objective 4.1: Youth currently and formerly in foster care have access to developmentally appropriate life experiences and services.

Intervention 4.4.1: Increase access to Independent Living Arrangements (ILA) for youth 18 and older.

In CY 2021 ILA and Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), is a top priority for DCW. DCW has created a best practice tip sheet, as well as a frequently asked questions document, to support county staff in understanding both best practice and rule regarding ILP. Rule changes²¹ for 12 CCR 2509-4, 7.305 were completed in CY 2020, to provide explicit guidance for use of ILA. DCW provided a training and technical assistance session for SILP practice to all counties in April 2020. The DCW team continues to offer ongoing drop-in sessions to answer county questions and facilitate peer to peer support.

Intervention 4.1.2: Ensure services to support all students in foster care in earning a high school credential.

Colorado HB 18-1306²² requires county departments of human/social services to initiate and facilitate a best interest determination process prior to any school move resulting from a foster care placement change. The school district Child Welfare Education Liaisons (CWELs) support the participation of an educator who knows the student and can give meaningful input into the decision of whether a student should remain in their school of origin. All but two small counties now have local memorandums of understanding regarding school stability for children and youth in OOH placement. These agreements detail communication expectations between the local agencies as well as systems-level plans for how transportation to maintain children and youth in their schools of origin will be provided, arranged, and funded.

²¹ <https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/eDocketDetails.do?trackingNum=2020-00523>

²² <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb18-1306>

Intervention 4.1.3: The Chafee Program for a Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) will be available to every eligible youth currently and formerly in foster care in Colorado.

In FFY 2020 and FFY 2021 there was continued work to integrate the Chafee Modernization recommendations into practice. This continued focus resulted in the increase in the coverage of the Chafee program within the state with the addition of the northeast region of the state. Morgan county is the newest addition and they have chosen to collaborate with seven surrounding counties that were not covered previously. DCW has ensured that a statewide Chafee referral form is available for counties that do not currently have access to a Chafee program. The modernization process was implemented to ensure that youth throughout the state have equitable access to Chafee services if they are needed. Work continues to update the county program funding methodology process which will further create this equitable process and work to provide county programs the funding they need to implement a robust program.

Objective 4.2: Youth are involved in case planning, and their voice is valued and respected in decisions.

Intervention 4.2.1: Roadmap to Success (RTS) plans will be in place for all eligible youth.

CY 2021 started at 88% completion of RTS for eligible youth. County staff continue to focus on this measure and many of the largest counties in the state are above 90% completion. In CY 2021, DCW has a goal of getting the current template in the state automated case management system, Trails, to align with the current format and title detailed in rule. The current format does not provide fields requiring individualized barriers and support activities, which DCW believes are essential to developing a more meaningful case plan for the youth. The importance of a tool that aligns with best practice and rule cannot be understated. DCW has provided county staff with a memo (OM-CW-2020-0006²³) detailing multiple options to use the updated RTS format in legacy Trails, including a fillable PDF that can be copy and pasted into any section of the current format in Trails. DCW will continue to provide technical assistance to counties in CY 2021 to support documentation for counties who have difficulty. While the support remains available, some counties have requested RTS training not occur until after the changes have been made in Trails. DCW will revisit training and technical assistance when the format has been updated in Trails and is required.

Intervention 4.2.2: Coordinate with BPCT and CIP to ensure youth have meaningful, current Emancipation Transition Plans (ETP) prior to emancipation.

Colorado is working to create a statutory framework which would require court oversight of the ETP and ensure its completion prior to emancipation. HB 21-1094²⁴ was introduced in February of 2021 and, if passed, will give Colorado a place to begin this work with BCPTs and CIP. More information on this will be reported in future APSRs.

Intervention 4.2.3: Youth, caregiver and parent representation have an active voice in training and professional development activities.

DCW continues to work on incorporating youth voice into training in a meaningful way. In CY 2021, DCW will continue to participate in youth leadership meetings to share key priorities for child welfare. Participation is offered anytime and at the discretion of the youth leadership's team leaders based on their goals and priorities. During meetings with DCW, youth are encouraged to provide feedback, ask questions, and become involved in any area of DCW work they are interested in. Additionally, DCW is working towards the second annual Youth Awareness Week to highlight youth voice and insight, as well as resources and professional development opportunities. Through the Juvenile Justice-Family First workgroup DCW is attempting to create a family friendly version of a flow chart used to better inform individuals on the juvenile justice process and points of access to prevention services. The goal of this group is to obtain family and youth voice during the creation of the flow chart.

²³ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1agJaHxFwDcoMepNVASTe0eQArwXPbg99/view>

²⁴ <http://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1094>

Measures of Progress for Goal 4

1. **By 2024, 90% of all youth in OOH care and age 14 and older will have a RTS completed in Trails. These counts will not include youth in DYS.**

In CY 2020, 91.03% of youth in OOH care and age 14 and older had a RTS completed in Trails. DCW continues to complete targeted outreach to counties when their RTS numbers decline. CY 2021 started at 88% completion. Targeted training and technical assistance to create more meaningful case planning with youth remains a priority. In CY 2021, DCW will meet with current and former foster youth, through youth boards and collaborations with community partners, to hear their experiences with case planning. This lived experience of young people will help to shape new training deliveries and support guidance for counties to get feedback from their youth. Meaningful case planning with older youth and the transition from child welfare to youth welfare is also a priority for DCW. The focus on case planning with older youth is intended to give caseworkers the skills to support their transition to adulthood through the RTS support activities.

2. **By June 2024, the percentage of emancipating youth from OOH care (over the age of 18) whose last placement was an ILA will increase from 29% to 40%, by decreasing the percent of youth whose last placement was a residential facility, foster care, or runaway. These counts will not include youth in DYS.**

In CY 2020, the percentage of emancipating youth from OOH care (over the age of 18) whose last placement was an ILA is 30%. Rule changes for 7.305 were completed in CY 2020, providing more explicit guidance for use of ILA and aligning the name with the federal language of supervised independent living placement. DCW continues to prioritize outreach to counties regarding their SILP process and has currently been able to review multiple counties' SILP agreements, and DCW has written guidance for the use of supervised independent living placement to provide to caseworkers seeking support.

3. **By June 2024, 90% of youth emancipating from OOH care will have timely transition plans (completed during the 90 days prior to emancipation). These counts will not include youth in DYS.**

In CY 2020, 21.3% of youth emancipating from OOH care had timely transition plans (completed during the 90 days prior to emancipation). Completion rates of emancipation transition plans for youth continue to be highly unpredictable. This is most likely due to a lack of awareness regarding the requirement to complete an ETP and the lack of understanding of their importance. In CY 2020 DCW continued to provide training highlighting the importance of ETP and the difference from a RTS, although the number of training sessions provided were significantly less than CY 2019 due to COVID-19.

In 2020, DCW created a youth-specific training, which gives county staff concrete guidance on ETP requirements and highlights the difference between the ETP and RTS. This course will be continued to be offered to county staff throughout 2021.

DCW will also be enhancing training and providing technical assistance to county staff for emancipating youth. Best practices for older youth in child welfare custody is both a priority and an area of focus for DCW in 2021.

4. **Increase the five-year high school graduation rate for youth in OOH care from 29.6% (SFY17-18) to 40%. These counts will not include youth in DYS.**

The five-year high school graduation rate for youth in OOH care for SFY 19-20 has increased to 33.4%. As was reported in last year's APSR, the primary area of intervention to increase the five-year high school graduation rate for youth in OOH care is to increase school stability. Please see Intervention 4.1.2 above for more information on how Colorado is working to improve school stability. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, data will be continually gathered to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on credit accrual for youth, and graduation rates.

Quality Assurance

CQI Workgroup

The Colorado CQI group continues to evolve to fit the needs of key initiatives. In Spring 2020, the CQI workgroup meeting was merged with the PIP-IT meeting, to align the efforts of each group and focus on the strategies and activities outlined in Colorado's PIP. Due to COVID-19, the meetings have shifted to a virtual platform. The two workgroups continued to jointly meet throughout 2020.

In January 2021, the CQI workgroup expanded outside of the joining meeting to focus on Timeliness to Initial Response. This additional meeting was open to all counties across the state and plans to continue meeting until June 2021. Counties will implement practice changes that are identified, as well as make recommendations to the larger workgroup. The CQI group is also in the initial phases of expanding to include an additional workgroup to look at RGAP and how to increase utilization of RGAPs in counties. DCW is working with counties to determine how this workgroup will best fit their needs, and ongoing discussions are held to continue ensuring that the CQI workgroups are helpful, efficient, and effective.

The Administrative Review Division (ARD)

The ARD manages the qualitative case review portion of Colorado's child welfare quality assurance system. The ARD's vision is to create a safe and promising future for children and at-risk adults, by strengthening the communities, families, and systems that work to make that future possible. ARD is a neutral third party that facilitates case reviews, gathers, and analyzes data, publish research, and provides training and technical assistance to affect change in practice, policy and programs that lead to improved outcomes for Colorado's children and at-risk adults.

Within Colorado's child welfare system, the ARD serves as an independent third-party review system under the auspices of CDHS. The ARD manages quality assurance and quality improvement programs for Colorado's child welfare systems. Specifically, the ARD is the mechanism responsible for the federally required Case Review System and the broader qualitative care review portion of the Quality Assurance System.

With an ultimate passion of enhancing the safety, permanency and well-being of Colorado's children, the ARD works closely with Colorado's counties to train, measure and assess their adherence to State and Federal regulations. Such regulations are in place to help prevent unnecessary moves for children in foster care and to assess (and encourage) that the needs of the families' and children are being appropriately addressed.

Administrative/Periodic Reviews

The ARD reviews all children in the child welfare system who are in out-of-home care for at least six months, and every six months thereafter if the child remains in care. Reviews are also conducted every six months for youth in the Division of Youth Services (DYS) who are in a community placement.

Colorado's case review instrument, and process, has been established to ensure that Colorado complies with federal requirements. These include the following:

- 45 CFR 1357.15 (u)²⁵, which requires a quality assurance system that regularly assesses the quality of services provided under the CFSP, and
- Section 475 (5) of the Social Security Act²⁶, which requires the case review system to assure:
 - Each child has a case plan designed to achieve placement in a safe setting and it is the least restrictive and most appropriate setting available in close proximity to the parents' home, and meets the best interest and needs of the child,
 - Determines:

²⁵ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2014-title45-vol4/pdf/CFR-2014-title45-vol4-sec1357-15.pdf>

²⁶ https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title04/0475.htm

- The safety of the child,
 - The continuing necessity for and appropriateness of placement,
 - Extent of compliance with the case plan,
 - Extent of progress made toward alleviating/mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care,
 - Opportunities for the child/youth to engage in age and/or developmentally appropriate activities,
 - Procedural safeguards are applied specific to permanency hearings, filing petitions for the TPR, changes in placements, removal of the child from the home, etc.,
 - Health and education records are in the case file, and any identified services required for the health or education of the child are being provided,
 - When a child has been in care for 15 of the 22 past months, petition for TPR has been filed, or a compelling reason exists for not filing,
 - Appropriate independent living and transition plans and services are in place for older youth,
 - Credit reporting checks are conducted for older youth, and,
 - The status of each child is reviewed no less frequently than once every six months.
- Section 475 (6) of the Social Security Act²⁴, which defines an “administrative review” as a review that is open to the participation of the parents of the child, and is conducted by an individual not responsible for the case management or delivery of services to the child or parents.

This process also meets the federal requirements outlined in 5 CFR 1355.34 (C (3))²⁵, which requires the quality assurance system is:

- In place in the jurisdictions within the State where services included in the CFSP are provided.
 - The ARD conducts administrative, qualitative, case reviews of children and youth placed into foster care in all 64 of Colorado’s counties. Additionally, the ARD conducts these reviews for youth placed into the Department’s custody with the DYS.
- Able to evaluate the adequacy and quality of services provided under the CFSP.
 - The ARD’s instrument has a series of questions designed to review the adequacy of the services included in the case plan, as well as those that are being provided to each child/youth and their family, specific to their permanency goal(s).
- Able to identify strengths and needs of the service delivery system it evaluates.
 - The ARD’s instrument is designed with a response set that allows for the identification of both case specific and systemic strengths and barriers to meeting the needs of Colorado’s children/youth and families. Specifically, the response set items identified as within a county departments’ direct influence (e.g., sending notification of a child/youth with potential Native American heritage to specific tribes) as well as those that are broader, systemic issues (e.g., Native American Tribes not responding to inquiries of Native American heritage).
- Provides reports to agency administration on the quality of services evaluated and areas of needed improvement.
 - The ARD’s case review instrument, implemented within Colorado’s CCWIS, allows for the creation and dissemination of routine aggregate reports (e.g. quarterly performance reports), as well as more advanced, ad-hoc analysis. Because the case review instrument exists within the CCWIS system, it allows for advanced statistical analysis of specific case practice factors that may be related to a child/youth’s safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Evaluates measures implemented to address identified problems.
 - The ARD’s case review instrument consists of questions that have remained stable over time, as well as ad-hoc questions. For areas of case practice where expectations do not experience frequent change, these stable questions allow for trend analysis sensitive to how other systems level changes impact practice in these areas. Ad-hoc questions are often added to the instrument when new practice expectations are implemented. This creates an immediate feedback loop that informs early implementation efforts and

allows for any necessary adjustments to be made in a more responsive and timely manner.

In addition to these specific areas, the ARD's qualitative case review instrument has items and response sets designed to measure the quality of case practice in the following areas:

- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Educational stability and progress
- Frequency and quality of contacts with the child/youth and parents
- Engagement of the child/youth and parents in case planning
- Adequacy of visitation between the child/youth and their siblings and parents
- Timeliness of Title IV-E eligibility

Lastly, the Administrative Review instrument has been mapped to the CFSR items. This theory-based approach focuses on mapping practice areas to specific child welfare outcomes they are believed to influence. In other words, improved practice in specific areas should result in enhanced outcomes for children and families along specific CFSR Items. Instructions for the review instrument are directly linked to Federal and State statute, Colorado's child welfare program rules, and are additionally informed by direct citations from the federal Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI).

Foster Home Certification Reviews

The purpose of the annual foster home certification review is to determine if county departments of human/social services are in compliance with certification requirements for foster homes and kinship foster homes as outlined in the Code of Colorado Regulations, Colorado Revised Statute, and federal law. A thorough and qualitative case review of the county certified provider case file is completed to determine if the certifying county and provider are in compliance with rules and regulations during the review period to provide a safe living environment for children in Out-of-Home care. Questions on this instrument were designed to help address CFSR Item 33: Standards Applied Equally on the OSRI regarding how well the State applies standards equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

Any foster home or kinship foster home that is certified by a county department of human/social services is eligible for review by the Administrative Review Division, Foster Home Certification Review. A foster home or kinship foster home can be reviewed if the Trails approval screen indicates a "Pending" and "Certify" status for a provider.

CFSR Round 3 PIP

The ARD is responsible for the completion of the measurement methodology for Colorado's Round Three CFSR PIP. This includes conducting 65 reviews across six counties and the Division of Youth Services every six months. While the ARD is using the federal OSRI as a measurement tool throughout the duration of Colorado's PIP, due to the lack of generalizability of the findings, it is not used as part of Colorado's routine CQI/QA system. However, information from the other qualitative case review process, administrative/quantitative data, and stakeholder feedback groups are used to provide more in-depth and generalizable information as to Colorado's statewide performance across the CFSR Items.

In planning for the CFSR Round 4 reviews, CDHS is having ongoing discussions around the ability to conduct a State Case Review process, and the continuation of aligning internal tools with the OSRI during Colorado's CQI/QA processes. A meeting was held in February 2021 and discussions will be ongoing. Further details will be provided in future APSRs.

Use of Qualitative Case Review Data

Data collected from the various qualitative case reviews are integrated into numerous continuous quality improvement and CFSR PIP processes. These include:

- CFSR Program Improvement Plan Implementation Team meetings and discussions.
- CDHS C-STAT discussions

- CDHS Risk- STAT discussions

Child Welfare Quality Assurance Updates

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Colorado made numerous changes to the qualitative case review processes to continue to provide quality assurance and continuous quality improvement assistance while ensuring the safety of state and county staff as well as the children, families, and other key case participants who are invited to reviews. Primary among these were the following changes:

- Administrative Reviews were transitioned to virtual meetings. The ARD continued to review cases through Colorado Trails, Colorado's Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System. Instead of in-person interviews and discussions with key case participants, these were facilitated either by video or teleconference. Anecdotally, review staff have indicated that participation in the facilitated discussions has increased during the time reviews have been managed remotely, via virtual participation. The ARD is currently conducting quantitative research to determine potential positive impacts to participation that may have occurred as a result of this transition.
- Child and Family Services Reviews PIP review transitioned to occurring remotely. The ARD partnered closely with county departments of human/social services staff to schedule key case participant interviews through the use of video and/or teleconference capability. Interviews were scheduled in advance, and county department staff helped reschedule any interviews as necessary when individuals were not available when initially scheduled. Through this process, Colorado has been able to continue to successfully review and monitor performance for the PIP without significant disruption, all while helping to keep staff and family members safe by following appropriate health guidelines.
- The ARD is currently conducting quantitative analysis on the impact of remote/virtual review discussions with participants. Potential increased review participation of key stakeholders could be a critical finding, as prior research has shown a positive impact on child outcomes when parents participate in the review process.

In addition to modifications made, and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ARD is participating in the Trails Modernization process. Data and results from the Administrative Reviews are stored in Trails, and the ARD's sections in Trails are undergoing modification along with the rest of the Trails system. The continued use of Trails to house the review data is a critical component to allowing for a full range of quantitative analysis and research, as review results can be linked to all other administrative data in the Trails system for each child and family.

Update on the Service Descriptions

Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program (title IV-B, subpart 1)

Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries (section 422(b)(11) of the Act)

All children, youth, and their families who are indicated in reports of child maltreatment, regardless of their familial status or countries of origin, are eligible for child welfare services. The Code of Colorado Regulations requires county caseworkers to ask if children/youth involved in reports of child maltreatment are adopted; however, there is not a requirement to ask if the children/youth were adopted from other countries. As a result, CDHS does not have reliable data on children/youth that were adopted from other countries and subsequently, entered Colorado's child welfare system. Efforts to address this gap in data collection include a change in the statewide database to create a mandatory data field to capture this information.

Colorado is in the third year of a contract that gives Lutheran Families Services-Rocky Mountain (LFS-RM) the authority to provide oversight of the intercountry application process. Their responsibility is to assure that applicants wanting to adopt from other countries meet suitability and eligibility criteria required by Colorado and federal law, as well as in rule. This includes criminal history background checks and home study requirements. In CY 2020, 70 families adopting children/youth from other countries requested approval of their documentation and records to move forward with getting approval from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Of these, 38 were initial requests and 42 were updates to prior requests.

Colorado is in the fourth contractual year with Raise the Future (formerly known as The Adoption Exchange) to provide post permanency support to families that have achieved permanency, including families who have adopted children/youth from through the intercountry process. Further information is in the Post Permanency Services and Supports (PPSS) section of this document.

Services for Children Under the Age of Five (section 422(b)(18) of the Act)

Consistent with Colorado's efforts to expand prevention and early intervention services in the state's child and family services continuum, CDHS continues to support a number of programs that seek to prevent children under the age of five from entering the child welfare system, as well as reducing the length of time children under the age of five remain in foster care. These programs were listed in the 2021 APSR, as well as in the MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) and Additional Services Information sections of this APSR.

Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths

The CDHS Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) reviews incidents of fatal, near fatal, or egregious abuse or neglect determined to be a result of child maltreatment, when the child or family had previous involvement with the child welfare system within the last three years. The process includes a review of the incident, identification of contributing factors that may have led to the incident, the quality and sufficiency of service delivery from state and local agencies, and the families' prior involvement with the child welfare system. After considering the identified strengths, as well as systemic gaps and/or deficiencies, recommendations are put forth regarding policy and practice considerations that may help prevent future incidents of fatal, near fatal, or egregious abuse or neglect, and/or strengthen the systems that provide direct service delivery to children and families. These reviews are facilitated, and data is collected by the ARD.

The CDHS CFRT staff work closely with the CDPHE Child Fatality Prevention System (CFPS) team to consider data from each system and make joint recommendations based upon these findings. Each review process serves a different purpose, and each process is supported by the respective agency. The CFPS staff members at the CDPHE serve as the two state appointees from the CDPHE to the CDHS CFRT, and the CFRT staff are involved with and participate in CFPS workgroups and state review meetings.

Partnering with the Colorado Vital Records Office, CFPS convenes nearly 50 local child fatality prevention review teams representing all 64 counties in Colorado and a state-level team to review deaths of infants, children, and youth in the state, including deaths due to child maltreatment. The state team and the local teams are made up of representatives from public health, human services, law enforcement, schools, medical and behavioral health providers, county and district attorneys, coroner and medical examiner offices, and community members, among others.

CFPS conducts a process each year to review trends and patterns in child deaths, including child maltreatment deaths, and develop prevention recommendations to prevent future deaths. These recommendations are submitted in an annual legislative report to the Colorado General Assembly each July 1st. The most recent CFPS legislative report can be found in Appendix F. CFPS also partners with CDHS to support Colorado's Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework for Action and the strategic priorities and activities of the CPTF.

CPTF aims to significantly reduce child fatalities and child maltreatment for all children zero to five, by positively and proactively supporting strong and healthy family formation²⁷. In 2020, Colorado was one of four states chosen by the Children's Bureau, Casey Family Programs, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Prevent Child Abuse America® to participate in a national effort to fundamentally rethink child welfare by creating the conditions for strong, thriving families where children are free from harm²⁸. Thriving Families, Safer Children: A National Commitment to Well-Being (Thriving Families) will work with a diverse range of partners and stakeholders, including families with lived experiences, to work on this initiative. Thriving Families will be composed of three tiers²⁹:

- Tier One – Select jurisdictions will serve as demonstration sites, collaborating with the initiative's partners for intensive technical support and resources to help realize their goal of creating child and family well-being systems.
- Tier Two – The effort will partner with jurisdictions to focus on policy and systemic reforms at the state, tribal or territorial level.
- Tier Three – The effort will share lessons learned to help inform and inspire other jurisdictions in launching their own journeys in building child well-being systems.

The Tier One work will be starting soon, and further updates will be provided in future APSRs.

New: Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (applicable states only)

Per Attachment A of [ACYF-CB-PI-20-01](#), Colorado is not eligible for the Disaster Relief Act funds.

New: Supplemental funding to prevent, prepare for, or respond to, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

DCW released an information memorandum (IM-CW-2020-0044³⁰) informing and providing guidance to counties on local spending of new and temporary federal funding made available to the state through the CARES Act. Colorado was awarded \$714,583 and the entirety of the award was distributed for the front-line work in the counties.

As these funds may be incurred by counties up until and no later than September 30, 2021, additional information will be provided in the 2023 APSR.

MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) (title IV-B, subpart 2)

The OEC oversees Colorado's PSSF program. The overarching objectives for Colorado's program include:

²⁷ <https://www.copartnershipforthrivingfamilies.org/about.html>

²⁸ <https://www.copartnershipforthrivingfamilies.org/blog/news-release-national-leaders-choose-colorado-to-prove-a-better-system-aimed-at-preventing-child-maltreatment-is-possible>

²⁹ <https://www.aecf.org/blog/first-of-its-kind-partnership-aims-to-redesign-child-welfare-into-child-and/>

³⁰ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GG29h59z_AVtxSdrUPxv2mX-v7VWijjo/view

- Secure permanency and safety for children by providing support to families in a flexible, family centered manner through collaborative community efforts.
- Enhance family support networks to increase well-being.
- Prevent unnecessary separation of children from their families.
- Reunite children with their parents or provide other permanent living arrangements through adoption or kin, and
- Support preservation efforts for families in crisis who have children at risk for maltreatment or re-abuse.

These objectives are addressed through the provision of services in four service categories or areas through family support, family preservation, time-limited family reunification and adoption promotion and support services. CDHS spends approximately 20 percent of PSSF funding in each of the four service categories or areas, and 10 percent to support special projects, planning, training, and service coordination.

Children and their families receive services through local sites after first engaging with PSSF providers to determine needs and goal setting with the family. Services are administered by county departments of human/social services and eligible American Indian Tribes through awarded grants.

A new Request for Proposal (RFP) is scheduled to be released for procurement of new sites for the next 5-year grant cycle. The new grants will begin October 1, 2021, the grant awards will include four additional years to be renewed by option and submission of plans by sites for each year. Awards will be offered based on the capacity to serve, ability to address community need, and greatest impact with verifiable return on available funding.

The following options for funded service priorities will be included in the new RFP:

1. Intensive family case management or home-based intervention: High Fidelity Wraparound, PSSF Case Management Guidelines, Child First (limited to specific activities)
2. Family Team Decision Making
3. Incredible Years Program
4. Parenting Education Models: Nurturing Parents/teen module, Parents as Teachers, Child First
5. Fatherhood programs: Nurturing Fathers, Caring Dads, Inside Out Dads
6. Respite Care
7. Colorado Community Response
8. Post-Adoption/Permanency Support: Adoption Navigator, PSSF Adoption/Post Permanency Support Services Guidelines, Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE), Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP), NTDC
9. Kinship Navigation
10. Parent Peer Support Programs/Mentoring programs: Parent Cafes, Circle of Parents

Additional resources from PSSF during this last year went to support trainers for the Nurturing Parenting and Nurturing Fathers programs, consultants, model implementation intermediaries to train and support fidelity, and an adoption support research project. PSSF also provided resources to families through a community agency/Family Resource Center that serves American Indian/Alaskan Native families in the metro area through collaborative and culturally responsive services. Additional activities included supporting the Biannual Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities Conference, providing respite care funds focused on serving adoptive families, and providing support collaboration to assess agency readiness for the Child First programming in Colorado.

Prior to receiving PSSF services in any area, families' needs are identified through an intake process that includes family input on services they feel would be beneficial. The family sets goals they would like to work on with the service provider, and the relationship is one that fosters family engagement and buy-in. PSSF sites work closely with community service providers to help provide resources and individualized services for the family based on the family's identified needs.

There are 23 sites that provide PSSF services to 36 counties. Colorado PSSF funding that is earmarked for services in both of Colorado’s federally recognized tribes.

PSSF is currently funding the following seven priorities:

- Intensive Case Management
- Family Team Decision Making
- The Incredible Years Parenting Program
- Nurturing Fathers and Nurturing Parenting Programs
- Respite Care
- Post-Adoption Permanency Supports
- The CCR Program

PSSF sites were also able to select a “county design” option to provide services. However, if the site selected the county design option, the outcomes are required to have high relevance to child abuse prevention and child welfare programs and must address the needs of the target population. Sites who are currently implementing “county design” services include implementation of Nurturing Parents, Adoption Navigation or kinship advocacy, Parents as Teachers, and Parent Cafes/Support Groups.

PSSF concluded research of its currently offered adoption support services to determine what aligned with what families are requesting through focus groups, literature review, implementation of recommendations from previous adoption steering committee results, and consultations with families. The research resulted in a summary of best practice, responses from adoptive parents and providers about what is needed and what is working, recommendations for adoption support/post permanency activities that should be included in the array of services offered through Colorado’s PSSF programs, and possible outcome measures to consider for each recommendation. The adoption support services will include required components or activities sites must implement to receive funding in the adoption support services category. The results of the study will guide future adoption/post permanency support strategies implemented through PSSF.

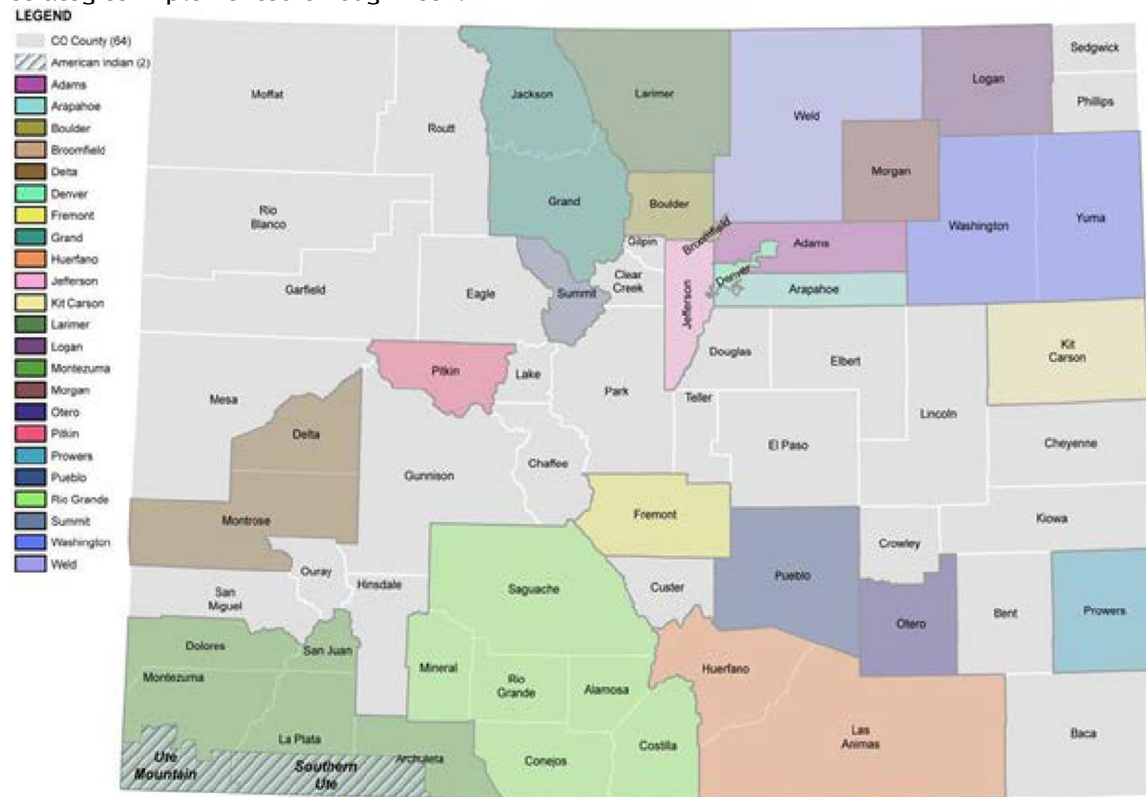


Figure 2: Map of FFY 2020 PSSF Sites.

| PSSF Service Area | Number Served - FFY 2018 | Number Served - FFY 2019 | Number Served - FFY 2020 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Family Preservation | 599 | 732 | 398 |
| Family Support | 1553 | 2073 | 1383 |
| Time-limited Reunification | 526 | 578 | 214 |
| Adoption Promotion and Support | 416 | 485 | 418 |

Table 2: FFY 2020 Individuals served by Colorado's PSSF program.

There were 254 additional open cases with a service provided during the reporting year, and a service category was not associated with the case. This is due to changes in the data system where the data entry was not being required in the service area/category field, it has since been changed to include this information for every service offered. The system has been corrected to require this data. These cases are not included in the grid above showing the numbers served in each service category.

The numbers served are lower in all categories in 2020. In response to COVID-19, services in PSSF in Colorado shifted to more crisis services and one-time services to support families during the pandemic. Many families reached out to PSSF programs for aid with rent, food, and other necessary supplies. Those families were helped by PSSF providers directly and indirectly by connecting families with needed services in the community.

Since mid-March 2020, when Colorado started experiencing the effects of COVID-19, PSSF sites attempted to continue providing beneficial services to families in the communities. PSSF sites remained open until the Governor of Colorado issued a shelter in place order for Colorado. Following the order, PSSF sites were tasked with figuring out how to reach out to families in a different way. Many PSSF sites in Colorado provide in-person parenting education opportunities through the Incredible Years Program or Nurturing Parenting programs and as a result of the shelter order, sites put classes on hold for a short time until they could pivot and provide those services virtually or through individual phone consults.

PSSF collects data on numbers served, activities, and outcomes of services through the OEC database. The data system is evolving to enable the provision of consistent accurate data. PSSF is unable to report complete numbers about preventative services for children/youth separately from families served, as many of the services are tied specifically to a parent, such as parenting education curriculums. It is known that these services impact the family as a whole, but the child(ren)/youth are not attached to the service, if it is more caregiver focused.

CDHS provides training to PSSF sites through multiple venues including sites visits, webinars and informational sessions held at annual conferences or grantee meetings training topics include:

- Implementation science
- Embedding learning into practice

- Incredible Years parent group facilitators
- Intensive Case Management training and monitoring
- Nurturing Parents facilitator training
- Nurturing Fathers facilitator training
- Adoption support services training
- Colorado Family Support Assessment Tool
- Motivational interviewing
- Children’s safety
- Family engagement, and
- Strengthening Families Protective Factors

PSSF will continue to provide technical assistance to county departments and other subcontractor agencies. The PSSF Program Manager collaborates closely with state and county child welfare staff to keep PSSF efforts aligned with priorities identified in the CFSP.

Service Decision-Making Process for Family Support Services

In Colorado, county departments of human/social services apply for PSSF funding based on the prescribed state priorities that were developed based on a statewide needs assessment and literature review of best/promising practices. Counties applied to provide services after assessing their local needs and determining best fit in the communities they serve. Many of the county applicants applied to use a portion of their award to provide family support services, while some focused on the other service categories. County departments also have an option to enter partnerships and subcontracts with community agencies including Family Resource Centers when appropriate to deliver family support services.

Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment (section 432(a)(10) of the Act)

Colorado continues to focus services and interventions on families with children ages 0 to 5. In 2020, 12.92% of all children under the age of 5 were victims of maltreatment and this population represents 45% of all maltreatment occurrences. The OEC has programs and services that target this population, and they have invested additional dollars to expand preschool and kindergarten. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, funds have been added to the child care and development fund. For further details on how Colorado provides services for children under the age of five, please see the *Services for Children Under the Age of Five* section of this APSR.

Kinship Navigator Funding (title IV-B, subpart 2)

See Intervention 3.2.2 in the Update to the Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes section of this APSR.

Monthly Caseworker Visits (MCV)

In FFY 2020, Colorado fell short of the federal goal of 95% of monthly caseworker visits completed. The state completed 94% of monthly caseworker visits and 75% of those visits occurred in the child/youth’s residence. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ACF allowed for videoconferencing technology to be used under limited circumstances in lieu of face to face contact for ongoing cases. The report developed by OIT was not able to track contacts coded as “videoconference”, so a new report had to be developed. At the same time, parenting time was occurring virtually as well. There was some confusion among front line staff at the county level about when to code contacts as “videoconference” or “virtual visit.” It was determined that some monthly caseworker visits with children were coded in error as “virtual visit” and were not included in the MCV data. Due to the timing and complexity of developing this new report, staff were unable to monitor this monthly as had been the case previously. Once the report was available in November 2020, DCW staff reached out to counties to determine if they had made the monthly contacts and to have the coding corrected. Contacts that were more than 45 days old could not be corrected without a Trails technician and they are under a backlog due to new system rollouts. CDHS is once again able to run this report monthly and will monitor it as we have done in the past to ensure that Colorado meets the MCV performance standards this year.

Colorado’s Use of the Monthly Caseworker Visit Grant

In addition to the ongoing evaluation of MCV data, CDHS distributes MCV funds to organizations for the purchase of goods, services, programs, and technologies that support efforts to ensure children and youth in OOH care are visited monthly. In FFY 2021, an announcement was sent to eligible organizations to inform them of grant funding opportunities through MCV to increase the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and youth in OOH care. It is anticipated that CDHS will have approximately \$82,000 to distribute to counties and affiliated agencies through a competitive procurement process. This process began on 02/01/2021 and will go through 09/15/21. No awards have been made at this time. Due to the pandemic, the Sex Offender Management Board Annual Conference was cancelled. This is usually an event that utilizes MCV funds to provide conference attendance scholarships for caseworkers. This conference will occur virtually in July of 2021 and plans are in place to offer scholarships to offset the cost of attendance. MCV funds are blended and braided with other h other funding sources to ensure services are delivered to county partners as effectively as possible. The following table highlights several organizations that have already received MCV Grant funds for FFY 2021:

| County/Agency | Award | MCV Expenditures |
|---|----------|---|
| Regents of the University of Colorado | \$46,857 | Secondary trauma services; supervisor training on secondary trauma. |
| Thomson Reuters | \$52,593 | CLEAR software for the following county agencies: Bent, Archuleta, Chaffee, Teller, Montezuma, Yuma, Washington, Morgan, Park, Fremont, Kit Carson, Phillips, Rio Blanco, Prowers, Moffatt, and Saguache. |
| County agencies served with scholarships: Adams, Broomfield, Jefferson, Boulder, Denver, El Paso, Lincoln, Logan, Phillips, Montrose, Prowers, Rio Grande, Teller, Gilpin, Morgan | \$5200 | Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) conference |
| CSU/Summitstone | \$5,500 | Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCH) |

Table 3: FFY 2021 Distribution of MCV Grant funds.

CDHS used MCV funds to expand access to specific tools and services throughout the state. CDHS renewed an agreement with Thomson Reuters to provide access to a web-based investigation software called CLEAR to caseworkers in Colorado’s balance-of-state counties. The service is expected to increase family finding and diligent search capacity in small- and medium-sized counties. Previously, child welfare staff in small- and medium-sized counties had limited access to such technology. In FFY 2021, there was high demand from county agencies to expand secondary trauma services across the state. Throughout COVID-19, CDHS increased availability of these services through MCV funding, which directly impacted staff retention and staff efficacy in providing services to children and youth in OOH care. While the providers were unable to travel as often to see staff in person, they made their services available virtually to address staff needs. CDHS continued to contract with Regents of the University of Colorado and THRIVE (at MSU) to expand access to secondary trauma services and consultations to all counties. This included

providing training funded by CAPTA to address secondary trauma to child welfare supervisors on implementing trauma-informed practice and providing supports to staff. MCV funds continue to be utilized for the Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCH) project. ARCH is a collaboration between CSU's Social Work Research Center, CDHS, Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Garfield, Jefferson, Larimer, and Pueblo counties to provide applied research and evaluation for child welfare prevention and intervention practices in Colorado. Now in its seventeenth year, ARCH is one of the longest standing child welfare research-practice partnerships in the nation. ARCH is currently conducting and preparing for the following activities:

- Placement Stability Study featuring a descriptive, comparative, and predictive study of the trends, characteristics, and drivers of placement stability/instability in Colorado over the past 10 years. The ARCH funded Doctoral Graduate Research Assistant is also completing a comprehensive literature review on the barriers and facilitators to placement stability.
- Support Planning Study focused on understanding best practices for creating support plans with families involved in child welfare.
- FFPSA, focused on providing research-to-practice support of Colorado's implementation of Family First, and
- Caseworker Retention Study focused on understanding lived experiences of new caseworkers in the first two years with an emphasis on retention facilitators and supports. These activities are continuing throughout this fiscal year, and feedback is obtained from stakeholders to plan for future projects.

CDHS continues to oversee applications and distribution of funding for FFY 2021. MCV data for FFY 2021 will be reported in a separate submission to the Children's Bureau by December 15, 2021.

Additional Services Information

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program

Colorado's MIECHV federal grant funds voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs in 12 of Colorado's highest-risk counties: Adams, Alamosa, Clear Creek, Costilla, Crowley, Denver, Gilpin, Mesa, Morgan, Otero, Pueblo, and Saguache counties. These communities were selected based on federal guidance that instructs states to identify "at-risk communities" by the following indicators:

- Percent of premature birth;
- Percent of low-birth-weight infants;
- Infant mortality rate;
- Infant death rate due to neglect or abuse;
- Child death rate;
- Percent of women with three risk factors (unmarried, under age 25 and no high school diploma);
- Percent of children in poverty;
- Proportion of individuals living below the federal poverty level;
- Juvenile crime arrest rate;
- Overall crime rate;
- Percent of high-school dropouts;
- Percent of unemployment; and,
- Overall child maltreatment rate.

Colorado's MIECHV provides a continuum of home visiting programs with the goal of ensuring that all vulnerable families can find a program that fits their needs and eligibility. Programs include Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), and Parents as Teachers (PAT). Together, they serve families from the prenatal stage to kindergarten entry. The programs are administered by 16 local implementing agencies, and the following table provides information about the geographic distribution of the programs and their approximate caseloads.

| Program | No. of Counties Served | Caseload |
|--|------------------------|----------|
| Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) | 5 | 341 |
| Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) | 2 | 408 |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Parents as Teachers | 12 | 798 |
| TOTAL | 12 | 1,547 |

Table 4: Number of counties where MIECHV programs are available and funded caseloads in FFY 2021.

Colorado Nurse Home Visitor Program

The Colorado Nurse Home Visitor Program (Nurse-Family Partnership or NFP) provides state funding for home visiting service to first-time, low-income parents in all 64 counties in Colorado. NFP is a relationship-based program that partners highly trained professional nurses with vulnerable first-time mothers and their babies. Eligibility requirements include voluntary participation, being a first-time mother, low-income at intake and enrollment in the program no later than 30 days post-partum.

Mothers who enroll in the program receive one-on-one home visits with a nurse home visitor throughout pregnancy and the first two years of the child's life. The Nurse-Family Partnership program is currently administered by 22 agencies across the state, including public health departments, community health centers, community nursing agencies and hospital systems. This program is managed by a four-part team that includes CDHS, the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus College of Nursing, the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office, and Invest in Kids. This team, known as the Colorado Nurse-Family Partnership Coordination team, meets quarterly to review implementation data from all 22 sites, monitor program improvement plans, and discuss trends. In SFY 2020, the Nurse Home Visitor Program served approximately 3,124 families, and in SFY 2021, the program is expected to serve around 3,048 families.

In March 2020, all NFP programs transitioned to providing services remotely. Though there was an initial learning curve for agencies and parents, the telehealth model has provided some unexpected positive outcomes. Nurses have been able to serve more families in remote or hard to reach locations. With coordination help from the program intermediary at CDHS, agencies with lower caseloads have been able to help other agencies with waitlists, or those who had staff diverted for COVID relief.

Unlike the other three programs, NFP is funded on the state fiscal year; therefore, NFP data reflects the period beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021.

Child Protective Services

Differential Response

Differential Response (DR) is an innovative system reform that allows CPS to address screened-in reports of child maltreatment in a family-centered way. Within the DR model, there are two approaches to the assessment of child maltreatment: High Risk Assessments (HRA) and Family Assessment Response (FAR). Multidisciplinary teams determine whether the referral meets criteria for abuse or neglect, the appropriate response time, and which track assignment is appropriate.

In CY 2020, DR counties conducted 9,316 FARs. This comprises over 50% of the assessments in DR counties, and approximately one third of the total assessments in all counties.

DR statewide implementation continues to progress forward. Through marketing and county outreach, DCW has been able to steadily increase participation and practice change at the county level. In 2020, DCW increased both the number of counties who have completed implementation, as well as the number of counties who have started the implementation process. Colorado DR is practiced in counties serving 80% of the state's population.

Colorado DR Implementation Status Map

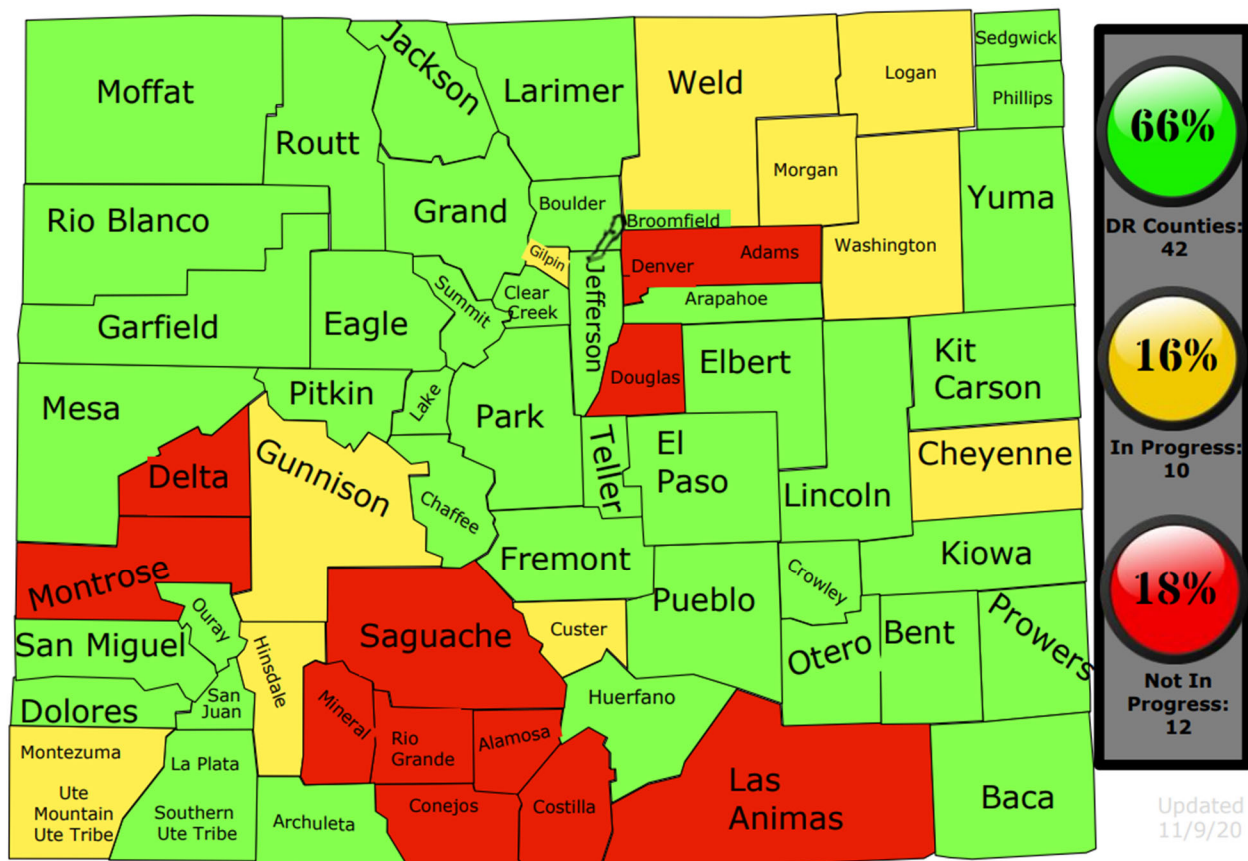


Figure 3: Map of DR Counties (as of 11/09/2020).

Safety and Risk Assessments

Colorado continues to strengthen and promote consistency of safety practice throughout child welfare's involvement with families. Colorado has established a safety assessment workgroup in response to Goal 2 of Colorado's PIP. The workgroup consists of a cross-functional team of rural and metro child welfare staff, court partners, DCW staff, and ARD staff.

The workgroup completed a review of the Colorado Family Safety Assessment Tool, applicable training offerings, and developed and analyzed a survey completed by supervisors, caseworkers, and training staff. The workgroup developed enhancements to Colorado's Safety Assessment instructions, desktop reference guides, and a transfer of learning protocol for supervisors.

Institutional Abuse

Colorado continues refining the process for assessments of alleged child maltreatment that occurs in a foster home, licensed facility or in a kinship placement while the child/youth is in the custody of the county.

In 2020 Colorado performed under the federal standard of child maltreatment in OOH care. Colorado passed legislation to explore the number of placements of children and youth in out of home care in response to COVID-19. Colorado adhered to public health requirements and guidance when entering facilities to perform an institutional assessment.

The Institutional Assessment Review Team (IART), in partnership with community stakeholders, utilized a CQI process to review statutes, rules, policies, training, guidance, technical assistance and quality assurance activities that are related to institutional assessments. The purpose was to: identify modifications that can improve assessments of abuse and/or neglect in institutional settings; provide feedback and recommendations to providers and governing agencies to reduce maltreatment while children/youth are in OOH placement; and, analyze placement data to help county partners in their placement decision-making processes. CWTS continues to deliver a learning series related to the improvement of institutional abuse assessments.

The ARD continues to review county institutional referrals that are not accepted for assessment. The review process evaluates compliance with the Code of Colorado Regulations and the Colorado Children's Code, as well as the identification of areas in need of improvement.

In 2021, Colorado will explore the institutional process for assessments of alleged child maltreatment to create a clearly defined process for allegations of child maltreatment and allegation of licensing and policy violations to ensure the appropriate agency is responding to the allegation.

Plans of Safe Care

The Plans of Safe Care kickoff event was held to raise awareness surrounding the Plans of Safe Care Guidelines and Checklist; attendees included: hospital staff, behavioral health providers, county human service and public health staff, and state agency partners. Statewide training sessions were offered to begin implementing the Plans of Safe Care in January 2021. All Colorado counties' child protection departments now have access to the Plans of Safe Care to utilize at the time of hotline, referral, and assessment. Modifications were made to the CCWIS system. The Plans of Safe Care was added to the referral and client details page.

Partnerships were developed with the Colorado Hospital Substance Exposed Newborns Collaborative and the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative to discuss hospital implementation of the Plans of Safe Care in Colorado's birthing hospitals. The Plans of Safe Care will be distributed to 61 Colorado birthing hospitals this year to ensure ongoing support and treatment when infants are identified as being affected by substance use and including services for the affected family or caregiver.

CDHS staff, partnering with multidisciplinary community partners, and led by the Colorado Attorney General have established a steering committee for all substance-exposed newborns which has six individual task groups reporting to it. The Plans of Safe Care task group worked on developing a community response for the plans of safe care, a collaborative approach to engaging families with Substance-Exposed Newborns (SEN). The work of this multidisciplinary team is to ensure that medical professionals, child welfare providers and treatment providers are aware of the Plans of Safe Care and identify consistent protocols to incorporate the Plans of Safe Care at critical points. In 2021, the Plans of Safe Care work group will look at best practices for Plans of Safe Care implementation pre- and post-pregnancy and to continue with birthing hospitals, provider, and child welfare coordination to implement Plans of Safe Care statewide.

Modifications were made to the CCWIS system. New questions are asked during assessment to gather the following information:

- Was a plan of safe care completed?
- Has the infant or caregiver received resources, referrals, or services to address their health and substance use treatment needs?
- Is the infant experiencing withdrawal symptoms?
- Can the infant eat more than 1oz during a single feeding, sleep at least an hour at a time, or be consoled within 10 minutes of crying?
- Do parents/caregiver display competency in the care taking of the infant?
- Can parent/caregiver assume full responsibility for the infant's care?
- Have 2 caregivers been identified to help support the care taking of the infant?

In 2021 a rule writing task group developed statute and rule related to the implementation of the Plans of Safe Care in child welfare practice. Task force recommendations include recommendations for the development and delivery of evidence-based and best practices around SEN. The task group will complete their work in late 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the Plans of Safe Care rollout due to changes in travel policies to facilitate in-person trainings and meetings. Further considerations and accommodations were made in response to county overwhelm in response to child welfare needs and managing restrictions in their respective counties. The county Plans of Safe Care rollout trainings were delayed by 3 months and were facilitated virtually, a Plans of Safe Care webpage was created on the CDHS website, and resources and trainings were added to CWTS in response to COVID-19 restrictions that prevented in-person gatherings.

Human Trafficking

In 2017, CDHS was awarded a \$1.5 million dollar Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking: A Jurisdictional-Wide Approach grant and has staffed a full time Human Trafficking Specialist position within DCW. This grant was awarded to CDHS with the Colorado Department of Public Safety as a sub-recipient. In addition to grant management duties, the Human Trafficking Specialist ensures that child welfare practice aligns with state and federal legislation through the creation of rule, provision of training and technical assistance and case consultation. A survivor consultant is paid by DCW using funding from the grant. The consultant reviews training material, participates in monthly grant meetings, and is included in key decision making points in the work funded by the grant.

The goal of the *Improving Outcomes* grant is to develop, enhance and coordinate programs and activities serving youth victims of trafficking through the enhancement of jurisdictional wide coordination and multi-disciplinary collaboration. These goals are accomplished through four main activities:

1. Enhanced coordination between law enforcement and child welfare
2. Training and public awareness
3. The development of regional specialists and community task forces, and
4. Utilization of a developmental design evaluation.

2021 is the final year of the Improving Outcomes grant cycle; remaining goals include: an awareness campaign focused on labor trafficking of youth, updating the child welfare training curriculum to include labor trafficking, and the holding of a Year 3 summit to highlight the work of the Improving Outcomes project and provide an opportunity for service providers and advocates throughout Colorado to connect.

Improving Outcomes staff provided training and outreach to 491 community members in 2020. The impact of COVID-19 resulted in training sessions and events transitioning to virtual delivery systems. While creating barriers in recruitment to new Improving Outcomes positions, this pivot resulted in the Introductory Human Trafficking training becoming more accessible to rural areas of Colorado. In February 2021, Improving Outcomes staff were trained to deliver the Colorado Human Trafficking Council's Advanced Service Provider training and are expected to begin offering this to rural regions beginning this year.

The impact of COVID-19 on trafficking victims is multi-faceted: not only has COVID-19 amplified the impact of economic consequences on vulnerable populations, but it has also created circumstances that increase the risk of trafficking, create challenges with identification of victims, and complicate service delivery once youth are recovered. Local high-risk youth multi-disciplinary teams report an increase in referrals and have heightened concerns about marginalized youth, specifically the LGBTQ+ community turning to survival sex to meet housing needs.

In 2020, CDHS received 354 calls with human trafficking concerns. Of these, 136 met the criteria and were assigned for investigation. Colorado made substantiated findings on 22 cases or 14% of human trafficking investigations. Most of these cases (83%) were in urban areas of Colorado.

| Referral Screening Status | Referral Count | % |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Not Screened In | 218 | 62% |
| Screened In | 136 | 38% |
| TOTAL | 354 | 100% |

Table 5: Human Trafficking Referral Assignments in CY 2020.

| Assessment Overall Finding | Assessment Count | % |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Unsubstantiated | 101 | 63% |
| Closed - no findings | 24 | 15% |
| Substantiated | 22 | 14% |
| Alternative Response | 9 | 6% |
| Pending | 4 | 3% |
| TOTAL | 160 | 100% |

Table 6: Human Trafficking Referral Dispositions CY 2020.

In May 2019, Colorado passed SB 19-185³¹ making involuntary servitude/labor trafficking of a child a form of child abuse and neglect; child welfare agencies are now required to investigate cases of labor trafficking involving minors. This allegation type was integrated into the SACWIS in August 2020. In December 2019, CDHS formed a Labor Trafficking Task Group to update child welfare rule and guidance in 12 CCR 2509. The finalized language was presented to Sub-PAC in February 2021 and is expected to be incorporated into rule in May 2021.

CDHS expects to resume the Human Trafficking Task Group to focus on specific needs of trafficked youth. The HTTG will review the National Advisory Committee on the Sex Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States report to incorporate best practices and recommendations in serving trafficked youth. In addition, Family First has identified several groups that are exempt from IV-E restrictions, one of them being “youth who are found to be, or are at risk of becoming sex trafficking victims” (Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019, Public Law 115-123, (2018), Title VII). Colorado will define the target population for trafficked youth and update standards for specialized placement settings.

³¹ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb19-185>

Foster Care Services

Kinship Care Quality Assurance

To promote consistency in kinship care practice across the state, a quality assurance case review process specific to non-certified kinship care placements was developed. The kinship care review process examines county department practices related to the completion of background checks, the application process to provide care, home inspection procedures, kinship care evaluations, certification and/or support services and IV-E waiver supports. Associated timeframes are also reviewed to ensure that all appropriate activities are completed within required timeframes. County departments' non-certified kinship care cases are eligible for review every three years.

In CY 2020, 23 counties were scheduled for review. Eight counties had no kinship placements during the sample period, and of the 15 reviewed counties, 73% passed with a cumulative score of 85%. DCW's goal was to raise the passing score to 90% for CY 2020, however due to COVID-19, less than 40% of fingerprinting offices were in operation, and appointments were scheduled weeks in advance, often falling out of compliance with statutory timeframes. To accommodate this barrier, the passing score was reduced to 85% for the entire 3-year cycle (CY 2020 - 2022).

Permanency

The CFSR Statewide Assessment highlights CDHS and its partners' efforts to sustain or improve performance on the federal permanency outcomes. To complement those efforts, CDHS created a time-limited Permanency Specialist position within CDHS to consult with county departments and other partners on permanency issues, including the permanency-related IV-E waiver demonstration project interventions.

Research was conducted by CDHS in 2014, to identify distinct factors affecting the permanency of children and youth within specific age groups. Data regarding legally free children/youth was gathered from January 2008 through August 2014 to identify predictive variables. The study identified distinct factors impacting permanency specific to age groups, ethnicity, gender, permanency goal and length of stay. Using the predictive factors, an algorithm was created to calculate the risk of emancipation. CDHS has developed a formalized process to identify and intervene in the cases of children and youth who are at highest risk of emancipating without legal permanency. Every quarter, the list of at-risk children and youth is updated to determine who continues to be most at risk for emancipation, while children and youth who have achieved permanency are removed from the list. The list is provided to the permanency specialists within CDHS. The group meets at least monthly to:

- Review the list of identified children and youth and submit this information to county partners of the children and youth on the list that are in their county,
- Identify child welfare practice trends, themes, or systemic barriers,
- Determine what supports are needed to counties and their staff and,
- Identify if there is a need for service for child/youth specific recruitment.

The permanency specialists work with county partners and OCYF recruitment and retention staff to determine which cases need increased intervention and support. This can include family engagement meetings, case consultations, permanency roundtables, or other requests from county partners. Every quarter, CDHS Executive Management Team reviews and provides feedback on CDHS's progress with the program and how permanency is being achieved for children and youth in Colorado. In addition, CDHS contracted with IMPAQ International to examine potential changes to the predictive analytics algorithm. These efforts led CDHS to expand the list of children/youth to include those with a high-risk score or an elevated risk score. The adaption allowed for CDHS staff to identify children/youth at risk of emancipation earlier in the life of the case and anticipates that this process will continue to help increase the number of children/youth with exits to permanency.

In 2020, 93 children/youth were identified on the predictive analytics report, and three youth had achieved legal permanency. In October 2020, the Permanency Specialist sent out a new

survey to county partners to determine the areas for improved effectiveness of the Predictive Analytics Program. The survey results revealed the following opportunities for expanded participation and attendance from the Permanency Specialist: permanency roundtables, family engagement meetings and internal staffing; case consultations; and support in having conversations and discussions with out-of-state divisions and departments. The Permanency Specialist continues to have regular contact with counties who have children/youth identified on the Predictive Analytics report and engagement with counties has increased over the last year.

Colorado's RGAP is available to assist children/youth in achieving legal permanency when reunification and adoption are not appropriate permanency goals. RGAP provides financial assistance, case services, and Medicaid (categorical eligibility for Title IV-E) to relatives and certain non-relatives who have assumed legal guardianship or allocation of parental responsibility of children/youth whom they previously served as relative and non-relative foster parents. The RGAP Administrator provides training and technical support to county departments of human/social services onsite and through teleconferences. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was one onsite training in CY 2020. Technical assistance was and is continued to be provided routinely to address county questions, problem solving, and brainstorming. Virtual training was provided to the Supervisor Learning Community, BPCTs, HCPF, ARD and two additional counties,

Reviews of RGAP files were completed for Montezuma, La Plata, Cheyenne, and Prowers counties. These reviews include qualitative assessment of required documentation, rates based on the needs of the children/youth and circumstances of the prospective guardian/legal custodian, RGAP policy, etc. There were no significant errors. A short-term task group to review RGAP rules was convened in April 2020 over a period of four weeks. Due to priorities because of the pandemic, rule revisions were put on hold. Rule review and revision will resume in 2021.

CDHS continues to increase the number of RGAPs so that children/youth exit foster care to permanency. Goal 4 in the PIP contains strategies to increase the percentage of certified relative/non-relative kin to expand participation in RGAP. The activities include:

- Convening a time-limited kinship foster care task group to use CQI processes to review of county-specific data, determine barriers to certification of kin/non-kin, identify and implement county-specific solutions to address barriers;
- Providing targeted technical assistance and training; including a development of three web-based trainings targeting caseworkers/supervisors, those who complete the RGAPs, and the public, to be completed by April 2021. Additional training occurs in PIP counties as requested, as well as other counties;
- Additional outreach and trainings for ORPC, OCR, city/county attorneys and other judicial partners will be developed in the next year to include not only RGAP but other permanency processes as well;
- Improved communications about RGAP by developing an RGAP webpage that went live in February 2021³². A brochure/flyer is in development and will be disseminated to RGAP contacts in counties statewide. The document will also be available on the RGAP webpage. A quarterly networking forum was established in January 2021 for counties with RGAPs to have an opportunity to discuss/share information about procedures and policies.

In CY 2020, 62 children/youth were entered into RGAP, and 25 children/youth exited the program (11 emancipated and 3 were adopted). In February 2021, there were 238 children/youth statewide, in RGAP from 29 counties. RGAP has been successful in maintaining sibling groups. For example, 72% of children/youth with RGAP Assistance Agreements are part of sibling groups of 2-5 children/youth.

³² https://cdhs.colorado.gov/relative-guardianship-assistance-program?mc_cid=1701d7a642&mc_eid=649d5faad5

The impact of COVID-19 on permanency and RGAP Assistance Agreements is currently unclear. Court dockets were cancelled statewide for varying periods of time, causing backlogs, however it is not known whether these resulted in delays to permanency for children/youth who were expected to have RGAP Assistance Agreements.

WWK (Wendy’s Wonderful Kids)

CDHS has partnered with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption in its efforts to increase permanency. WWK presented to CIP members and completed a special two part virtual special in October and November 2020 around permanency for children and youth in Colorado. This was attended by DCW, county partners, GAL’s judicial officers, judicial staff, community partners, the respondent parent counsel, and community members.

The Youth Connections program at WWK follows an evidence-based child-focused recruitment model that is used to find permanent homes for children and youth in foster care. Independent research has proven the model to be up to three times more effective at serving youth who have been in foster care the longest, including teenagers, children with special needs, and siblings³³. Each Youth Connection Advocate works with a small caseload of children/youth, focusing time and resources to finding the right home for every youth. Each advocate begins a search with the youth’s circles of family, friends, and neighbors identified through a deep-dive into a youth’s child protection file; creating genograms; and, implementing aggressive diligent searches and follow-up for relatives and other safe adults in the youth’s networks (i.e. coaches, teachers, mentors, etc.). The Youth Connections program in Colorado served 159 children/youth and, 21 Colorado children/youth served by the Youth Connections program achieved legal permanency.

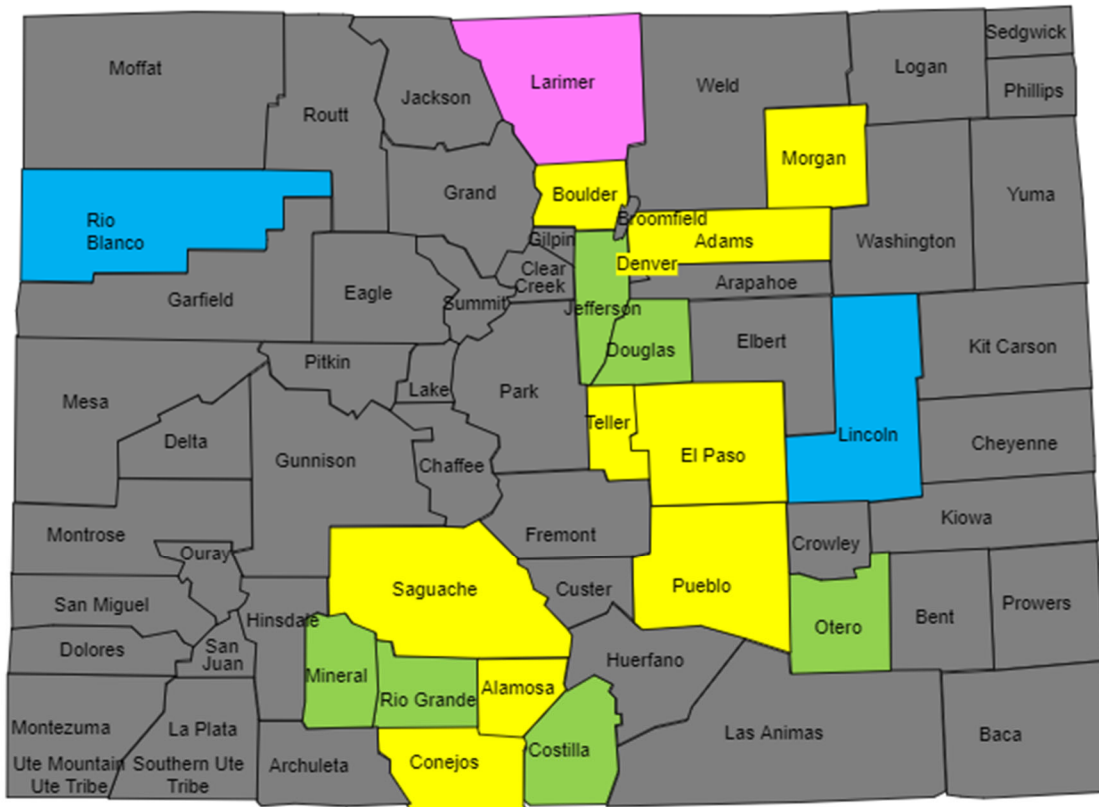


Figure 4: Colorado counties with WWK recruiters as of 2021.

³³ <https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/our-programs/wendys-wonderful-kids/>

Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments

The ACF's Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments program awards incentive funds to eligible states, or other Title IV-E agencies, which improve performance in finding permanent homes for children and youth in foster care. Colorado was awarded \$1,298,500 in FFY 2018, \$799,000 in FFY 2019, and \$200,000 in FFY 2020. These funds are used according to the plan outlined in the CFSP, with a focus on funding Post-Permanency Services (PPSS)-statewide. The PPSS contract was adjusted to begin services in the federal fiscal year, effective October 2020. The program was fully implemented in 2020. Based on information reported for FFY 2015- 2018, Colorado calculated over \$1,284,472 in Adoption Savings, of which about \$907,757 has been spent, leaving approximately \$313,715 available for expenditure. In FFY 2019, Colorado earned \$661,533 and in FFY 2020 earned \$777,989 in adoption savings. CDHS has used and will continue to use the Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive and Adoption Savings funds for the following:

Post Permanency Services and Supports (PPSS)

CDHS renewed its contract with Raise the Future (formerly known as The Adoption Exchange) from a request for proposal to provide PPSS using Adoption/RGAP incentives funding. A nine-month contract was initiated on January 1, 2020, to September 30, 2020, and as of October 1, 2020, this contract was moved to the federal fiscal year. All 64 counties are now fully implemented in this program and DCW continues to emphasize services and support in the rural areas of the state, where traditionally they had been underserved prior to PPSS.

The purpose of PPSS is to improve equity in service array, preserve stable permanency for families who were previously served in child welfare and achieved permanency through guardianship, reunification (parents or relatives) and adoption. Below are examples of specific activities that were completed from January 1, 2020, through September 30, 2020, and will continue through FFY 2021:

- Trauma-informed/evidence-informed Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training for families and professionals.
- In-home coaching to assist TBRI-trained families in successfully implementing the parenting model is offered in all counties once TBRI training is completed by families.
- Implementation and connection groups on a regional basis provided ongoing support, learning opportunities and natural points of connection for families. This is offered in all counties following their TBRI trainings.
- Access to a pool of TBRI-trained families and/or individuals to provide respite care as needed for program participating families. This is not offered in the metro area, as this is generally accessible to families connected to their county post-permanency support worker.
- Online directory of mental health professionals available to offer crisis intervention and ongoing therapeutic services for all families.
- Resource navigation for post-permanency families is available to all families.
- Specialized in-person and web-based training for families and professionals in all 64 counties.

In SFY 2020, the full array of services in PPSS was provided to all counties that are divided into seven regions and each region is staffed with a practitioner. This makes the respective practitioner to be more accessible to families and to limit travel. Over 90% of Colorado is rural and approximately 26% of the residents in Colorado live in rural areas.

Services provided from January 2020 through September 2020:

311 attendees in 32 TBRI® classes (unduplicated count).

321.75 hours of coaching were provided to 33 families (unduplicated count).

23 Implementation and Connection groups served 121 adult attendees and 90 child and youth attendees - (this is a combination of in-person and virtual groups).

27.5 hours of respite were provided to 5 families. There were no respite services provided from July to September 2020 due to COVID-19.

48 unduplicated individuals utilized resource coordination services including: education and training for caregivers, educational support, general support, mental health services, support groups, Medicaid assistance, and housing resources.

989 individuals utilized the searchable database (unduplicated count).

With the COVID-19 pandemic, services have been able to continue or remain in place with accommodations. It has been beneficial to have regional practitioners in place due to the incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 rates across the state. For example, when there were low incidence rates in one region, services continued with little change, while in other regions with higher incidence rates the way services were provided had to be adjusted to assure safety (for instance, virtual delivery). A surprising trend was the acceptance of virtual delivery by families, especially with TBRI training and coaching. The way services are provided will continue to be assessed for safety and will include family input.

In accordance with state and national protocols, Raise the Future restricted in-person services beginning March 13, 2020. Needs were identified by the area of service and alternative ways to meet the needs were developed. Virtual services initiated during this time included: daily sensory breaks for children and youth, Friday celebrations for families, coffee for caregivers, child and youth times to connect, and virtual office hours for caregivers. A YouTube link was created to store sensory breaks for families to access any time as well as a Google Drive with resources. Care packages were sent to 42 families with sensory, regulation, and self-care items. The families were currently or historically engaged in in-home coaching, implementation and connection groups, and respite.

TBRI® classes, coaching, and Implementation and Connection groups were offered virtually from March 2020 through December 2020, due to COVID-19 precautions. Virtual classes were limited in number to engage participants meaningfully. Due to this, there is a decrease in reported number of attendees. In-person groups for caregivers and youth fluctuated due to COVID-19 safety guidelines. This also impacted the family's ability to participate.

Respite was not provided for a full quarter during this time. Attempts were made to offer virtual respite, but families did not access this service. Due to this, there is a decrease in numbers of hours provided and families served.

As the COVID-19 pandemic remains ongoing, Raise the Future is anticipated to continue with pandemic protocols, and transition from virtual services when appropriate.

Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA)

CDHS has a three-year membership with ICAMA. This membership allows CDHS to utilize agreements between and among its member states enabling coordination of provisions of medical benefits and services to children/youth receiving adoption assistance in interstate cases. ICAMA prevents and/or eliminates geographic barriers that may delay or deny the provision of medical assistance and post-adoption services to families who have adopted children/youth with special needs. This membership costs \$7,500 which is funded through the FFY 2021 award.

Voice for Adoptions

CDHS has a two-year membership with the Voice for Adoptions organization. This organization is a bipartisan task force that provides accurate information on national adoption issues, common

problems facing children/youth who are awaiting adoption, and advocacy for policies that support adoption. CDHS pays \$3,000 for the two-year membership ending SFY 2021. Colorado is currently exploring other organizations that provide similar resources.

There is no estimated timetable for spending unused savings due to the fund being used effectively and timely. Colorado does not foresee any challenges in accessing and spending the Adoption Savings funds. Colorado is not making changes in its Adoption Savings Methodology calculation at this time.

All awarded funds will be encumbered by September 30 2021, and expended by December 31, 2021. CDHS does not anticipate any challenges or issues in spending the funds timely. CDHS will use incentive funds in FFY 2021 according to the plan outlined in the CFSP, but again with a special focus on increasing permanency and post-permanency support.

Expenditures may include:

- Provision of post-permanency supports and services statewide; and
- Training to county child welfare staff regarding how to provide post-permanency support for families in their jurisdictions, what existing resources are available statewide and within their jurisdictions and how to support the development of post-permanency programs in their local communities. DCW staff continues to provide information about PPSS to counties. Counties are encouraged to provide information about PPSS for families that are achieving permanency through adoption, guardianship, and other forms of legal permanency (legal custody and reunification)

FFPSA Transition Grants

Through the Family First Transition Act, which passed in December 2019, Colorado received \$7,723,580 to spend over five years (through September 30, 2025). While these funds can be used for a variety of purposes, CDHS, Colorado's FFSPA-IT, and key stakeholder groups have been ensuring that these funds are used to support and accelerate the state's Family First implementation efforts. While Colorado has been fully engaged in laying the groundwork for initial Family First implementation, there are critical implementation infrastructure and capacity building needs that benefit from an infusion of one-time funds to cover necessary upfront costs.

Due to the overwhelming interest from stakeholders regarding the use of transition funds, the Department created a diverse 15-member group charged with reviewing and prioritizing funding proposals and developing recommendations for the Department. Of the 15 members, six represent diverse county departments of human services and 6 represent other key stakeholder groups (former foster youth, research/evaluation, judicial/legal, public health, providers, and Tribes). The other three members represent the Department.

Although CDHS has until 2025 to spend down transition funds, CDHS anticipates front-loading most investments over the next two years for maximum impact. Family First transition funds represent an opportunity to pivot the child welfare system by putting resources behind the changes Colorado wants to see - in expanding evidence-based prevention services statewide, in adapting and right-sizing the placement continuum, and in innovative locally-driven approaches to improving outcomes for children, youth, and families. Through strategic investment and responsive grant-making, Family First transition funds will bring Colorado closer to realizing its bold vision for a transformed child welfare system.

Colorado has identified the following priority funding categories for Family First transition funds:

- **Outcome 1:** Children, youth and families have timely access to a continuum of community-based, prevention-focused services that meet their needs, promote safety and well-being, and keep families together.
Priority Funding Area 1: Expand the prevention services continuum in a way that addresses locally identified needs, meets Family First requirements, addresses inequities across the state, and emphasizes cultural responsiveness.

- **Outcome 2:** When necessary, children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting possible that is aligned with their individual needs, high-quality, time-limited and focused on treatment.
Priority Funding Area 2: Build a continuum of placement options that includes small, high-quality QRTPs as well as sufficient options for lower levels of family-based care that are responsive to the needs of children and youth.
- **Outcome 3:** Colorado has a strong foundation from which to launch Family First implementation efforts and support a successful and smooth roll-out.
Priority Funding Area 3: Address known and potential barriers to initial Family First implementation.

To date, Colorado has awarded the following:

- **Developing a Prevention Services Expansion Strategy**
 - Recipient: Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab, \$36,990 in transition funds (in addition to other funding sources)
 - Purpose: The overall goal of this scope of work is to develop a short, medium, and long-term strategy for expanding Family First-eligible prevention services statewide. Colorado wants to ensure that selected EBPs are aligned with locally identified needs and prevention goals, while also maximizing our ability to drawdown federal funds. Through data analysis, interactive discussion, and implementation science principles, the end-product will not only identify services for the state to pursue, but also offer concrete recommendations regarding strategic investments needed to build capacity for services implementation.

While the overall scope of the project is the state as a whole, particular attention will be made to identify region-specific opportunities, and ensure services are culturally responsive and tailored, whenever possible, to meet the unique needs of underserved populations.

Final recommendations will be received no later than August 2021 and will be used to inform phased investments in the startup or expansion of select prevention services. Approximately \$4.5 million in transition funds has been set aside for this subsequent purpose.

- **Research to Inform the Future Placement Continuum in Colorado**
 - Recipient: Signal Behavioral Health Network and Praed Foundation/University of Kentucky, \$55,500
 - Purpose: This scope of work includes a one-time paper review CANS assessment on a sample of 200 DCW and DYS youth currently in congregate care settings. The assessment and subsequent data analysis will determine the number of children/youth who would qualify for QRTP placement, and therefore allow us to better estimate the number of QRTP beds needed in Colorado. We will also identify key clusters or sub-populations of youth in congregate care and their primary needs, which will inform the right-sizing and refinement of the placement continuum. Data analysis estimated by the end of March 2021. Results will be used to inform placement continuum capacity-building needs, with an additional \$1.5 million in transition funds set aside for this subsequent purpose.
- **Responsive Grantmaking Process - Community Support Grants**
 - Recipients: To be determined.
 - Purpose: Colorado has set aside \$1.5 million in transition funds over three years to fund innovative proposals that align with Family First implementation priorities. The first round for funding closed on January 31, 2021. We received 51 proposals from diverse applicants, including counties, nonprofit organizations, providers, and universities, addressing both prevention and placement challenges. Award decisions will be finalized in early March 2021.
- **Local Implementation Support for Family First**
 - Recipient: Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA), \$211,972

- Purpose: This funding is for a 100% Family First-dedicated position at CHSDA to support county-level implementation for two years.

To date, Colorado has not used any Family First transition funds to continue specific activities previously funded under the state's title IV-E waiver demonstration.

Family First Transition Act Funding Certainty Grants

Prior to H.R 133³⁴, the federal government calculated Colorado's funding certainty baseline at \$52,189,338 (ACYF-CB-PI-20-08³⁵). Had Colorado earned less than 90% of this baseline during FFY 2020, the Certainty Grant would have provided funds to ensure Colorado received 90% of the funding certainty baseline. As a result of H.R 133, the funding certainty baseline changed to accommodate the enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP). The federal government's updated figure for Colorado's funding certainty baseline is now \$54,174,688 (ACYF-CB-IM-21-05³⁶). Colorado does not qualify for Funding Certainty Grants as it earned well over 90% of both funding certainty baselines during FFY 2020.

³⁴ https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr133/BILLS-116hr133enr.pdf?mc_cid=1701d7a642&mc_eid=649d5faad5

³⁵ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pi2008.pdf>

³⁶ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/im-21-05.pdf>

John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program)

Chafee-Funded Services

Colorado's Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee program) provides an array of supports and services to youth as young as 14 who are likely to emancipate out of foster care, and to young adults between the ages of 18-23 who have left foster care. The Chafee program services are offered statewide through county departments of human/social services. In FFY 2020, 34 counties and tribes had access to the Chafee program supports and services through 17 host counties, and in FFY 2021, 42 counties and tribes had access to the Chafee program services. In addition, a portion of the Chafee program funding is set aside to provide services to eligible youth in counties that do not host a program or have a service agreement with a host county.

In FFY 2020, 710 youth were served through the Chafee program. Colorado anticipates this number to stay about the same for FFY 2021. Like last year, there will be an increase in youth that are served throughout the state with the implementation of the recommendations from the Chafee Modernization Task Group but there will also a decrease as some of the Chafee country programs start rolling out the Pathways to Success program, which has lower caseloads than the Chafee program. CDHS continues to redesign the state's Chafee program to provide more robust services and integrate counties with the Pathways to Success model.

During FFY 2021, CDHS' Chafee program continues to work with county departments of human/social services, stakeholders, and youth advisors to update program improvement processes as was discussed in Intervention 4.1.3 from the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section. DCW continues to utilize the redesigned annual plan to target areas of need identified by CDHS and its partners.

Following the implementation of the Chafee modernization recommendations, DCW has reconvened a work group to update the funding methodology that ensures funding is provided to youth in an equitable manner and that the Chafee program has statewide coverage. This group started meeting in February of 2021 and will continue until a new methodology has been proposed.

The initial steps have been taken to implement the Chafee Modernization recommendations meaningfully implement the expansion of the changes made by Family First as well as modernize the program to ensure that it is an equitable program throughout the state. The new rules³⁷ that expanded Chafee eligibility and aligned SILP with federal language went into effect December 2020.

Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act, Division X of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Division X)

Division X was enacted on December 27th 2020, and expands services for Chafee eligible youth, places a moratorium on requiring youth to exit care due to age, permits youth to reenter care if they exited during the pandemic period, and waives the five required activity areas to claim IV-E. DCW immediately notified county departments of human/social services by issuing IM-CP-2021-0001³⁸ on January 8th 2021, and presented the changes in public meetings including: the Child Welfare Sub-PAC meetings on 01/07/21, 02/04/21, and 03/04/21; the Chafee Quarterly meetings on 01/28/21 and 04/22/21, and biweekly workshops beginning March 2021.

Funding award letters were sent to existing Chafee programs in April for FFY 2021. The total budget being awarded to local programs including existing programs and new programs in areas not previously supported locally for FFY 2021 was \$1,373,198. DCW will award an additional \$2,050,000 in FFY 2022. An

³⁷ <https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/eDocketDetails.do?trackingNum=2020-00528>

³⁸ https://drive.google.com/file/d/11wwJdw98zlllRnay-EJa_-ULTDwBU2r8/view

additional Information Memo (IM-CW-2021-0015³⁹) was issued along with the FFY 2021 supplemental award letters to provide programs with additional guidance. Colorado rules align eligibility for the Chafee program with federal law, policies, and program instructions, so no additional rule-making was required for implementation.

In January 2021, the first youth re-entered care through the provisions included in Division X. While there is not a legal structure in place in Colorado yet, HB 21-1094⁴⁰ will provide the structure required to fully implement the re-entry requirements of Division X. In the meantime, Colorado is moving forward using voluntary service agreements. The public awareness campaign launched in April 2021.

Implementation of Pathways to Success program

Colorado's Youth at Risk of Homelessness (YARH) grant, called Pathways to Success, was selected to participate in the phase 3 summative evaluation in the Summer of 2020. The evaluation will begin enrollment mid-Summer 2021 and will continue enrolling youth for two years. There will be an additional one year follow up period. Approximately half of the Chafee programs in Colorado will implement the Pathways to Success model intervention and the remainder will continue to operate their programs without making any major changes through the evaluation period. The national evaluation team led by Mathematica and the local evaluator, Center for Policy Research, has been working to finalize the evaluation which includes obtaining institutional review board and Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation approvals before enrollments can begin.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data

CDHS continues to collaborate with other agencies and community partners to share data and better locate youth who are scheduled to complete the NYTD survey. CDHS has an existing agreement with HCPF to access Medicaid enrollment information from the Medicaid Management Information System and coordinates with partners who have separate information systems to help locate youth. CDHS also coordinates internally across all programs to ensure that all eligible youth are located. Although a date has not been scheduled for the next NYTD review, CDHS is continuing to prepare, and staff are being proactive by reviewing its process and procedures for NYTD surveys to assess potential vulnerabilities in advance of the review.

CDHS continues to engage staff and stakeholders about the NYTD Review in the Chafee Services Quarterly meetings that were held on January 23, 2020, April 23, 2020, July 23, 2020, and October 22, 2020. Additionally, CDHS continued to provide technical assistance to Chafee Workers, county caseworkers and DYS client managers in preparation for the baseline and follow-up cohorts.

An area that DCW has improved in FFY 2020 is training for professionals who have contact with the youth are trained and providing additional resources for those professionals. DCW staff have collaborated with CWTS staff to update the existing training module to ensure its usability and update the information. The goal was to provide a baseline knowledge of NYTD and why it matters to child welfare practice and the youth themselves. The training provided the historical context of NYTD, areas covered in the survey, the process for entering the survey into the Trails system, a frequently asked questions section, and what is done with the data once it is entered. This training provided guidance as it pertains to following CCWIS requirements to ensure that practice aligns with the new case management system and there will not be a lag in the entering of data. The training was virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic for Chafee coordinators, caseworkers, DYS staff, CASA workers and other professionals who help facilitate the survey process.

Through the Trails Modernization process, DCW was also given the opportunity to streamline the NYTD process for caseworkers and Chafee coordinators. This new functionality has not been put into production in this FFY so the results from the changes cannot be evaluated yet in this APSR.

³⁹ https://mcusercontent.com/cd781c9bc8f90270567729e9e/files/1f786df4-53fa-45db-b513-28874a04c68f/IM_CW_2021_0015.pdf?mc_cid=17785c7b01&mc_eid=ae16388369

⁴⁰ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1094>

During FFY 2019, DCW staff collaborated with HCPF to integrate youths' voices in how they were given information about the Medicaid options available to them. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, collaboration during FFY 2020 was paused. There has been ongoing collaboration with HCPF to identify and provide guidance to county departments to ensure that youth are accessing the appropriate Medicaid when they emancipate from the system. This is an ongoing process to help the counties in navigating the Medicaid system and how to ensure the coverage of the youth that are being served. DCW is working on how to integrate the data provided by HCPF into the reports that can be analyzed to lead to ongoing guidance for counties.

The Colorado Youth Leadership Network

The Colorado Youth Leadership Network (COYLN) is a conglomerate of youth advisory boards and councils (county and local partners) across the state. The function of the COYLN is to align, integrate and leverage collaborative youth voices for positive youth outcomes. This process occurs when DCW invites youth to participate in providing feedback/input via youth panels, subject matter reviews and focus groups. This year the COYLN made adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was 90% virtual and was made possible using the Google Meets platform. Professionals and youth also created a collaborative video to promote the week-long event.

In September 2020, the COYLN hosted its first Youth Awareness Week⁴¹, which was formerly hosted by Pueblo county. The purpose of Youth Awareness Week is to emphasize positive youth voices, celebrate the influence youth have in our state and local communities, and recognize and inspire the various organizations and advocates which involve Colorado's youth and help guide them towards positive life choices and stability. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the events⁴² were hosted on virtual platforms. The sessions were meant to provide youth with additional tools to advocate for themselves and connect with other former foster care youth. The youth concluded the week with stronger connections across youth boards and improved communication skills.

DCW had two former foster youth participate in the Children's Bureau Virtual Roundtable conversation with representatives from ACF and the Children's Bureau. The conversation has encouraged Colorado to look at the service and supports provided to older foster youth and ensure that the youth themselves are given the options for services, allowing them to be key parts of the decision-making process. One action item was to put information together for the youth who are contacted for NYTD surveys, to let them know the services they may be eligible to receive, and how they can access the services. While this was informally done in the past, the feedback from the youth and other partners was to create a more structured process. This outreach will begin due to the requirements in the Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act (H.R. 7947⁴³) and will continue afterwards to ensure that youth have knowledge of the services that they are eligible for.

Another aspect that DCW has already been working to address and was reinforced by the responses through the town halls is the need to provide training to the county departments of human services for the tools that are available for youth aging out of foster care and best practices when it comes to those services. This has been started with the training series for the Roadmap to Success (RTS) and Emancipation Transition Plan (ETP). The training needed to be centered on utilizing SILPs and ensuring that it is utilized in an age and developmentally appropriate manner to provide those independent living skills paired with the safety net of ongoing support through the department of human services. The updated rule package⁴⁴ that went into effect in December 2020 addressed many of the concerns expressed by county departments and provides additional guidance on how to implement the practice.

⁴¹ <https://www.co4kids.org/community/governor-polis-declares-sept-6-12-youth-awareness-week>

⁴²

<https://co4kids.org/sites/default/files/Youth%20Engagement%20Opportunities%20%28Youth%20Awareness%20Week%29%28Sept%208-12%29.pdf>

⁴³ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7947/text>

⁴⁴ <https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/eDocketDetails.do?trackingNum=2020-00520>

Coordination of Services

CDHS continues to partner with the stakeholders reported in previous APSRs in coordinating Chafee services across the state. The below detail key highlights of efforts that have been made in 2020, and planned activities in 2021 to be updated in further APSRs.

CDHS continues to collaborate with the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) and the Rural Collaborative on Homeless Youth (RCHY) on housing. ACHY is a legislatively created strategic planning and action body that advises DOLA's Office of Homeless Youth Services and oversees implementation of the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan. The RCHY is a collaborative of state agencies, county departments and community providers that is focused on improving the delivery of services and supports to youth in rural communities who have little or no connection to stable housing and family situations. This work has continued through this reporting period with monthly meetings starting in July 2020 through the writing of this report.

CDHS and its partners are working to improve data collection regarding youth who are experiencing homelessness. Currently, the annual Point in Time (PIT) count, which is required by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), measures the number of people experiencing homelessness in the state. Historically, youth who are experiencing homelessness are undercounted and underrepresented in the annual PIT count. As a result, resources for that population are nominal. In FFY 2017 ACHY members collaborated with DOLA's Division of Housing to create a Youth Supplemental Survey with the intent on capturing more youth who are experiencing homelessness in Colorado. Due to the narrowness of the annual PIT count's definition of homelessness, the supplemental survey was developed to include youth who are experiencing housing instability but who do not meet the HUD definition. This annual data collection through the Youth Supplemental Surveys will give a more accurate picture of rates of youth homelessness in Colorado and will be used to aid local nonprofits in applying for grants. The report for the past year can be found [here](#).

CDHS participates as a governor-appointed member of the Colorado Human Trafficking Council to develop recommendations for improving Colorado's response to all forms of human trafficking. In 2017, CDHS received a \$1.5 million grant (Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking: A Jurisdictional -Wide Approach), to enhance collaboration between child welfare and law enforcement agencies response to child trafficking across the state of Colorado. Activities under this grant include the identification of Regional Human Trafficking Specialists in rural areas to provide training, support, and guidance on community response to trafficking. In addition, CDHS convened the Labor Trafficking Task Group in 2020 to assist in the development of new regulations to meet state and federal requirements related to Labor trafficking. The new rule, expected to be adopted in June 2021, will incorporate labor trafficking into the already existing trainings human trafficking trainings offered through CWTS.

Improving educational outcomes for youth and young adults served by the Chafee program continues to be a priority for the program. In 2020, CDHS hosted the 22nd Annual Celebration of Educational Excellence (CEEX) in the Front Range, and the 5th Annual Celebration of Educational Excellence on the Western Slope. Due to COVID-19, these events were held virtually, which increased the statewide accessibility of the events. The western slope CEEX was held on May 21, 2020 and the front range CEEX was held on June 9, 2020. The 2021 Celebrations will be focused on improving the virtual format for the event and both the western slope and front range celebration will be held on June 10, 2021.

Throughout 2019 and 2020, CDHS and CDE continued to hold regional meetings with county and school district partners to provide training and technical assistance as local agencies implement school stability protections of the Fostering Connections Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act and Colorado law. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the regional trainings and meetings were primarily held in person. CDHS and CDE continued to provide continuing education and technical assistance throughout 2020 through remote platforms and had similar, if not more, participation than previous years. Due to remote learning, many counties and districts indicated students were able to remain in their schools of origin due to the lack of transportation barriers.

CDHS' efforts to improve educational outcomes for youth and these efforts specific to postsecondary education are documented in the following Education and Training Vouchers section. CDHS has continued to maintain a position at CDHE. The Education Coach position attends Chafee quarterly meetings and collaborates with Chafee professionals to provide trainings for former and current foster youth. The education coach is also working towards convening a multidisciplinary group of professionals who will host an event to highlight the findings from a report from the Colorado Action Lab focused on former foster youth and their post-secondary attainment. The education coach position also serves on an executive leadership team for a regional association for diversity, equity, and inclusion officers to ensure to advocate for all professionals and students.

The Chafee Program Coordinator was invited to speak at the 2020 Collaborative Forum on November 20, 2020 about the expansion for both the Chafee and ETV programs from Family First. The presentation consisted of providing information on the updated Chafee and ETV eligibility and there was time for an extended question and answer session to explore how Chafee/ETV can help support the work being done through the TRIO programs throughout the state.

CDHS and the Chafee program host counties have integrated policies and practices to support and affirm the sexual orientation and gender identities of youth served by the program. CDHS requires Chafee program counties to address in their annual plans how the program will support the cultural and linguistic needs of youth with varying racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities.

CDHS continues its work on best practices for working with LGBTQ+ youth through an internal work group that meets regularly. This work group continues to update and disseminate resources and best practices for the Division. DCW planned on publishing a Colorado Best Practice Guide for serving LGBTQ+ youth in child welfare in 2020 called *Seen, Safe, and Respected: Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ+ Children and Youth in Colorado's Child Welfare System*. Through feedback from a nonbinary consultant, youth focus groups, and Colorado LGBTQ+ experts, DCW has worked to expand and strengthen the guide to include both introductory level information applicable to all youth service providers as well as specific recommendation for navigation through the child welfare system. It is anticipated to be released July 2021 after completion of copyediting and layout processes. DCW plans to have the guide available for distribution in PDF as well as integrated into the CDHS website.

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Voucher Program

In July 2019, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development announced the "Foster Youth to Independence" (FYI) Voucher Program. The FYI program provides eligible young adults with a housing voucher to assist in the prevention of homelessness among young adults with foster care histories. To receive a voucher, the child welfare agency must ensure the provision of supportive services for the duration of the voucher. While FYI operates in most states at the community level, it is important that state child welfare agencies support and facilitate conversations to assist in implementation of this initiative.

The Jefferson county Chafee program was one of the first locations in the nation to implement the new program and has become a resource for other programs that are wanting to implement the vouchers. The updated guidance that was provided now allows public housing authorities (PHA) that administer the FUP vouchers to also administer the FYI vouchers. This change in guidance has opened the potential for additional county programs being led by the Chafee programs to work with their local PHA for FYI vouchers. DCW will continue to provide technical assistance and guidance to county programs that would like to integrate the FYI vouchers into their menu of services.

The January 2021 Chafee quarterly meeting will be focused on housing resources for former foster youth. The highlight of the meeting will be a panel discussion from providers who have successfully implemented the FYI vouchers and providing an opportunity for guidance to be provided to those programs who are still working on it. The panel had representatives from the Division of Housing that is in the DOLA, two representatives of public housing authorities, and

two Chafee coordinators who have successfully implemented the program. There are multiple county programs that are pursuing FYI vouchers and the Division of Housing is going to access the vouchers to cover areas of the state that encountered barriers for implementing the program. All attendees of the quarterly meeting were provided with the HUD notice⁴⁵ pertaining to FYI vouchers. Additional state resources through SB 20B-002⁴⁶ were discussed by the representative of the Division of Housing. This legislation provides emergency funds to youth who are at-risk of becoming homeless due to loss of income from the pandemic.

Private and Public Sector Involvement in Helping Youth in Foster Care Achieve Independence

Counties submit plans each year with information on how the county program collaborates with public and private organizations in helping youth achieve independence. Many of the examples can be seen above but the annual plan also has the counties identify which agencies they collaborate with in certain areas to provide training and skills to the young people that they are working with. The areas include:

- Legal permanency and lifelong connections
- Wellbeing (physical, mental, and behavioral health, comprehensive sexual health, pregnant and parenting youth)
- Safe and stable housing
- Secondary educational attainment
- Post-secondary educational and training attainment
- Adequate employment
- Financial stability

Many of the programs will continue to coordinate with local banks to provide financial education around credit scores and instructions on how to open a banking account. Other programs work closely with local employers to create an apprenticeship program where the company can hire the young person at the end of the training period. Many of the programs work closely with their local department of health to provide comprehensive sexual health education.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program (section 477(i) of the Act)

Colorado's ETV Program has been administered by Foster Care to Success since the academic year 2003-2004. To facilitate outreach and support, Foster Care to Success also connects youth with county Chafee programs and community or school-based resources. County Chafee programs receive notification every October and February of all youth receiving ETV support who attend schools in their county to maintain connections and ensure every student in the program is getting the support and services they need.

FFY 2020 and FFY 2021 have brought unique challenges to the ETV recipients and Foster Care to Success has done some additional work to engage those students and provide additional support. Foster Care to Success sent out a survey to the Colorado ETV students in May 2020 to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on their overall wellbeing. The survey covered questions about housing, rental assistance, online classes, areas needing additional support/advice, and parenting. This allowed the program to tailor their response to the areas identified in the surveys. Foster Care to Success also made a big push to utilize social media to reach the young people they work with and have profiles for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest. In addition, there is also a private Facebook group for Foster Care to Success students and alumni. Social media is utilized to deliver information and answer questions, as well as offer support.

With the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act in 2021, drastic changes were made to policy when it comes to serving older foster care youth and those who have left foster care after reaching the age of eighteen. With the release of ACYF-CB-PI-21-04⁴⁷, DCW staff engaged county partners in relaying information as it pertains to the moratorium on youth aging out during the current pandemic. ETV funds will be added to the contract with Foster Care to Success so they can begin allocating funds to support

⁴⁵ <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/pih2020-28.pdf>

⁴⁶ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb20b-002>

⁴⁷ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pi2104.pdf>

youth. These funds will be used for the broad scope of services available under federal program instruction. The additional funding and eligibility standards provided through the Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act will be discussed at the April 22, 2021 Chafee Quarterly meeting. Foster Care to Success staff have been invited to the meeting to ensure coordination between the two funding streams to provide support to youth in Colorado.

Additionally, DCW boosted the contract amount in FFY 2020 for Foster Care to Success to ensure that the additional funds could be utilized to support the ETV students during the middle of the pandemic. This additional funding was provided to increase the payments to youth to ensure that they would not become homeless and had access to basic necessities while navigating the higher education system. The Foster Care to Success program staff also sent out documentation of the youth’s rights during the pandemic and advocated directly to the school to ensure that youth could continue to stay on campus if they had no other housing options. DCW staff also worked with multiple campuses to ensure that the youth were able to stay on campus and paid for outstanding school fees to ensure that a youth could move back to campus housing when they were able to.

For FFY 2020 and FFY 2021 CDHS has also integrated collaborations with CDHE to supplement the work being done by Foster Care to Success and assist ETV students with additional wraparound services. The following table includes the number of youth who were served through Colorado’s ETV program.

| Annual Reporting of ETV’s awarded | Total ETV’s Awarded | New ETV Recipients |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2014-15 School Year (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015) | 154 | 75 |
| 2015-16 School Year (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016) | 160 | 77 |
| 2016-17 School Year (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017) | 138 | 66 |
| 2017-18 School Year (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) | 103 | 40 |
| 2018-19 School Year (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) | 103 | 34 |
| 2019-20 School Year (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020) | 114 | 45 |
| Estimate - 2020-21 School Year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) | 120 | 50 |

Table 7: Number of ETVs awarded

Chafee Training

Supportive services are voluntary for the youth and may be provided by other agencies on behalf of the child welfare agency. Voucher assistance is provided for 36 months. CDHS notes that funding under the Chafee program may not be available to support the services to be provided due to Chafee program eligibility and age of the youth; however, child welfare agencies have developed partnerships with housing providers, foundations, and other community resources to secure the services needed to ensure youth are successful in obtaining and maintaining the voucher for the 36 months.

The NYTD training through CWTS also includes training on the Chafee and ETV programs including the history of the program, eligibility standards, modernization changes, and what the Colorado program looks like. This training was created to provide a basic understanding of Chafee and ETV for caseworkers, casework supervisors, new Chafee workers, and other interested parties that have access to the training system.

Consultation with Tribes (section 477(b)(3)(G) of the Act)

Please see the *Consultation and Coordination Between States and Tribes* section of this APSR

Consultation and Coordination Between States and Tribes

CDHS continues to consult, collaborate, and coordinate with both federally recognized Tribes within the state, as well as with Colorado-based organizations that serve the state's American Indian urban communities. There are two federally recognized Tribes with land bases in Colorado. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) is located primarily in La Plata County and includes approximately 1,510 enrolled members, according to data from the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA). The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (UMUT) is located primarily in Montezuma County with another community in White Mesa, Utah and includes approximately 2,143 enrolled members. The 2010 Census Bureau reports that 56,010 people who identify as solely American Indian/Alaska Native live in Colorado. Of this population, 46,395 live in urban areas, largely concentrated in the Denver metro area and Colorado Springs. The 2010 Census Bureau also shows there are 104,464 people in Colorado who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native in combination with one or more races. These population numbers are up 35.3% since the 2000 Census, and Census estimates anticipate an upward trend to continue.

In addition to the two federally recognized Tribes, CDHS partners with organizations such as CCIA, Denver Indian Family Resource Center (DIFRC) and Denver Indian Health and Family Services (DIHFS) to address ongoing and emerging human services concerns for the state's American Indian urban populations. To facilitate communication and collaboration, CDHS employs a County and Tribal Liaison, a DCW Indian Child Welfare Specialist (at the time of writing this APSR, this position is currently open and is anticipated to be filled Spring 2021), and a Behavioral Health Tribal Liaison who are responsible for nurturing and strengthening the CDHS' relationship with the Tribes and organizations that serve the state's American Indian urban communities. The DCW Indian Child Welfare Specialist and the CDHS Tribal Liaisons meet quarterly with the Tribes to discuss progress on goals derived from the annual State/Tribe consultations.

The child welfare contract will be renewed this year with the Tribes, and the amount allocated is based on Tribal population. The child welfare contract template will be shared with the Tribes for their input and feedback. In the past, these funds have been used for prevention and intervention services related to child welfare. In addition to the child welfare contract funding, each Tribe is also allocated \$25,000 annually to provide CORE Services in their communities. SUIT has a CORE service agreement with the Southern Colorado Community Action Agency. With the passage of Family First, Tribes will have the ability to enter into a state or direct federal IV-E agreement that would allow Tribes to draw down Title IV-E funding for prevention services. Currently, neither UMUT nor SUIT has IV-E plans or IV-E agreements with CDHS.

The SUIT, UMUT, and DIHFS are all contracted with the OBH to receive State Opioid Response Grant (SOR) funds in 2019-2020. The grant totals for FY 2020 are as follows: the SUIT Behavioral Health Center received \$250,187, UMUT received \$246,187 and DIHFS received \$125,000. Most of the funds are used for positions within the behavioral health teams, and to provide prevention services and treatment to clients with opioid misuse issues. One Tribe is using Peer Navigation for opioid and stimulant treatment, with a peer support person with lived experience from the area and stable in recovery. All these grant contractors were also given a no cost extension and additional funds during the beginning of COVID-19. CDHS continues to work with the Tribes and the urban Indian Health Center to strategically plan further needs for behavioral health services.

SafeCare® Colorado is available to both Tribes through San Juan Basin Public Health, and UMUT became a SafeCare® site in 2017. However, the UMUT SafeCare® Coordinator position became vacant in August 2019, and remains vacant at the time of writing this APSR. Due to pandemic restrictions and struggles with internet access, they have been unable to hire a replacement to provide services. Once a tribal home visitor is hired and capacity has grown, it is anticipated that SUIT will be able to utilize services at this site also.

CDHS worked with staff from county departments of human services, a child placement agency, and employees of organizations that serve the American Indian community in the Denver metro area to develop shared messaging to support the recruitment of American Indian foster families. The goal for the shared messaging project was to develop a message bank that is culturally sensitive and respectful of the historical and current experiences of the American Indian community that state, counties, child placement agencies and community partners can utilize as they develop strategies and tactics to recruit American Indian foster parents. The shared messaging also helped lay the groundwork for future communications strategies and tactics.

Community outreach is an integral part of Colorado's recruitment strategy, and given the need for American Indian foster families, CDHS and its partners hosted a foster care information table at the Denver March Pow Wow in March 2019. The Denver March Pow Wow attracts attendees from several neighboring states and Canada. Given this reach, CDHS shared the booth space with representatives from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes from Oklahoma as well. Due to COVID-19, the Pow Wow was cancelled in March 2020. A Pow Wow was scheduled for March 2021, but at the time of writing this APSR, has been postponed to a date to be determined.

A draft of the APSR was sent to the two Tribes in Colorado for their feedback. The final APSR has been and will continually be shared with the SUIT and UMUT after completion via email.

The 2020 Consultation

COVID-19 brought about a change and shift in priorities for the Tribes. There was also a shift for the consultations to be held virtually. It is important to note that virtual consultations posed a challenge as much of the rural geographic location of both the UMUT and SUIT reservation struggle with broadband bandwidth and capabilities. The Colorado Economic Stimulus bill was introduced to the legislature in mid-February to propose high-speed internet and broadband investments across Colorado, that also included providing \$20 million in funding to SUIT and UMUT. The purpose of this funding was to review overall broadband engineering needs, conduct internet speed test mapping and build upon existing broadband infrastructure.

The 2020 SUIT and CDHS Annual Formal Tribal Consultation was originally scheduled to be held virtually on December 18th, 2020. However, this event was rescheduled due to a special election run-off on the same date for three of the seven council seats, including the Chairman's seat. Additionally, due to the vacancies in the council seats, there would not have been a full council to consult with.

The SUIT and CDHS Consultation was rescheduled for February 8th, 2021. There were several interest and action items that had come from this consultation. These items include, but are not limited to:

- Chafee: A particular interest in youth that are aging out of the system,
 - Beta program for truancy through La Plata County.
- PSSF Funds,
- Services for veterans,
- Contact information for all CDHS Leadership,
- How can CDHS support UMUT Charter School?
- General Supports for:
 - Veterans,
 - Elder Services and Programs,
 - Children's Services,
 - Supporting families during COVID,
 - Culturally appropriate approaches.

CDHS has not been able to secure a consultation with UMUT but continues to be available on regular COVID calls with the Tribes and CCIA.

Chafee Program

CDHS staff continued to work with the tribes to ensure they have access to supports and services through the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood. Chafee services are provided through the La Plata county Chafee program to both Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribal youth.

Both tribes are consulted on the programs to be carried out under the Chafee program through multiple ways. The first is through the option of applying for their own Chafee funding when the annual plan is disseminated by DCW. The tribes have yet to choose to host their own program and DCW has been told that they do not have the capacity to provide this service. Each year the La Plata county Chafee program coordinates with both the tribes to ensure that their youth can be covered by the program. Tribal youth have access to the same services and funding that other counties that partner with host county programs have. Both tribes were invited to participate in the Chafee Modernization Task group that was discussed earlier in the document (see Intervention 4.1.3 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State's Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR). The SUI had a representative who participated in the planning and ensuring that tribal youth's service needs were thought of in the proceedings.

To ensure that both tribes are aware of the benefits available to their youth, both tribes are included in an informational memorandum that contains the planning package for the annual Chafee plan and can apply for program funds. La Plata county staff maintain contact with both tribes regarding the Chafee program supports and services and ensure that all eligible youth that are seeking services can be served by the program. The annual plan that La Plata county submits each year documents their ongoing collaboration with both tribes.

As a requirement of accepting Chafee funds the state is responsible for outreaching and coordinating with the tribes in its state. The opportunity to apply annually for the Chafee program is sent out to all the county directors including directors of the Tribal department of human services. As of the writing of this APSR, the tribes have chosen not to apply for funding although DCW staff did discuss the requirements of applying for funding with the human services director for the UMUT on June 4, 2020.

The Chafee program is always discussed within the tribal consultation and the additional funding and eligibility criteria that states were provided through Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act was discussed on February 8, 2021. SUI indicated an interest in Chafee services during Tribal Consultation with CDHS. SUI showed a particular interest in looking into services for young people aging out the foster care system. State and County Chafee teams will be working with SUI to support the needs of the Tribe. A member of the council was identified to have continuing conversations with the Tribal liaison through CDHS, DCW staff, and representatives of the La Plata county DHS to problem solve how to best support tribal youth aging out of foster care. An initial meeting will be scheduled through CDHS staff to discuss goals in pushing forward with the collaboration.

Currently eligible tribal youth are served through a MOU with the La Plata county Chafee program. CDHS will continue to regularly consult the tribes to see if they have the capacity to take on the program themselves but until then the existing relationship with La Plata county is enabling their youth to be served by the program. The DCW Indian Child Welfare Specialist met with both UMUT and SUI during the week of April 15, 2019 to see if they would like to pursue their own program and they reported that they did not have the staffing capacity to take on the program and will continue to collaborate with the La Plata county Chafee program.

ICWA

ICWA requires efforts to place American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children within their own families, tribes, or other tribes whenever possible. In Colorado, there is currently a lack of available Indian foster homes, and efforts are being made to address this. HB21-1151⁴⁸ was introduced in March 2021 to update statute allowing federally recognized tribes to voluntarily contract with county departments of

⁴⁸ https://statebillinfo.com/bills/bills/21/2021a_1151_01.pdf

human/social services to place children in county custody in tribally certified homes (if there is availability). With these legislative changes, the goal is to keep American Indian/Alaska Native children with their families, in their communities and connected to their culture⁴⁹. Please see Appendix G for the “Recognition of Foster Homes Certified by Federally Recognized Tribes” fact sheet.

For details on how DCW is working to Improve ICWA compliance in Dependency and Neglect cases, please see Intervention 3.3.2 in the *Update to the Plan for Enacting the State’s Vision and Progress Made to Improve Outcomes* section of this APSR.

⁴⁹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nlwh72f2KU6OtOw5YV1fw3k8V4ZTeJML/view>

CAPTA State Plan Requirements and Updates

Please see Appendix H for the 2022 CAPTA Annual Report, Appendix I for the Institutional Assessment Review Team (IART) Annual Report, Appendix J for the Children’s Justice Act Application Report and Three Year Assessment, and Appendix K for the 2019 Child Maltreatment Fatality Annual Report.

Updates to Targeted Plans within the 2020-2024 CFSP

Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

Colorado has continued to practice targeted and general recruitment as an effort to meet the needs of the children and youth in care. With Colorado's county-administered and state-supervised structure, successful, diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive parents occurs at the local level. In 2020, sixty-four counties and thirty-five licensed CPAs were required to submit a diligent recruitment plan outlining regions with the highest removal, characteristics of waiting children and youth, and analysis of statewide services. All plans were submitted and analyzed annually by DCW's Foster Care and Recruitment and Retention Specialist. Colorado counties and CPAs were directed to analyze their regional data to identify systemic gaps and service needs in their region and submit their Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan based upon this determination. Based on data and anecdotal evidence from service providers the following themes were identified:

- Male children and youth have a higher probability of receiving service compared to their female or other identified gender counterpart.
- Children who are between the ages of zero to two and youth who are age 15 remain in the child welfare system, for longer periods of time, when compared to other age groups.
- Youth ages 15 and over struggle in achieving permanency due to culture/race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+,
- Quantitative data show that this age group (older youth) has a higher likelihood of experiencing separation from siblings, traumatic events, increased numbers of placement moves, delinquency, and running away, and a higher likelihood of exiting child welfare through emancipation.
- In addition, this age group has a higher likelihood of being diagnosed with an Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD).

Strengths identified included:

- 100% of the Colorado counties and CPAs submitted their Diligent Recruitment Plans early and on time.
- 100% of counties were in compliance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and met all of the 8 ACYF requirements⁵⁰.
- 100% of CPA's were in compliance with MEPA and met all 7 ACYF requirements (CPAs are exempt from the 8th which is child-specific recruitment)
- Counties and CPAs identified recruitment strategies that support the reduction of congregate care, supporting educational stability, and identified specific targeted recruitment goals for LGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and other specific populations.
- Some counties continue to have information about the need for foster families on their public-facing websites.
- Counties and CPAs reported a high level of interest at community and county fairs and events. Due to COVID-19, many of these events were held virtually in 2020.
- The Colorado Heart Gallery photographed 15 children/youth, filmed 6 videos, and shared the traveling banners at 4 venues. 48% of BIPOC children/youth achieved permanency, 68% of BIPOC children/youth achieved placement, and 50% of BIPOC children/youth achieved guardianship.

Strategies & Upcoming Trainings:

- The Diligent Recruitment Plans are being updated to support coordination between counties, agencies, and community organizations and improve overall practice.
- Technical assistance training related to recruitment and retention will continue to be offered virtually in 2021.

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https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cwpm/public_html/programs/cb/laws_policies/laws/cwpm/policy_dsp_pf.jspx?id=4

- Ongoing training specific to targeted recruitment, geo-mapping, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and teen recruitment will be offered virtually in 2021.
- The Adoption Call to Action will continue throughout 2021. The Recruitment and Retention Program has a goal to decrease the number of legally freed children/youth that are awaiting permanency. By reaching out to the Colorado counties with the highest numbers of children/youth to identify barriers and identify strategies, the recruitment and retention team will help develop plans for this population.
- Optional recruitment and retention customer service training and support are offered to all recruitment and retention professionals.
- Recruitment and Retention Quarterly Meetings are scheduled virtually to increase the skills, knowledge, and provide supplemental training to recruiters. Professionals use this time to identify training needs, collaborate, and share placement needs or available placement options.
- A Retention and Recruitment Roundtable support group was established in January 2021 by county representatives to support the county and CPA recruiters in the state. The professionals meet bi-monthly, complete case consultations and provide solutions in a collaborative manner to identify and evaluate specific and targeted recruitment methods.

There are no changes to the statewide Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan at this time.

Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan

The DCW's Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan remains in effect. The goals continue to be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure work is being accomplished and remains relevant. Most of the work on the plan is currently focused on psychotropic medications. First, the Psychotropic Medications Protocol is being reviewed to determine if updates or amendments are needed. Second, the CWTS continues to work to develop a course for assuring safe prescribing of psychotropic medications for children/youth in care. Lastly, work continues on developing procedures and protocols to ensure that children/youth in foster care are not inappropriately diagnosed with mental illness, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and placed in settings that are not foster family homes as a result of inappropriate diagnoses.

CDHS has created an automated system within the CCWIS system regarding completing developmental screening for all children under the age of five. This automatically refers all children under the age of five who are the victims of abuse or neglect to the local community centerboards for a developmental screening. During the staged implementation of the updated CCWIS, this automation has stopped working and counties have been asked to revert to manually sending referrals until CCWIS can be fully operational.

CDHS will be utilizing the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) and this will be done by OBH to determine if a youth is eligible for placement in a QRTP. The CANS tool helps prevent inappropriate diagnoses by nature of the tool itself. The CANS is agnostic to etiology or any cause and effect and does not generate a diagnosis. This assessment is completed prior to placement at a QRTP to ensure the level of treatment needed aligns with QRTP level of care.

CDHS is also working with the HCPF to streamline the process for obtaining Medicaid information for children/youth in the county custody. When children/youth are placed in the custody of county child welfare, their treatment, services, or diagnosis could vary by providers. In obtaining these records, multiple diagnoses and duplication of services could be reduced and mitigated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and national public health emergency, DCW has worked to ensure children/youth continue to receive appropriate health care per CDPHE guidelines. Colorado county child welfare departments were also encouraged to partner with their local public health departments, who are under the purview of CDPHE. OCYF also hired a medical director, who worked to support counties by providing expert medical guidance, attending town hall sessions, and ensuring the right resources were available to refer counties to.

No changes are needed to the Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan this year.

Disaster Plan

In CY 2020, Colorado has not been affected by a natural disaster. The Disaster Plan was not utilized for COVID-19, and no changes are required this year.

Although the Disaster Plan was not utilized for the COVID-19 pandemic, CDHS has been active in ensuring that counties and agencies are supported during the global pandemic. Please see “COVID-19 Consultation and Collaboration” in the *Collaboration* section of this APSR for detailed information on how CDHS has supported counties and other stakeholders.

Training Plan

Please see Appendix L for the updated Training Plan.

Statistical and Supporting Information

Information on Child Protective Service Workforce

CDHS collects demographic information about new caseworkers who are completing the Fundamentals of Child Welfare Casework Practice training requirements. CDHS will continue to use information on the race and ethnicity of new CPS personnel and educational degree type from the CWTS. CWTS manages this data through a contract with the Kempe Center. The following tables provide information about learners who had active profiles in the learning management system for the Child Welfare Training System.

LMS Users Overview

The data presented below represent all active learners (who have logged into the LMS) in CY 2020 and have at least one documented course completion; using this definition, CWTS served 6,779 active learners in 2020 in Colorado. As presented in Table 8, below, these learners are foster/kin/adoptive parents (46%), county child welfare staff (41%), community-based service professionals (13%) and others.

| Role | Number | Percent |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| Foster/kin/adoptive parent | 3105 | 45.80% |
| County child welfare staff member | 2755 | 40.64% |
| Community-based child/family service professional | 748 | 11.03% |
| Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) | 140 | 2.07% |
| Colorado Child Welfare Training System (CWTS) employee or provider | 20 | 0.30% |
| Tribal child welfare agency or community organization | 11 | 0.16% |
| TOTAL | 6779 | 100.00% |

Table 8: CWTS User Type

CWTS User Demographics

The following tables describe the active CWTS users by gender, race, ethnicity, education level and, for BSW/MSW degrees, at which institution the learner earned their degree. Users self-report these demographics. In July 2019, the LMS made some of these fields mandatory, though some blanks exist for users who have not personally logged in since that time (not all completions require user interface) and for other questions where responses are not mandatory (e.g., degree-granting institution). The tables rank demographics and follow in order of highest to lowest percentage of self-report.

| Gender Identity | Count | Percent |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Female | 4910 | 72.43% |
| Male | 1804 | 26.61% |
| I prefer not to say | 54 | 0.80% |
| Transgender/Non-Binary | 11 | 0.16% |
| Total | 6779 | 100.00% |

Table 9: CWTS User Demographics - Gender Identity

| Race | Number | Percent |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| White | 5244 | 77.37% |
| I prefer not to answer | 490 | 7.23% |
| Other | 426 | 6.29% |
| Black or African American | 402 | 5.93% |
| Asian | 111 | 1.64% |
| Native American/ Native Alaskan | 74 | 1.09% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 31 | 0.46% |
| (blank) | 1 | 0.00% |
| TOTAL | 6779 | 100.00% |

Table 10: CWTS User Demographics - Race

| Ethnicity | Number | Percent |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Hispanic or Latino | 1116 | 16.46% |
| I prefer not to answer | 474 | 6.99% |
| Non-Hispanic or Latino | 5189 | 76.55% |
| TOTAL | 6779 | 100.00% |

Table 11: CWTS User Demographics - Ethnicity

| Highest Level | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Other Bachelors' degree | 2490 | 36.74% |
| Other Master's degree | 1160 | 17.11% |
| Master of Social Work (MSW) | 673 | 9.93% |
| Some college | 656 | 9.68% |
| High school diploma/GED | 472 | 6.96% |
| Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) | 461 | 6.80% |
| Associate's degree | 371 | 5.47% |
| Doctoral or other advanced degree | 171 | 2.52% |
| Trade/vocational training | 150 | 2.21% |
| I prefer not to say | 118 | 1.74% |
| Less than high school education | 56 | 0.83% |

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| (blank) | 1 | 0.00% |
| TOTAL | 6779 | 100.00% |

Table 12: CWTS User Demographics - Highest Level of Education Received

| University | Count | Percent |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| (blank) | 3,519 | 51.91% |
| Other/Outside of Colorado | 1927 | 28.43% |
| Colorado State University | 315 | 4.65% |
| Metropolitan State University of Denver | 300 | 4.43% |
| University of Denver | 242 | 3.57% |
| University of Colorado | 176 | 2.60% |
| University of Northern Colorado | 154 | 2.27% |
| Colorado State University-Pueblo | 146 | 2.15% |
| Grand Total | 6779 | 100.00% |

Table 13: CWTS User Demographics - University Where BSW/MSW Earned

Juvenile Justice Transfers

Between January 1 and December 31, 2020, there were 170 children/youth in Colorado who had custody transferred from the local county department of human/social services to the state juvenile justice system. This reflects an ongoing trend in Colorado. This information is documented in Trails, which is used by both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and the data includes all children/youth being served in an OOH placement by county departments and were subsequently committed to DYS during CY 2020. These data may include delinquent youth who were court-ordered to Title IV-E eligible community placements. The following figure provides juvenile justice transfers data from CY 2015 to CY 2020.

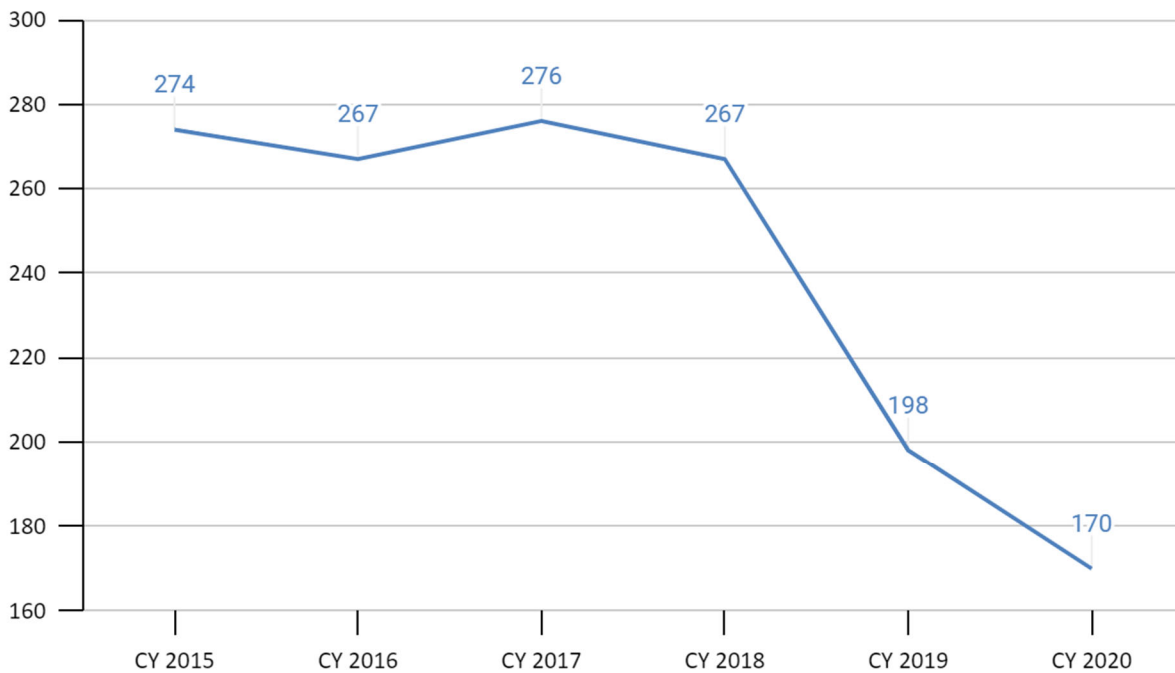


Figure 5: Number of children and youth transferred from CDHS to DYS (Source: Trails, 01/20/2021).

Education and Training Vouchers

The number of youth who received ETV awards is located in the *John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program)* section of this APSR.

Inter-Country Adoptions

See “Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries” in the *Updates to Service Description* section of this APSR.

Monthly Caseworker Visit Data

Monthly caseworker visit data for FFY 2021 will be reported separately and submitted by the December 2021 due date.

Financial Information

Colorado's CFS-101, Parts I, II, and III are submitted with this report as separate files. CDHS included on the forms information regarding number of individuals, families, population, and geographic areas to be served wherever possible; however, data for some services/activities are not readily available. Title IV-B, subpart 1 are allocated to Colorado counties through a block allocation that also includes Title IV-E and state funds; therefore, it is not possible to parse out the number of individuals, families, population, and geographic areas served through those funding streams. CAPTA funds are allocated to CDHS and are used for interventions and programs at the county level. CAPTA funds are available to be used by all 64 Colorado counties. However, because CAPTA funds cannot be used for direct client services there is no way to determine the number of individuals or families served by the funds.

As noted in the Update on the Service Descriptions section, CDHS continues to work to improve data collection related to the Title IV-B, subpart 2 PSSF grant. There are multiple methods of collecting data, and data related to one-time services may include duplicate counts of individuals served in other PSSF service areas. It is anticipated that enhancements through the Trails Modernization project and implementation of the new OEC information system will resolve these issues. As a result, more reliable data will be available to report on future CFS-101 forms.

As PSSF sites are determined through a competitive procurement process, it is not possible to anticipate the geographic areas where services will be available until after the procurement process is completed. This information is included on line six of the CFS-101, Part III form which covers FFY 2018 grants. The requested amount for FFY 2021 in Part I and Part II of the CFS-101 is \$4,702,511.

Lastly, CDHS is not able to separate out foster care maintenance expenditure estimates between foster family and relative foster care and group/institutional care at this time. The data sharing between Trails and the state's financial information systems complicates attempts to cleanly separate expenditures between the two categories. For this submission, the expenditure estimates for both categories are reported on line seven (a) of the CFS-101, Part II form.

FFY 2019 state and local share expenditures for the purpose of Title IV-B, subpart 2, amount to approximately \$1,378,203.81.

The 2022 APSR program instructions request information on the amount of FY 2005 Title IV-B, subpart 1 and non-federal matching funds that Colorado expended for foster care maintenance. In FFY 2005, \$2,890,135 Title IV-B, subpart 1 funds were expended for foster care maintenance and \$630,045 nonfederal funds, applied as a state match, were expended for foster care maintenance. Title IV-B, subpart 1 funds were not used for expenses related to child care and adoption assistance payments. Title IV-E funds are used for those purposes.

The CFS-101 Part II form references Population A and Population B in column (k) - Population to Be Served. For the purposes of this form, Population A includes all children and youth in foster care, while Population B includes all children and youth who are eligible for funds per rules in CCR.