

Appendix J

Collaborating During the Child and Family Services Reviews

From their inception, the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) were intended as a vehicle for promoting change through collaboration. This begins with the collaboration between the Federal and State Governments in assessing the effectiveness of child welfare agencies in serving children and families. And it continues with the collaboration between child welfare agency leaders and their internal and external partners. Those internal partners include staff and consultants; the external partners include policymakers; other agencies serving child, youth, and families; the courts; tribes and tribal organizations; the community; and children, youth, and families.

These collaborations are critical during the two assessment phases of the CFSR (Statewide Assessment and onsite review) and the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) development, implementation, and evaluation process. The information presented below is intended to (1) offer guidance to States in fostering enhanced collaborations during the CFSRs and (2) provide a structure for the Children's Bureau staff responsible for assessing State child welfare agency efforts to enhance or forge new collaborations in conjunction with the CFSR:

- I. Overarching Principles of CFSR Collaboration**
- II. CFSR Collaborative Partners**
- III. The Collaborative Process**
- IV. Engaging Collaborative Partners**
- V. Using the CFSR to Build Partnerships: Illustrative Examples**
- VI. Evidence of State Collaboration With Stakeholders During the CFSR**
- VII. Monitoring Stakeholder Involvement**
- VIII. Technical Assistance in Support of State Collaborative Efforts**
- IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes**
- X. Illustrative Examples of State Child Welfare Agency Collaborations: Youth, Courts, and Tribes**

I. Overarching Principles of CFSR Collaboration

The CFSRs demand a collaborative process that focuses on identifying shared goals and activities and establishing a purpose, framework, and plan. Most important, that collaborative process should result in changes that promote improved outcomes for children and families. The overarching principles guiding the CFSR collaborative process include the following:

- The safety, permanency, and well-being of children is a shared responsibility, and child welfare agencies should make every effort to reach out to other partners in the State who can help to achieve positive results with respect to the CFSR child welfare outcome measures and systemic factors.
- Child welfare agencies do not serve children and families in isolation; they should work in partnership with policymakers, community leaders, and other public and private agencies to improve outcomes for children and families in their States. This includes partnering with organizations that directly serve children, youth, and families and those whose actions impact family and community life.
- Family-centered and community-based practices are integral to improving outcomes for children and families. As such, collaboration with families, including young people, is important in identifying and assessing strengths and barriers to improved outcomes for children, youth, and families.
- Real collaboration has a purpose and a goal; it takes time and effort to promote meaningful collaboration. There also are varying degrees of collaboration, each of which can serve the CFSR process and, more importantly, children, youth, and families.

II. CFSR Collaborative Partners

The CFSR process defines key partners that should be engaged in the CFSR Statewide Assessment, onsite review, and PIP (these include partners with whom the State is required to collaborate in developing the Child and Family Services Plan [CFSP] and Annual Progress and Services Reports [APSRs], as noted at 45 CFR, Part 1357.15(1)):

- Court representatives, including, but not limited to, Court Improvement Programs (CIPs)
- Tribal representatives
- Youth representatives
- Child welfare agency internal partners, such as State and local agency staff, training staff, contract staff, supervisors, and administrators
- Child welfare agency external partners, such as children (as appropriate); biological, foster, and adoptive parents and relative caregivers; and representatives from (1) other State and community-based service agencies, (2) State and local governments, (3) professional and advocacy organizations, and (4) agencies administering other Federal and federally assisted programs. (These programs include those funded by the U.S. Departments of Education, Housing, and Labor; the Administration for Children

II. CFSR Collaborative Partners *(continued)*

and Families (ACF) [including Head Start; the Family and Youth Services Bureau; the Office of Family Assistance—and the Child Care Bureau within that Office; and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities]; the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. These programs are responsible for education, labor, developmental disabilities services, juvenile justice, mental health, substance abuse prevention and treatment, family support, services to runaway and homeless youth, domestic violence intervention, child care, Medicaid, and housing.)

- Partners that represent the diversity of the State’s population, especially in relation to those served by the child welfare system
- Other entities related to children and families within the State, such as the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) lead agencies, citizen review panels, Children’s Justice Act (CJA) task forces, and CFSP and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) partners

III. The Collaborative Process

Collaboration takes planning, time, and a commitment to working together to create change. State child welfare agencies can build new, or strengthen existing, collaborations by focusing on the following core elements:

- **A common goal.** Collaboration requires a common goal; collaboration for collaboration’s sake does not create change. The shared goal of CFSR-driven collaborations is improving outcomes for children and families.
- **Benefit to all parties.** All participants need to see the benefit to them of the collaborative goal. While each agency or individual might view improving child welfare as the altruistic goal of the CFSR and PIP, States should identify the practical benefits for the stakeholders whom they wish to engage. These might include, for example, (1) a reduction in calls to law enforcement if child abuse rates are reduced over time, (2) less frequently requested court continuances because of improvements in agency reporting on children’s progress, or (3) improved coordination between child welfare agency staff and mental health counselors that enhance services while streamlining agency efforts to jointly serve children and families.
- **A vehicle for collaborating.** There should be a vehicle for achieving the agreed-upon goal. The CFSR and PIP processes provide excellent vehicles for collaboration, but the collaborative effort cannot happen serendipitously. It should be well planned so that each partner knows their roles and the time and resource commitment required of them.
- **The ability to come to consensus.** Real collaboration requires the ability to come to consensus about what needs to be done and the most effective approaches for doing so.

III. The Collaborative Process *(continued)*

The CFSR offers States the former; through the reviews, they will have identified the improvements that need to be made. States then should engage the appropriate stakeholders in identifying approaches that appear to be both effective and achievable. They also will need to provide support to both internal and external stakeholders in adapting to the changes that will be identified, as necessary, through the program improvement process.

- **Strong leadership.** States will need to provide strong leadership and to engage stakeholders who have the ability and authority to help them create change. The Children’s Bureau Regional Office staff should encourage States to use the CFSR and PIP processes, and other required or ongoing child welfare planning efforts (for example, title IV-B), to identify who has the power, responsibility, and/or expertise to help them reform their child welfare systems.
- **A process for ensuring meaningful stakeholder involvement.** States need a process for ensuring that stakeholder engagement is real and meaningful, that stakeholders feel valued, and that all partners are kept apprised of CFSR activities, including the Statewide Assessment, onsite review, and PIP. During the first cycle of reviews, some States invited external partners to serve on Statewide Assessment or PIP planning work groups, but the external partners never saw the final Statewide Assessment or PIP until the documents were released. And they never received an explanation about which of their ideas were incorporated and which were not. Real collaboration requires a commitment to determining how to most effectively engage with others toward a common goal, and a willingness to communicate about expectations, commitments, and, most importantly, results.
- **Shared success.** States should create opportunities for early collaborative successes; nothing ensures ongoing involvement in a joint process more than a shared success. This links back to the concept that States should set reasonable PIP goals. States then can identify areas in which they can anticipate early successes and establish ways to share the credit for those with their stakeholders.
- **Use of stakeholders to engage new partners.** States should encourage stakeholders to bring new players into the process, whenever appropriate. A substance abuse agency director who witnesses positive changes in relationships with the child welfare agency as a result of being involved in the CFSRs becomes one of the agency’s best advocates for engaging others in the process.
- **A shared vision for the future.** States will need to develop strategies for keeping people involved in the long term. Success contributes to that, but so does “forward planning.” If States can help stakeholders continually consider next steps, those stakeholders and others will begin to understand that change requires a long-term commitment and that the CFSR and its program improvement process are intentionally ongoing in nature.

III. The Collaborative Process *(continued)*

- **Ongoing evaluation.** States should develop a process for continually assessing the outcomes of collaborative efforts, especially with regard to creating real and lasting changes in policy and practice. More important, they should examine how those changes are resulting in improved outcomes for children and families.

IV. Engaging Collaborative Partners

States can enhance the process of engaging their external partners by both focusing on the elements described above and undertaking the following steps:

1. Continually promoting the CFSR process and findings; State child welfare agencies that set up procedures for doing this have been the most effective in involving others.
2. Identifying which stakeholders need to be involved in the two assessment phases of the CFSR process (Statewide Assessment and onsite review), and who then might help with the PIP development and implementation.
3. Conducting targeted outreach to stakeholders (individuals or agencies) through the appropriate channels. If a State child welfare administrator needs the cooperation of the director of the State mental health agency, for example, they might jointly work through the head of the human services agency that manages both the child welfare and mental health services agencies. That person can help facilitate the mental health director's involvement by authorizing the time and resources necessary for them to collaborate.
4. Reviewing with each stakeholder the advantages of the CFSR and PIP collaboration, and jointly identifying barriers to previous collaborations and strategies for overcoming those during the CFSR and PIP processes.
5. Jointly assessing the contributions, time commitment, and resources that each stakeholder might bring to the process.
6. Jointly establishing the "rules of engagement." This means letting people know how the State plans to operate during the CFSR and PIP processes, engaging them in developing effective procedures for working together, and setting an equitable workload-sharing system. No one wants to feel that they are doing more than their share.
7. Setting timelines for all CFSR-related meetings, activities, and products, and communicating those to stakeholders.
8. Exploring how to manage and sustain stakeholder involvement during the different stages of the CFSR process; this may be different for each type of stakeholder engaged.

IV. Engaging Collaborative Partners *(continued)*

Judges, for example, may offer staff to assist in assessing court-related strengths and needs and identifying strategies for improving court processing of child welfare cases; those judges, however, should themselves be closely involved in making final decisions about new court procedures and ensuring that those will be institutionalized. Agency collaboration with youth and families might require a different level of preparation (for both agency staff and the youth or family members) and support.

Moreover, people likely will be participating in the CFSR process in addition to their regular jobs. In those situations, people want to feel that their time is being used wisely and that their contributions will make a difference; a strong CFSR management system will help with both. States also need to think of incentives for those involved and ways to show them appreciation.

V. Using the CFSR To Build Partnerships: Illustrative Examples

Some States have used the CFSR, including the PIP process, to form new collaborations and develop strong partnerships that they will be able to build on as they prepare for the subsequent reviews. States can do the following, for example:

- **Draw on the expertise of existing child welfare collaborations.** State CFSR Coordinators, for example, can request the assistance of the State Independent Living (IL) Coordinator to engage youth in the CFSR process. The IL Coordinator has direct contact with youth and the State Youth Advisory Board, if one exists. The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (NCWRCYD; see also Section VIII. Technical Assistance) maintains a listing of the State IL Coordinators and identifies youth leadership activities in each State. States who are interested in developing or expanding their youth advisory boards can refer to the NCWRCYD website (www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd), contact another State directly, or contact NCWRCYD. States such as Maine, Kansas, and Kentucky have very active Youth Advisory Boards who are interested in making significant contributions to the CFSR and PIP processes.
- **Consider the use of volunteers in the CFSR or PIP process.** Alabama has a quality assurance (QA) system that was in place before the CFSR. It uses volunteer reviewers with strong connections to the communities being served by the child welfare agency. Those volunteers bring to the process knowledge of the resources available within the community and a commitment to protecting that community's children and strengthening its families.
- **Allocate staff time and resources to building and sustaining collaborations.** The North Dakota child welfare agency has strong collaborative relationships that enhanced its initial CFSR and PIP processes. State agency staff cite a willingness to say what they need and to work with others to get things done as the cornerstone of those efforts. Agency staff also work hard on their relationships, and their efforts have paid off: the chief judge required that judges be involved in the State's PIP process.

V. Using the CFSR To Build Partnerships: Illustrative Examples

(continued)

- **Establish communication vehicles.** In Wisconsin, the State agency set up an Intranet system for communicating with all of their stakeholders during the first PIP process, including reporting on their committee discussions and decisions. This helped to keep stakeholders engaged in the process, including enabling them to comment on the strategies proposed for inclusion in the PIP.

VI. Evidence of State Collaboration With Stakeholders During the CFSR

At each stage of the collaborative process, there will be different levels of evidence showing the State’s capacity to engage its external partners in the CFSR process. During the early stages of any collaboration, for example, there will be evidence that shows the initial outreach and the beginnings of collaborative partnerships. Later, there should be evidence of how the partners are working together, including projected results and a process and timeline for achieving those. As the collaborative partnership develops, there should be strong evidence of results that can be measured and referenced in key CFSR documents, such as the PIP quarterly reports, renegotiated PIPs, and Statewide Assessments.

The table below provides illustrative examples of the continuum of State child welfare agency collaboration, from limited to strong. The Children’s Bureau Regional Offices and State child welfare agencies can use the information in the table to periodically assess the status and effectiveness of State involvement with stakeholders. By doing so, they can determine the extent to which the State is building meaningful collaborative partnerships for creating positive changes in child welfare policy and practice and improving outcomes for children and families.

Elements of Collaboration	Evidence of Limited or No Collaboration	Evidence of Strong Collaboration
Engagement of other partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State has started to consult with at least one other partner agency to identify critical issues for the Statewide Assessment or PIP. • The State has not made any strong efforts to engage or consult with other partners or stakeholders in the development of the Statewide Assessment or PIP. • There is simply a list of collaborative partner agencies and stakeholders in the Statewide Assessment; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State has worked to engage a broad group of internal and external partners and stakeholders in the development and ongoing analysis of the PIP and new Statewide Assessment. • The State has been invited by a broad group of external partners to participate in work or focus groups or other collaborative efforts. • Internal and external partners convey a shared ownership of the Statewide Assessment and PIP processes, including development, implementation, and outcomes.

VI. Evidence of State Collaboration With Stakeholders During the CFSR (continued)		
Elements of Collaboration	Evidence of Limited or No Collaboration	Evidence of Strong Collaboration
	there is no other indication of their level of collaboration in the CFSR or Statewide Assessment.	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies identified as partners and stakeholders simply are invited to give input through one-time meetings or PIP or Statewide Assessment focus groups. Partner agencies or stakeholders are invited to collaborate only by reviewing and commenting on draft CFSR materials. There is no other evidence of ongoing communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners and stakeholders are invited to provide input on the State’s CFSR documents and processes on an ongoing basis, and there is a well-defined and regular feedback loop between the child welfare agency and partners. The State has established standing meetings that are regularly attended by key partners; they track meeting participation and outcomes. Partners are actively involved in producing draft and final materials. The State agency and its partners have assigned responsibility (and authority) to key staff for communicating regularly, internally and externally, about the CFSR process.
Needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State agency developed a Statewide Assessment process for the CFSR that is separate from other needs assessment processes established by the agency or others. The State agency relies solely on its own data when analyzing strengths and areas needing improvement and does not examine data available from other sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State’s Statewide Assessment process builds on the assessments conducted through existing vehicles such as the CFSP, CIP, CBCAP, CJA, consent decrees, and other agency needs assessment efforts. Data are compiled, analyzed, and used by the State and its partners on a regular basis, such as quarterly, and shared with others whenever possible.

VI. Evidence of State Collaboration With Stakeholders During the CFSR (continued)		
Elements of Collaboration	Evidence of Limited or No Collaboration	Evidence of Strong Collaboration
Joint strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State’s external partners do not participate in any joint planning efforts with the child welfare agency. The State provides external partners with limited time to review draft plans and reports and does not respond to comments provided, and final State products do not reflect the comments of those partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State’s external partners work with the agency to contribute to and review their strategic plans. They explore overlapping issues and strategies and determine how to work together to address those. The State’s external partners provide input on all of the Federal child welfare programs (Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)/Chafee/CIP/CBCAP) and support the coordination of such activities with those conducted during the CFSR process, as applicable. The strategic plans of the State child welfare agency and of external partners reflect mutual goals and activities.
Sharing of resources and structural changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited (or no) evidence that external partners are contributing resources (in-kind or direct funding) to address the issues identified through the previous CFSR and PIP or to support the current Statewide Assessment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State’s external partners have identified and/or made specific contributions to the previous CFSR and PIP and the current Statewide Assessment process. The partners have identified areas in which they can contribute to making positive changes in outcomes through the PIP, for example, co-locating a mental health or public health specialist in the child welfare agency or co-locating a social worker in a school-based family resource center.

VI. Evidence of State Collaboration With Stakeholders During the CFSR (continued)		
Elements of Collaboration	Evidence of Limited or No Collaboration	Evidence of Strong Collaboration
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no indication that the other partners will continue participating in future CFSRs or ongoing evaluations of State performance. • There is no process or vehicle for promoting and sustaining the collaboration, for example, not sharing, with other partners, agency data or ongoing evaluations of progress noted through the QA process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are established procedures and vehicles for collaborating in an ongoing manner, such as stakeholder involvement in ongoing monitoring of progress through the State’s QA process or data sharing. • The State and its partners have identified specific actions that other agencies will undertake to support the CFSRs and other outcome-driven activities on an ongoing basis. For the CFSR, this might include, for example, engagement in PIP implementation and monitoring, and involvement in CFSR-related activities between PIP completion and the subsequent CFSR. • The State’s external partners coordinate with the child welfare agency in advocating for improvements in services for children and families through their State legislature or the State budget process.
Policies/laws/regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes are made to policies without collaboration with key partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific policies/laws/regulations have been established as a result of the collaboration process. • Agency leadership works together under the established protocols to advocate for legislative change or comment on proposed legislation, as appropriate.

VI. Evidence of State Collaboration With Stakeholders During the CFSR (continued)		
Elements of Collaboration	Evidence of Limited or No Collaboration	Evidence of Strong Collaboration
Research/data/evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no process for sharing data among agencies in support of the planning and evaluation of programs and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a process for sharing data among the State agency and its external partners for the purposes of (1) identifying shared clients and promoting coordinated services/delivery and (2) identifying policy and practice issues that require improvements or that can serve as best practices. The roles of the collaborative partners in contributing to improved outcomes are continually evaluated, and the development of new strategies for making those improvements is ongoing. There is a process for evaluating the impact of the collaborative process.
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited (or no) evidence that the leadership of the State agency or its external partner agencies are committed to collaboration. The leadership is not communicating with staff about the importance of, and/or strategies for, interagency collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence that State agency and external partner leadership support strong collaboration. The State agency's vision and mission, and internal structure and management practice, promote collaboration and are shared with staff and the community. Senior staff are assigned responsibility for promoting collaboration within the child welfare agency and with its external partners.

VII. Monitoring Stakeholder Involvement

The Children's Bureau Regional Office staff and State child welfare agency leaders share joint responsibility for monitoring State efforts to engage stakeholders, both at the State and local levels, in the CFSR process. The following strategies can be used by both to ensure that State agencies establish CFSR and PIP planning processes, both internal and with the Children's Bureau, that promote the involvement of stakeholders in meaningful ways:

- **Assess how State agency staff are involving stakeholders.** Children's Bureau staff and State agency leadership can consider how often State child welfare agency staff talk about their plans for collaborating with key stakeholders and their efforts to do so. What are the focus and outcomes of those collaborations regarding both process and substance? Children's Bureau staff also should watch for other signs of State collaboration with stakeholders. These might include, for example, (1) collaborative meetings that State staff attend or host, (2) Web sites that convey information to, or solicit information from, stakeholders, (3) cross-training of agency and stakeholder staff, or (4) the routine engagement of key stakeholders in PIP or other child welfare reform action strategies and analysis.

Questions such as the following also can be useful in assessing the degree to which an agency is engaging stakeholders:

- What collaborative relationships with stakeholders did the agency have in place before the most recent CFSR and PIP? After the most recent CFSR and PIP?
 - Which stakeholders currently appear to be actively involved, and which are not and why?
 - Do the stakeholders represent the diversity of the State population, particularly those being served by the child welfare system?
 - What role(s) are stakeholders playing? Are they simply providing input, or do they appear to be playing a role in conducting CFSR processes or developing and reviewing CFSR-related materials?
 - What process(es) does the agency plan to use to provide feedback to stakeholders on how their input will be used?
 - What strategies is the State using to continually educate/communicate with stakeholders about the CFSR/PIP?
 - What strategies does the State agency currently employ or plan to employ to ensure the continuation or enhancement of stakeholder relationships developed or strengthened through the CFSR or PIP processes?
- **Check the engagement of stakeholders in relation to the outcomes and systemic factors under review.** For each of the CFSR outcomes and systemic factors, the Children's Bureau Regional Office staff and State agency leadership might use the following questions to explore with the State child welfare staff new ways for engaging

VII. Monitoring Stakeholder Involvement *(continued)*

stakeholders in improving child welfare policies and practices. Children’s Bureau staff should note that the inclusion of a question/strategy about collaboration in a specific area below does not denote it as a requirement to be assessed during the CFSR review of outcomes. Rather, Children’s Bureau staff might use the questions to guide their assessment of, or conversations with, the State child welfare agency about the State’s ongoing CFSR-related collaborative efforts to address needed improvements in State policies and practices related to those outcomes and systemic factors:

- How does the State agency currently engage the appropriate stakeholders in designing and assessing its policy/strategies for each of the items under the CFSR outcomes and systemic factors?
- Which stakeholders does the agency engage in relation to the items, how does it do so, and what have been the results?
- What are the agency’s plans for enhancing its engagement of stakeholders related to specific CFSR items under the CFSR outcomes and systemic factors?
- **Prepare for the next review.** Before each new cycle of reviews (and throughout the CFSP and CFSR processes), Children’s Bureau Regional Office staff and State child welfare agency leadership can explore how the State is continually enhancing their plans for engaging critical stakeholders by reflecting on the following:
 - What did the agency learn by consulting with stakeholders during the previous CFSR, and how will the agency integrate those lessons into future CFSR and PIP planning?
 - Which of the processes used to solicit input from stakeholders during the previous CFSR might be useful during the current CFSR in reaching out to the stakeholders with whom the agency needs to consult?
 - What have been the benefits of the stakeholder relationships with regard to the State’s child welfare reform efforts?
 - Which stakeholders are proving to be valuable assets to the State agency during the CFSR and PIP planning processes, and why?
 - How can the State build on those positive stakeholder experiences?
 - Does the State have procedures for assessing stakeholder perspectives on the agency’s efforts to engage them in the CFSR process and for responding to stakeholder feedback received?
 - How is the agency planning to consult with stakeholders during the Statewide Assessment, onsite review, and PIP development? Which stakeholders are they planning to consult with, how will they do so (for example, through focus groups, meetings, or Web sites), and what are the anticipated results?

VII. Monitoring Stakeholder Involvement *(continued)*

- How is the agency planning to involve stakeholders in the Statewide Assessment, onsite review, and PIP? Which stakeholders are they planning to involve, how will they do so (for example, having them participate in developing key sections of the Statewide Assessment or PIP or serve as a reviewer during the onsite review), and what are the anticipated results?
- What plans does the State have for building on the successful partnerships created to date, and how will it reach out in new ways to those previously reluctant to engage in the CFSR and PIP planning processes and continue to identify potential new partners?
- What type of guidance/technical assistance (TA) appeared to help the State achieve greater stakeholder involvement?
- **Check for clear signs of stakeholder involvement when reviewing the Statewide Assessment or PIP drafts.** Questions such as the following can be valuable in checking for collaboration in the Statewide Assessment or PIP drafts:
 - Are stakeholders listed as key players in the Statewide Assessment or PIP?
 - Were those stakeholders involved in previous reviews so that they bring a strong understanding to the Statewide Assessment or PIP process?
 - What roles are the stakeholders playing in the Statewide Assessment or PIP development, implementation, and monitoring/analysis process? Are these roles similar to those played by the stakeholders during the previous CFSR, or have they been expanded?

VIII. Technical Assistance in Support of State Collaborative Efforts

Collaboration is not easy under the best of circumstances; it requires the commitment of time and the availability of resources, *and* it is contingent on the interest of agency leaders and the State's current political context. The Children's Bureau and State agency staff can use the following questions to assess whether TA might help the State enhance its collaborative process:

- What types of collaborations and partnerships currently exist?
- Is the State child welfare agency the convener/leader of those collaborations/partnerships or a participant in a process facilitated by others?
- How strong is the evidence of these collaborations, as reflected in the Statewide Assessment, onsite review, and PIP?
- What changes have resulted from those collaborations/partnerships, and what has been the impact on outcomes for children, youth, and families?

VIII. Technical Assistance in Support of State Collaborative Efforts (continued)

- With whom/with which agencies has the agency been unable to establish a collaborative partnership?
- What have been the barriers to those collaborations, and how might TA help address those?

Children's Bureau-Funded National Resource Centers

States may access TA in support of CFSR-related collaboration through the Children's Bureau-funded National Resource Centers (NRCs):

- National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement
<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/tele.htm>
- National Resource Center for Child Protective Services
<http://www.nrccps.org/>
- National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues
<http://www.abanet.org/child/rcjji/>
- National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/>
- National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology
<http://www.nrccwdt.org/>
- National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption
<http://www.nrcadoption.org/>
- National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development
<http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/>
- National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare
<http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/>
- National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
<http://www.friendsnrc.org/>
- AdoptUSKids
<http://www.adoptuskids.org/>

VIII. Technical Assistance in Support of State Collaborative Efforts (continued)

Other Technical Assistance Resources

States also can access TA documents and information through other organizations. A list of organizations that provide child welfare information and/or TA appears on the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information's Web site, at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/general/organizations/index.cfm>.

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes

During the second and subsequent CFSR cycles, the Children's Bureau will emphasize the need for States to engage three of its key partners—youth, the courts, and tribes. State child welfare agency staff managing the CFSR process will need to determine the best methods for doing so. In selecting those methods, States should consider both the issues specific to each group and the more general issues of collaboration, such as the following:

- Transportation issues (Where are CFSR meetings scheduled? How will people get to those?)
- Meeting dates and times that accommodate participants' other commitments and schedules (for example, not during school hours)
- Systems for sharing information about the CFSR with the key stakeholders
- Ways to mentor or otherwise support key stakeholders, particularly youth, during their involvement

The section below highlights the benefits of collaborating with youth, the courts, and tribes during the CFSRs; provides strategies for doing so; and outlines potential roles for these stakeholders during the Statewide Assessment, onsite review, and PIP. For more information on working with these key groups, please visit the Web sites of the Children's Bureau-funded NRCs and other key related organizations; a list is available on the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information's Web site at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/general/organizations/index.cfm>. Several of the NRCs and other organizations focus specifically on issues related to youth, court, and tribal involvement in the CFSRs.

Collaborating With Youth

State child welfare agencies can engage youth who are being or have been served by the child welfare system in the CFSR process by identifying and then working with existing youth organizations and advisory boards. These might include the following, for example:

- State, regional, and local child welfare youth advisory boards
- Governors' youth councils
- Local chapters of national child welfare or youth-related organizations
- Transitional Living Programs

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes

(continued)

Collaborating With Youth *(continued)*

- Community-based youth serving organizations
- Youth life skills groups
- The child protective services component of the child welfare agency (to engage youth who received child welfare services in the home)
- State or local runaway or homeless youth programs
- State or local foster care, foster youth, or foster parent associations
- State or local mental health association subcommittees on youth
- State or local bar association subcommittees on youth/child welfare/juvenile justice
- Local Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or Guardian ad Litem (GAL) chapters
- State or local children’s advocacy center organizations

Benefits of Collaborating With Youth

Young people bring a unique perspective to the CFSR process. As former service recipients or volunteers in their local communities, they offer child welfare agencies insights into how services to youth can best be provided. There are significant benefits to engaging them fully in the CFSR process:

- Offers youth, who are the consumers of child welfare services, the opportunity to provide input into systems change
- Ensures the input of youth about what works and what does not, and their service needs
- Offers child welfare agency staff the opportunity to consider new strategies on the basis of the creative perspectives that youth provide
- Empowers youth by engaging them in meaningful contributions to their communities, the child welfare system, and other youth in care and strengthening their sense of competence, usefulness, and belonging
- Creates opportunities for youth to speak on behalf of the agency regarding the needs of foster care youth and the program and systems improvements that need to be made

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes (continued)

Strategies for Collaborating With Youth

Statewide Assessment

States can engage youth in the Statewide Assessment process through the following activities:

- Identifying existing statewide youth-serving or youth organizations, youth advisory or advocacy groups, or other standing committees that can help to promote the engagement of youth in the CFSR process by both recommending youth participants and providing training and mentoring to those youth during their involvement.
- Working with State or local foster youth ombudspersons to identify youth who might be involved.
- Training staff on working collaboratively with youth; experienced youth can serve as co-trainers and co-facilitators.
- Developing systems for preparing youth to collaborate with the State and its other partners during the Statewide Assessment process. These might include, for example, inviting them to CFSR-related public forums or trainings, and developing CFSR materials targeted to their age group and potential role in the process.
- Including two or more youth who are being or have been served by the child welfare system—either through in-home or foster care services—on the Statewide Assessment Team (and subgroups, as appropriate), providing a clearly defined role, setting expectations, and assigning a senior staff person to provide them with an orientation and to mentor them during the process. By engaging several youth, States can provide a measure of safety for them and increase their confidence in speaking up on youth-related issues.
- Defining the types of information that the Statewide Assessment Team feels it needs to gather from youth in completing the Statewide Assessment Instrument, and developing questions for doing so.
- Conducting surveys of, and focus groups with, youth regarding their experience with the child welfare agency, and using the results to outline areas to be further assessed through the onsite review and to guide program analysis, service realignment, and practice improvements. These survey and focus groups should target or include, when possible, youth engaged through child protective services and those who experienced out-of-home care.
- Meeting with existing youth advisory or advocacy groups to gather input for inclusion in the Statewide Assessment about how child welfare services to youth meet the goals of ensuring their safety, permanency, and well-being.

In preparation for the second round of CFSRs, some States already are exploring such strategies for engaging youth in the process.

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes

(continued)

Strategies for Collaborating With Youth *(continued)*

Onsite Review

States can engage youth in the onsite review process through the following activities:

- Developing systems for preparing youth, especially those who are being or have been served by child welfare systems, or representatives of youth-serving organizations to participate in stakeholder interviews during the onsite review. Begin by inviting them to CFSR-related public forums or trainings and developing CFSR materials targeted to their age group and role in the process.
- If inviting youth to play a role in the stakeholder interviews, other than as observers, assigning an agency staff person to work with them to (1) determine at which interviews they might play an active role and (2) develop a list of youth-issue-focused questions related to the CFSR. This staff person also might serve as a mentor to the youth during the process, traveling with them to interviews and debriefing their experience after the interviews are completed.
- Conducting stakeholder interviews with youth (and providing to them in advance of the interview a copy of the questions that they will be asked)
- Inviting youth and/or representatives of youth-serving organizations to attend the State's exit conference at the end of the review week.

Program Improvement Plan

States can engage youth in the PIP process through the following activities:

- Including youth on the PIP Team and in PIP development and implementation work groups (through both youth advisory or advocacy groups and inclusion of individual youth on teams and work groups).
- Inviting youth from the committee responsible for developing the Chafee State Plan to participate in the PIP development and implementation process to address overlapping areas of improvement.
- Engaging youth in assessing PIP progress on issues related to serving youth in the child welfare system; for example, they can serve on a PIP monitoring subgroup charged with reviewing PIP progress quarterly.
- Asking youth from various committees (PIP and other State advisory or advocacy groups on social service delivery) to review and comment on PIP drafts and participate in the subsequent revision discussions.
- Asking staff from youth-serving organizations to participate in the ongoing evaluation of State data relative to youth outcomes, for example, taking a role in assessing youth involvement in the development of their case plans.
- Teaming State child welfare agency staff with staff of State or local youth organizations to help design and implement specific PIP action steps.

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes (continued)

Collaborating With the Courts

State child welfare agencies can involve the courts in the CFSR process by establishing working relationships with individuals and organizations such as the following:

- Chief Justice
- State Court Administrator
- CIP Director
- Local presiding judges
- Agency attorneys
- GALs and CASAs
- State bar association
- Parents' attorneys
- State Council of Family and Juvenile Court Judges
- Juvenile Probation Officers
- Governor's Task Force on Juvenile Justice

Benefits of Collaborating With the Courts

The courts play an integral role in supporting positive outcomes for children and families engaged in child welfare services, and there are significant benefits to engaging them fully in the CFSR process:

- Increases judicial and court personnel awareness of the benefits of the CFSR process
- Ensures that the experience and perspectives of court personnel inform the CFSR and PIP processes
- Ensures that new strategies for improving child welfare agency and court collaboration are designed by both agency and court personnel
- Promotes court interest in implementing and monitoring the impact of PIP strategies
- Builds ongoing relationships between agency and court personnel that will impact day-to-day practice
- Promotes a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing issues raised through the CIP and the PIP

Since the launching of the CFSRs, the Children's Bureau has strongly encouraged States to use the CFSR process to enhance their collaboration with the courts. In addition, the scope of the CIP, as amended and reauthorized by the PSSF Amendments of 2001 (Public Law 107-133), was expanded to (1) include improvements that the highest court deems necessary to provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in foster care, as set forth in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) and (2) implement a corrective action plan, as necessary, in response to findings about the State child welfare system identified by the CFSR. More recently, the Children's Bureau issued an Information Memorandum (IM) entitled "Court Involvement in the Child and Family Services Reviews" (ACYF-CB-IM-05-05; June 2005).

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes (continued)

Benefits of Collaborating With the Courts (continued)

The IM shares information about the special efforts that the Children’s Bureau will make to foster collaboration between courts and State child welfare agencies. Moreover, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 added several new objectives to the CFSR-related efforts to promote court-child welfare agency collaboration: (1) appropriated funds for two new grants designed to improve case tracking and analysis by the courts and to provide training of court personnel, including cross-training with child welfare agency staff, and (2) added a title IV-B plan requirement for States to demonstrate substantial, ongoing, and meaningful collaboration with State courts during IV-B and IV-E planning and the CFSRs.

Strategies for Collaborating With the Courts¹

Statewide Assessment

States can engage court personnel in the Statewide Assessment process through the following activities:

- Engaging the Chief Justice early in the process by notifying them of the CFSR’s purpose and schedule (during the second and subsequent rounds of CFSRs, the Children’s Bureau Regional Office will notify the State’s Chief Justice regarding the CFSR at the initiation of the Statewide Assessment).
- Developing materials about the CFSRs to share with court personnel; the documents should help them understand the benefits of the CFSR to their operation and to children and families.
- Notifying the court of the CFSR timeline, including when the Statewide Assessment will take place.
- Developing plans for engaging court personnel, and reporting on those during the CFSR planning conference calls.
- Accessing the TA available from the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues; recently retired judges will be available to visit with court personnel before the beginning of the Statewide Assessment, and again as the PIP is being developed.
- Including court personnel on the Statewide Assessment Team.
- Conducting surveys, focus groups, and informational meetings with, or in conjunction with, court personnel.
- Requesting court personnel’s assistance in identifying legal and judicial issues affecting safety and permanency.

¹Adapted from *How and Why To Involve the Courts in Your Child and Families Services Review (CFSR)*. Mark Hardin, National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, March 2002.

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes (continued)

Strategies for Collaborating With the Courts (continued)

Statewide Assessment (continued)

- Developing cross-agency data teams to compare State agency and court data with regard to procedures for ensuring children’s safety and permanency. For example, States can create teams of child welfare agency and court personnel to explore patterns in the data regarding the number of Terminations of Parental Rights (TPRs) that are pending.
- Engaging court personnel in cross-training opportunities; for example, key court personnel should be invited to participate in the federally sponsored CFSR-related trainings conducted by the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement.
- Requesting court assistance in preparing the narrative portions of the Statewide Assessment relative to the work of the court.
- Asking key court personnel, both those involved in the PIP development process and others, to review and comment on Statewide Assessment drafts.
- Creating a special CFSR legal-judicial subcommittee to examine safety, permanency, and well-being issues and report on those to the Statewide Assessment Team.

Onsite Review

States can engage court personnel in the onsite review through the following activities:

- Notifying key court personnel about the timeline for planning and conducting the onsite review
- Inviting senior court personnel to designate staff to participate as case record reviewers during the onsite review
- Conducting stakeholder interviews with court personnel (and providing to them in advance of the interview a copy of the questions that they will be asked)
- Inviting court personnel to attend exit meetings/debriefings

Program Improvement Plan

States can engage court personnel in the PIP process through the following activities:

- Providing the Chief Justice and other juvenile or family court judges with a copy of the Final Report
- Notifying key court personnel about the PIP timeline
- Engaging CIP staff in exploring how best to integrate the CIP Strategic Plan and the PIP

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes (continued)

Strategies for Collaborating With the Courts (continued)

Program Improvement Plan (continued)

- Including key court personnel on the PIP Development Team and associated work groups
- Requesting court involvement in the development of PIP strategies to address onsite findings, particularly as they relate to the role of the court
- Using existing court data to measure the results of PIP action strategies, and exploring opportunities for new court data collection activities in support of the PIP
- Inviting court personnel to review and comment on PIP drafts
- Identifying TA needs, for example, strategies for achieving timely filings for TPRs
- Initiating cross-training opportunities for child welfare agency and court personnel on issues such as the ASFA requirements
- Partnering to develop strategies for approaching the State legislature to request needed legislative changes
- Ensuring that the PIP is aligned with the CIP re-assessments
- Developing sustainable, regularly scheduled meetings to address challenges/problems that affect children's permanency and to shape and implement the State's reform agenda
- Teaming court personnel with State child welfare agency staff to implement and monitor PIP action strategies
- Committing to implement specific aspects of the CIP's strategic plan for court improvements
- Including court personnel on PIP evaluation teams
- Sharing child welfare data with the court on an ongoing basis

Collaborating With Tribes

State child welfare agencies can engage tribal representatives in the CFSR process by identifying and then working with the leaders of the following, for example:

- Local tribes
- Local tribal organizations, such as urban service centers
- Local chapters of national organizations addressing tribal issues

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes

(continued)

Collaborating With Tribes *(continued)*

- Statewide tribal organizations
- Tribal child-placing agencies or social services

Benefits of Collaborating With Tribes

- Clarifies the roles and responsibilities for the provision of care to tribal children to better serve Native American children and families
- Provides opportunities to improve outcomes for Native American children served by the child welfare agency
- Enhances mutual understanding of the role of governmental agencies in formulating or implementing policies that have tribal implications

Statewide Assessment

States can engage tribal representatives in the Statewide Assessment process through the following activities:

- Providing formal notification of the CFSR to the tribal chairpersons/executive directors and social services directors, and requesting that they designate appropriate persons to be involved throughout this collaborative process
- Using the CFSR process to formalize and enhance consultation and collaboration with tribes; consulting early in the process and engaging tribal representatives in meaningful roles, discussions of key issues, and decisionmaking
- Developing materials about the CFSRs to share with tribal representatives; the documents should help them understand the benefits of the CFSR to their efforts to support children and families
- Including tribal representatives on the Statewide Assessment Team and associated work groups
- Inviting tribal representatives to participate in surveys and focus groups
- Holding key Statewide Assessment meetings or focus groups on tribal lands, in Indian Country, and/or on reservations, and at times convenient for tribal members
- Asking tribal representatives to identify any tribal data that they would like to share related to children served by the State child welfare agency and to help analyze State agency data

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes

(continued)

Benefits of Collaborating With Tribes *(continued)*

Statewide Assessment *(continued)*

- Identifying child welfare issues related to Native American children served by the State agency, and exploring strategies for resolving those with tribal representatives, including building on the sharing of information that occurs in developing State and tribal CFSPs and reporting annual progress in each entity's APSR
- Identifying areas in which States and tribes could work together better to improve their child welfare systems
- Initiating cross-training opportunities for State and tribal child welfare agency staff
- Involving tribal representatives in drafting sections of the Statewide Assessment
- Soliciting tribal representatives' comments on Statewide Assessment drafts

Onsite Review

States can engage tribal representatives in the onsite review through the following activities:

- Notifying key tribal representatives about the timeline for planning and conducting the onsite review
- Inviting tribal representatives to designate staff to participate as case record reviewers during the onsite review
- Conducting stakeholder interviews with tribal representatives (and providing to them in advance of the interview a copy of the questions that they will be asked)
- Inviting tribal representatives to attend exit meetings or debriefings

Program Improvement Plan

States can engage tribal representatives in the PIP process through the following activities:

- Providing a copy of the Final Report to tribal representatives.
- Including tribal representatives on the PIP Team and associated work groups.
- Establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs). Through these agreements, the State agency and tribes agree to work together to address child welfare policies and practices needing improvement. An MOA, for example, might identify State and tribal roles in recruiting foster parents. The partnerships created by the MOUs/MOAs also enable State agencies to focus improvements on issues important to tribes and reassure tribes of the agency's willingness to collaborate.

IX. Working With Key Stakeholders: Youth, Courts, and Tribes *(continued)*

Benefits of Collaborating With Tribes *(continued)*

Program Improvement Plan *(continued)*

- Asking for assistance in identifying areas needing improvement.
- Engaging tribal representatives in analyzing State and local data to identify tribal issues and concerns and promising practices.
- Ensuring that the State’s ongoing QA efforts address issues concerning Native American children and include tribal representatives in measuring program improvement activities.
- Inviting tribal representatives to review and comment on PIP drafts.
- Teaming tribal representatives with State child welfare agency staff to implement and monitor PIP activities. Ideally, State agencies engage tribal representatives throughout the CFSR process as stakeholders participating in the Statewide Assessment and onsite review, or in serving as onsite reviewers, as appropriate. Engagement in PIP planning and implementation therefore flows logically from the collaboration established during earlier stages of the review cycle. In situations in which tribal representatives were not involved in the CFSR before the PIP process, States might provide a thorough and targeted explanation of the process and outcomes and ask tribes for input into designing, and assistance in carrying out, PIP strategies.
- Including tribal representatives on PIP evaluation teams.
- Identifying TA needs for both tribes and State child welfare agencies.
- Initiating cross-training opportunities for State and tribal child welfare agency staff about practice issues related to agency/tribe jurisdiction over child welfare cases.
- Holding PIP meetings on tribal lands, in Indian Country, and/or on reservations.
- Acknowledging both the uniqueness of tribal child welfare circumstances and perspectives and the shared goal of improving outcomes for children and families.

X. Illustrative Examples of State Child Welfare Agency Collaborations: Youth, Courts, and Tribes

The CFSRs have created unique opportunities for State child welfare agencies to build new or strengthen existing collaborative relationships. The following are illustrative examples of how States have used the CFSR process to collaborate for positive change for children and families:

- In Wisconsin, the Chief Juvenile Judge in a large metropolitan area participated in the onsite review as a reviewer for another site, and participated in a stakeholder interview for the largest metropolitan area via telephone.
- In Michigan, Mississippi, and other States, the CIP Coordinator participated in the development of the Statewide Assessment and served as a reviewer during the onsite review.
- After the CFSR and during the PIP process, the Delaware Division of Family Services, Department of Services to Children, Youth and Their Families, decided that new legislation was needed to support the courts in addressing permanency issues identified through the review, specifically the use of TPR in relation to the length of time to adoption. The State convened a Work Group to pursue the legislative option and, on the basis of their discussions, determined that the performance issues might be better addressed through administrative changes.

Subsequently, the State has been able to meet the standard for length of time to adoption through a range of systems improvements, including:

- Administrative reviews for 100 percent of the children entering foster care
- Consistent case review by the Permanency Committee prior to the Permanency Hearings in Family Court (in Delaware, the Permanency Committee reviews the cases of children who have not been reunited with their families within 9 months of entering foster care or who have been in care for a total of 9 out of 16 months; any subsequent goal changes then must be approved by the Committee)

In addition, with the support of the CIP, during the first year that children come into care, the court reviews their cases frequently and all parents are represented by contract attorneys from the Preliminary Protection Hearing forward. As a result, within a year, either children have been returned home or the case for TPR has been put in the court order.

To foster collaboration between the State child welfare agencies and courts in their Region, the Children's Bureau Region VI Office sponsored a half-day CIP roundtable at their 2005 Midwinter Leadership Conference, which was attended by State child welfare agency directors, the CIP leadership, and key judicial leaders. Facilitators at the roundtable highlighted the best practices promoted by each of the regional State Court

X. Illustrative Examples of State Child Welfare Agency Collaborations: Youth, Courts, and Tribes *(continued)*

Improvement Projects and the current and potential impact of those on the CFSR outcomes in the respective States in which they operate.

For example, the Cluster Courts and Family Drug Courts, which are projects of the Texas and Louisiana CIPs, respectively, have significantly decreased the number of child welfare case continuances and promoted the location and involvement of fathers in child abuse and neglect case resolution. (Texas Cluster Courts were formed to enable rural counties to meet the State's permanency statute guidelines enacted in 1998; each court serves a cluster of contiguous counties, and a specially trained judge is appointed to travel to each county within the cluster to hear child welfare cases).

The event leaders also facilitated a dialogue between the CSFR and CIP lead personnel, which, coupled with their learning about innovations in other States, has the potential to promote positive change.

- The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Division of Children, Youth and Families, has established a number of vehicles for collaborating with tribal child welfare program staff, including
 - Holding joint strategic planning sessions with tribal child welfare program staff through specialized forums and ongoing committees
 - Holding monthly meetings between the State's Indian Child Welfare Specialist and tribal affiliates and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) liaisons
 - Inviting the Intertribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) and Tribal Social Services Work Group members (a group facilitated by the ITCA that focuses on social services issues and concerns that impact tribal communities) to participate in a focus group during the Statewide Assessment.

In addition, through a contract between the DES and the ITCA, the ITCA provides training, policy analysis, and information dissemination and sponsors the annual Indian Child and Family Conference in collaboration with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Health Service, and the Arizona State University School of Social Work.

Arizona also included as a PIP benchmark consultation with the Youth Advisory Board during the development of a new training curriculum on conducting case management for, and addressing the services of, older youth. That State's training institute has ongoing contact with board members who are current and former foster youth; the youth also meet twice a year with the Governor to provide information on their foster care experience. The board is an independent organization; however, since the Governor joined the group in 2004, there is some expectation that the youth, as well as the State agency, will follow up and report on recommendations for improving the child welfare system.

X. Illustrative Examples of State Child Welfare Agency Collaborations: Youth, Courts, and Tribes *(continued)*

- The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department conducted stakeholder interviews with a group of youth in foster care and the State Independent Living Coordinator. During those interviews, youth described how they participated in their service plans and the types of services that they felt they needed.

The agency also worked closely with the Navajo Nation to increase recruitment of Navajo foster homes.
- The Michigan Department of Human Services conducted stakeholder interviews with children in foster care; in addition, a member of the Governor’s Task Force on Children’s Justice participated as a reviewer during the onsite review.
- Utah uses a “policy summit process” to gather information when considering changes to policy or programming. In 2004, when the State focused on making changes in youth services, including Independent Living Services, they conducted surveys of young people and staff of organizations serving youth in the child welfare system. The information collected and analyzed through that process helped the State to realign policy, programming, and spending for youth services.
- The Oklahoma Department of Human Services, through its title IV-E Tribal/State agreements, is conducting mini-CFSRs on randomly selected tribal custody cases. This experience has assisted the tribes in understanding what is being required of the State agency during the CFSR process and in appreciating the value of the process.
- The Judicial Council of California’s CIP promoted court participation in California’s CFSR and the Outcomes and Accountability Review process (known as the C-CFSR) that was subsequently implemented at the county level. The council also included questions in its court improvement re-assessment survey that determine the extent to which the local courts participated in their respective C-CFSR self-assessment and system improvement efforts. In addition, the Council plans to continue promoting and assessing these collaborations.