

Section V – State Assessment of Strengths and Needs

This section is based on an examination of the data in Section II and the narrative response in sections III and IV.

What specific strengths of the agency's programs has the team identified?

Safety Outcome 1:

Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

In February 2010, face to face contacts / or attempted contacts with alleged victims by a social worker was accomplished in 93% of CPS referrals (emergent and non-emergent combined).

- Emergent Referrals (24 hr response) was accomplished for 95% of alleged victims
- Non-emergent Referrals (72 hr response) was accomplished for 91% of alleged victims

Well-Being Outcome 1:

Social Worker visits with child

From a low of 71.1% in December 2008 to a high of 91.0% in January 2010 FamLink data demonstrates a steady improvement in the monthly visits between the social worker (or another responsible party) and the child(ren) to ensure the safety, permanency, and well being of the child and promote achievement of case goals.

Well-Being Outcome 2:

Educational needs of the child

Significant improvement has been made in meeting the educational needs of children in care. 2009 Central Case Review data reported success in meeting the educational needs of children ranging from a low of 78% in Region 1 to a high of 94% in Region 4. Contributing to this success is the establishment of:

- School District agreements
- Educational Advocates
- Contracts to recruit and retain foster parents in local school districts with the highest removal rates to better insure a child's education can continue

Well-Being Outcome 3:

Physical health of the child

2009 Central Case Review data demonstrates that Children's Administration has successfully addressed the physical health needs of children in both their own home and within out-of-home care. The success rate of meeting the physical health needs of children ranges from a low of 62% in Region 2 to a high of 86% in Region 4.

Mental/behavioral health of the child

Success with addressing the mental/behavioral health needs of children within both their home and within out-of-home care is reported by the 2009 Central Case Review data to range from 75% in Region 3 to 94% in Region 1.

In comparison to 2008, Central Case Review data, in 2009 demonstrates that over 90.8% of children receive a completed mental health assessment within 30 days of the request to Regional Support Networks. The 2009 data represents an improvement of 5.2% over that of 2008.

Systemic Factors

Training

Children's Administration Staff

New social worker Academy training continues to be a strength. The redesign of Academy and the integration of FamLink and SBC has had a positive impact within Children's Administration and is supported at all levels. Academy enhancement and collaborative efforts in curriculum development have strengthened staff's ability to perform their jobs effectively. The integration of FamLink and Solution Based Casework into ongoing training of staff has had a positive impact on service delivery.

Anti-racism training

The department aggressively engages in culturally competent and anti-racist training as a vital step in the efforts to eliminate disproportionality in our child welfare system. The department implemented a process to provide ongoing cultural competence and anti-racism training to all staff who work with children and families in Washington:

- Children's Administration contracted with People's Institute for Survival and Beyond Northwest to provide six DSHS-CA specific, two day sessions of Undoing Racism. Children's Administration partnered with Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) and Department of Early Learning (DEL) to have their staff participate in the CA organized workshops.
- Children's Administration provides ongoing training entitled "Building Bridges" given by the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI). This training deals with all areas of oppression and focuses primarily on dialogue.
- Knowing Who You Are is a three-part curriculum for social workers and other adults and professionals in the child welfare system. Created with the direct collaboration of foster care alumni, youth still in care, birth parents, and resource families, the curriculum helps child welfare professionals explore race and ethnicity, preparing them to support the healthy development of their constituent's racial and ethnic identity.

Community Partners & Providers

With the integration of Solution Based Casework into the curriculum of PRIDE Pre-Service and Special Topic trainings, foster parents report greater satisfaction than the trainings offered in past years. In addition, foster parent surveys, and regular local and statewide meetings between foster parents and Children's Administration has resulted in trainings being developed for foster parents that are directly responsive to the specific needs of caregivers. Training and support has also been improved for caregivers by Children's Administration establishing both on-line training and a lending library to provide information on the special needs of children and youth.

Children's Administration Collaborations & Partnerships

- Casey Family Services
- Partners for Our Children
- Tribes
- Courts
- Youth
- DSHS Administrations

What are the primary areas needing improvement?

Permanency Outcome 1

Stability of foster care placement:

Since 2007 the stability of a child's placement in out-of-home care has remained relatively consistent at 81%. In 2009 Central Case Review data ranged from 74% in Region 4 to 82% in Region 6.

A Child's placement was considered stable by the Central Case Review team if the:

- Child / youth remained with the same caregiver over the last 12 months
- Child / youth was moved from a non-relative to a relative home, or moved from a foster home to an adoptive home.
- Child's / youth's was moved due to the child's need for a higher level of care or a less restrictive level of care

Child and family involvement in case planning

The Central Case Review data demonstrates a decline with the involvement of children and family in case planning:

- Engagement of the father in the case plan decreased from 51% in 2008 to 47% in 2009
- Engagement of the mother in the case plan decreased from 74% in 2008 to 68% in 2009
- Engagement of the child in the case plan increased from 60% in 2008 to 63% in 2009

Well-Being Outcome 1:

Social worker visits with parents

The Central Case Review data demonstrates that no significant improvement with the social worker regularly meeting with parents. In addition, the data indicates that the social worker meets with fathers less frequently than with mothers:

- Monthly visits with the father increased from 18% in 2008 to 19% in 2009.
- Monthly visits with the mother increased from 31% in 2008 to 32% in 2009.

Permanency Outcome 2

Relationship of child in care with parents

2007 Central Case Review data demonstrates a 7% decline in maintaining the relationship of the child and parents. In 2009 Central Case Review data ranged from 75% in Regions 2 and 5 to that of 86% in Region 4.

The Central Case Review data is based on efforts to promote, support, and maintain a positive and nurturing parent/child relationship. This includes encouraging parental participation in school activities, medical appointment, therapeutic situations and, foster parent mentoring to assist in appropriate parenting.

Disproportionality and Racial Disparity

Racial disproportionality exists for Native American and Children of color in Washington state and is a significant challenge.

Compared with White children referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) in 2004, after referrals:

- American Indian children were:
 - 3 times as likely to be referred to CPS
 - 1.6 times as likely to be removed from their home
 - 2.2 times as likely to remain in foster care for over two years
 - Less likely to be reunified with their parents within two years
 - Less likely to be adopted within two years
- African American children were:
 - 2 times as likely to be referred to CPS
 - 1.2 times more likely to be removed from home
 - 1.5 times more likely to remain in foster care for over two years
 - More likely to have an accepted referral
 - Less likely to be adopted within two years
- Hispanic children were:
 - 1.3 times as likely to be referred to CPS
 - No more likely to be removed from home
 - No more likely to remain in foster care for over two years

Graduation and Dropout Outcomes for Children in State Care (2005—2008)

Washington State Institute for Public Policy Report November 2009

The report represents the latest analysis in an ongoing study to investigate educational outcomes for foster youth. While the Institute has conducted previous analyses on the educational attainment of foster youth, this is this first report to compare these outcomes using the standard, federal definitions of dropout and graduation rates.

Approximately 70% of high school students in Washington State graduate on time. About 30-40% of foster youth in placement for at least half of the school year graduate after four years in high school.

The statewide annual dropout rate for all high school students in Washington ranges between 5% and 6%. However between 8% and 13% of foster youth with a long-term (full-year) placement dropout of high school.

Foster youth with longer-term placements (360 days or more during the school year) have lower dropout rates and higher graduation rates compared with foster youth with short-term placements during high school.

What specific needs has the team identified that warrant further examination during the onsite review?

Children Administration requests that the onsite review make an effort to examine the following:

- Quantity and quality of engagement with parents and children
- Identification of practices and/or systemic barriers to
 - Timely permanency for children
 - Services being provided to children and families
- Quality and quantity of Family Team Decision Making meetings being held per policy
- Identify practices that promote parent-child relationships
- Quality and quantity of services for youth transitioning to adulthood
- Quality and quantity of case planning in collaboration with Tribes

Onsite Review Site Selection

King County, Region 4-Field Offices-Bellevue, Martin Luther King, King ICW, King West, Kent and White Center.

Background:

- King County is the largest urban area in Washington. The population of Seattle is currently estimated to be **602,000**. King County has an estimated population in 2009 of **1,909,300**.
- King County has 25% of the child population of the state. Children of color make up over 40% of the child population: Asian-Pacific Islander (18.6%), African American (11%), Hispanic (10.5%) and American Indian (2.84%)

Key Data:

- There were 7986 referrals screened in during FY2008
King County had 17.4% (1692 of 9733 statewide) of children in out-of-home placement as of Jan 28, 2009. 38% of those children were in relative placements

Comparison by race of the General Population to that of placements and accepted referrals

Ethnicity King County	% African American	% American Indian	% Asian / Pacific Islander	% Hispanic	% Non Caucasian	% Caucasian only	% Statewide
Youth Population	11.0%	2.8%	18.7%	10.6%	40.0%	60.0%	25.1%
All Population	7.1%	2.1%	15.5%	6.7%	29.9%	70.1%	28.6%
Placement Jan 2009	42.7%	14.0%		14.3%	63.8%	36.2%	17.4%
Victims in accepted CPS Referrals FY2008	25.3%	9.4%		17.5%	51.6%	48.4%	22.2%

Central Case Review Data

Office	Date	Overall CFSR	Safety	Permanency	Well Being
King East	Feb-10	65%	73%	85%	46%
MLK Jr.	Apr-09	71%	88%	77%	61%
ICW	Jun-08	43%	49%	53%	34%
King West	Jul-09	62%	73%	73%	51%
King South	Jun-09	67%	84%	68%	61%
White Center	Apr-08	59%	66%	71%	47%
Statewide %	CY2009	69%	82%	76%	59%

Rationale for Site Selection:

King County is the largest metropolitan area and as such it will be selected as one of the three sites to be reviewed.

Whatcom County, Region 3- Field Office-Bellingham

Background:

- Bellingham is the largest city in Whatcom County. The population of Bellingham is currently estimated to be **76,130**. Whatcom County has an estimated population in 2009 of **193,100**.
- Whatcom County has 2.7% of the child population of the state. Children of color make up 16% of the child population: Hispanic (11.3%), American Indian (6.7%), Asian-Pacific Islander (5.3%), and African American (2.2%).
- The Lummi and Nooksack Tribes are located in Whatcom County.

Key Data:

- There were 1162 referrals screened in during FY2008
- Whatcom County had 4% (391 of 9733 statewide) of children in out-of-home placement as of Jan 28, 2009. 38% of those children were in relative placements.

Comparison by race of the General Population to that of placements and accepted referrals

Ethnicity Whatcom County	% African American	% American Indian	% Asian / Pacific Islander	% Hispanic	% Non Caucasian	% Caucasian only	% Statewide
Youth Population	2.2%	6.7%	5.3%	11.3%	23.3%	76.7%	2.7%
All Population	1.3%	4.2%	4.6%	6.4%	15.4%	84.6%	2.9%
Placement Jan 2009	6.4%	39.6%		12.3%	48.3%	51.7%	4.0%
Victims in accepted CPS Referrals FY2008	4.4%	24.6%		12.3%	37.9%	62.1%	3.8%

Central Case Review Data:

Office	Date	Overall CFSR	Safety	Permanency	Well Being
Bellingham	Jun-09	61%	57%	82%	46%
Statewide %	CY2009	69%	82%	76%	59%

Rationale for Site Selection:

Whatcom County is below the mean for all counties nationwide in three of four federal composite measures. Composite 3, Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time, is just above the national mean.

Whatcom county data shows an over representation of children of color in placement and in referrals of abuse and maltreatment. There is approximately 6 times the number of Native American children in placement as compared to the general population. The percentage of African American children in placement is 3 times that of the general population. The percentage of Hispanic children in placement is just slightly above that of the general population.

The rate of referrals for Native American and African American children appear disproportionate considering the general population.

CA would like to have Whatcom County selected as a site because despite strong community partnerships and numerous innovative services and programs, many outcome measures remain below the national average.

The Bellingham office was rated as having a high level of Solution Based Casework (SBC) implementation by SBC program managers, and coaches. CA staff and court personnel have been trained in the new model.

Family Treatment court is a strong program in Whatcom County and the Court Improvement Project-Whatcom Table of Ten provides increased communication for all partners in the judicial process. Strategies being used and recommended by the Table of Ten are:

- Inviting service providers to attend shelter care hearings for immediate engagement with parents
- Scheduling service appointments and follow up visits with parents at shelter care hearing
- Use veteran parents as part of family support network

Foster Parent Mentors play a large role in assisting potential, new and veteran foster parents and caregivers, and supporting them through initial and difficult placements. Mentors also play an important role in communications between caregivers and CA staff.

Brigid Collins, a Child Advocacy and Family Support Center, is a strong and long standing community partner with CA. The center offers a wide array of Evidence Based Practice services and has championed a new program entitled "Pathways to Reunification", designed to assist children to safely return home in 270 days or less, and when that is not possible to provide timely information to the courts for decisions on moving towards termination of parental rights.

The Whatcom Family & Community Network and CA- Bellingham office have been working together on Family to Family since 2007. This strong collaborative partnership has produced many of the concepts that will be used in a Community Navigation Pilot to promote effective partnering to provide key services to children and families. These new concepts include how the state could contract and work differently with the local community in a way that could help reduce the barriers that these families face when attempting to reunify their family or in preventing the need to remove a child from their home.

The Bellingham office has embraced Family to Family values and strategies and has a strong history of FTDM's during the past 4 years. The Community Navigator project described above is an outgrowth of the F2F collaboration between CA and the community.

Spokane County, Region 1- Field Office-Spokane

Background:

- Spokane is the second largest city in Washington. The population of the city of Spokane is currently estimated to be **205,500**. Spokane County has an estimated population in 2009 of **465,000**.
- Spokane County has 7% of the child population of the state. Children of color make up 16% of the child population: Hispanic (5.5%), Asian-Pacific Islander (4.3%), African American (4.3%), and American Indian (3.8%).
- There are no tribal reservations in Spokane County

Key Data:

- There were 3031 referrals screened in during FY2008
- Spokane County had 9.7% (946 of 9733 statewide) of children in out-of-home placement as of Jan 28, 2009. 39% of those children were in relative placements.

Comparison by race of the General Population to that of placements and accepted referrals

Ethnicity Spokane County	% African American	% American Indian	% Asian / Pacific Islander	% Hispanic	% Non Caucasian	% Caucasian only	% Statewide
Youth Population	4.3%	3.9%	4.4%	5.5%	16.3%	83.7%	6.9%
All Population	2.5%	2.7%	3.6%	3.3%	11.3%	88.7%	7.0%
Placement Jan 2009	9.2%	13.5%		6.8%	24.4%	75.6%	9.7%
Victims in accepted CPS Referrals FY2008	8.7%	9.8%		5.2%	23.0%	77.0%	9.6%

Central Case Review Data

Office	Date	Overall CFSR	Safety	Permanency	Well Being
Spokane	Dec-09	71%	81%	79%	61%
Statewide %	CY2009	69%	82%	76%	59%

Rationale for Site Selection:

Spokane County is at or above the mean for all counties nationwide in all four federal composite measures.

Spokane county data shows an over representation of children of color in placement and in referrals of abuse and maltreatment. There is approximately 3.5 times the number of Native American children in placement as compared to the general population. The percentage of African American children in placement is twice that of the general population. The percentage of Hispanic children in placement is just slightly above that of the general population.

The rate of referrals for Native American and African American children appear disproportionate considering the general population.

According to CA's Solution Based Casework coaching staff, the Spokane office is rated as having medium level of SBC implementation.

CA would like to have Spokane County included as a review site because of the number of innovative practices and programmatic structures currently in place. Spokane was one of the original Family to Family sites and has been holding FTDMs since 2004. Over this time the office has increased the number and depth of community partnerships and has created teams of community members working on CA goals.

Spokane County Juvenile Court implemented a major change in dependency case processing two years ago and serves as one of three "Model Courts" participating in a workload study through the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The Spokane court has committed to a "one family-one judge" case assignment, and time certain calendaring (i.e. all review hearings on one specific day). The court has also adopted a team approach, which brings stability and consistency with regard to the stakeholders assigned to the case; the same assistant attorney general, defense attorney and social worker are assigned to shared cases and stay with the case from beginning to end. This has led to all parties more often being present for hearings, including fathers and children. Judicial officers report that ISSPs are filed in a timely manner as a matter of routine, and if an ISSP is missing, the social worker's supervisor is immediately responsive to the court's inquiry regarding the missing ISSP. A full evaluation of the team approach is pending finalization and distribution.

Spokane has strong Native Health Services with a comprehensive culturally appropriate service array. All tribes in the region work closely together. Communication and service coordination is strong. Urban Native Health Services-Spokane County has comprehensive Health and Social Services for urban Indian children and families.

Region 1 has regionalized its referral intake process resulting in greater consistency in screening decisions and has centralized all adoption cases to three units under one AA. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in completed adoptions for the region.

Methodology for Developing the Statewide Assessment

The accurate assessment of the priorities, strengths and challenges of Child Welfare in Washington State necessitated candid discussions with parents, youth, tribes, providers, community stakeholders, courts, and DSHS staff. Given this task the following support teams and processes were created:

CFSR Operational Team Meeting

CFSR Operational Team is responsible for developing and executing the plan for organization, collaboration, coordination, communication and successful completion of the CFSR review:

- Facilitates and supports the activities of the Statewide CFSR Team, Regional work, and Stakeholder, Partner, Customer, Advocate groups.
- Facilitate and coordinate activities and supports for the Statewide CFSR Team, Regions, & Communications Committee.
- Solicits and coordinates technical assistance from federal partners, National Resource Center, Casey Family Program, Annie E. Casey, Partners for Our Children, and DSHS Performance & Accountability Division.
- Strengthen communication networks throughout the state for efficient gathering and analysis of data and information.
- Gather information to assess status and activities related to the outcome and systemic factors being evaluated.
- Access and review performance data to identify areas of strengths and needs and differences among regions and counties to target solicitation of information to inform evaluation process.
- Design and host annual symposia to provide and receive information and assist with action planning based on results facilitate achievement of PIP.

CFSR Statewide Assessment Team

“Kickoff Meeting” and Monthly Statewide Stakeholders Meetings - Stakeholders, veteran parents, DSHS staff and administrators, providers and superior court staff and judges provided input concerning the priorities, strengths and challenges of Child Welfare in Washington State. The specific areas for discussion were: Safety, Permanency, Reunification, Stability of Placements and Service Array. This information was compiled and reported back to the CFSR operational team and DSHS-Childrens Administration.

Regional Focus Groups

Building upon the “Kickoff Meeting” and the Monthly Statewide Stakeholders Meetings each of the 6 Regions that comprise the State of Washington held focus groups to identify shared statewide themes and unique local strengths and challenges concerning Safety, Permanency, Reunification, Stability of Placements and Service Array. Over a 3 month period a total 52 focus group sessions were held statewide. The expectation is that the focus group process with continue throughout the state as a tool to develop our Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and as an ongoing process of quality assurance and innovation.



Washington State CFSR Self Assessment Participants



Community Stakeholders	
Na'im Williams Veteran Parent	Michael Heard Washington State Office of Public Defense
Patti Carroll Island Co.-Stanwood Community Network	LaRon Burris Veteran Parent
Adrienne Garner SE Yakima Community Center	Ron Murphy Casey Family Programs
Jim Theofolis Mockingbird Society	Teresa Jackson Partnerships in the Community/Adoptive Parent
Marcus Stubblefield King Co. Dept. of Youth Services	Jeremiah Donier Spokane Parent Advocacy Committee
Onalee Stewart Passion for Action	Brenda Lopez Washington State Office of Public Defense
Liz Mueller Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe	Lyman Legters Casey Family Programs
Rebecca Peck Samish Indian Nation	Janet Skreen Administrative Office Of The Courts
Rick Copen Administrative Office Of The Courts	Nancy Roberts Brown Catalyst for Kids
Matilda Sampson American Indian Community Center/Spokane	Cheryl Miller Skokomish Tribal Nation

Community Stakeholders Continued

Beth Canfield Foster Parent Association of Washington State	Ruth Graham Olive Crest
Jana Heyd Society of Counsel Representing Accused Persons	Karen Spoelman King Co. Dept. of Community & Human Services (RSN)
Annie Blackledge Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Dee Wilson Casey Family Programs
Alexia Everett Foster Care Education & Policy College Success Foundation	Susan Brook Lutheran Community Services
Mary McGauhey Foster Parents Association of Washington State	Matt Orme Partners for Our Children
Sheila Huber Office of Attorney General	Michael Yates Cowlitz Tribe/ICW
Carrie Whitaker Executive Coordinator Braam Oversight Panel	Margaret Hobart, Ph.D. Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Ryan Murrey Interim Executive Director CASA	Pat Donahue Spokane Co CASA
Julie Lowery Pierce Co CASA	

Department of Social and Health Services Participants	
Rick Butt Children's Administration - HQ	Barb Putnam Children's Administration - Well-Being Supervisor
Marjorie Fitzgerald Children's Administration - Training & Development Supervisor	Pam Kramer Children's Administration - HQ
Colette McCully Children's Administration - HQ	Juliana Curiel DCFS Region 2 - CFWS/FRS Supervisor
Tim Nelson Children's Administration R1 CFSR Representative	Nate Sitton Children's Administration R2 CFSR Representative
Patty Turner Children's Administration R3 CFSR Representative	Kathy Ramsay Children's Administration R3 CFSR Representative
Teri Clark Children's Administration R4 CFSR Representative	Stacey Weaver-Wee Children's Administration R5 CFSR Representative
Kui Hug Children's Administration R6 CFSR Representative	Julian Bryd Children's Administration - Solution Based Casework
Mary Hughes DCFS Region 3 - CFWS Supervisor	Kendrick Stewart Economic Services Administration
Nichole Jensen Aging Disabilities Services Administration	Corinne Mason Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration
Margaret Wilson Health and Recovery Services Administration	Diana Chesterfield CA - Region 6 AA
Lyn Craik CA – Central Case Review	Stacey Bushaw Economic Services Administration/CSD
Bob Thornquist DCFS Region 4 - CFWS Supervisor	John Allen DCFS Region 4 - CFWS Supervisor
Mary Pagni-Leavitt DCFS Region 4 - CFWS Supervisor	Gia Wesley DLR
Sherry Hill DSHS CA Headquarters Communications Director	Marianne K. Ozmun DSHS CA Headquarters Communications Director