

# Center for States Needs Assessment 2017 - Coordinated State Child Welfare Program Grantee Meeting Focus Group Guide

## Background

Focus groups are an effective methodology for gathering the experiences of many people at once, i.e., it can be more efficient for increasing sample size. The group process can bring ideas or experiences to light which would otherwise have been hard to access. The process of sharing in a group can reduce feelings of isolation.

Three focus groups will be held on the first day of the Coordinated State Child Welfare Program Grantee Meetings. One focus group will include the State Child Welfare Directors. The second focus group will include the State Adoption Managers & Foster Care Managers. The third focus group will include the State Liaison Officers, Children's Justice Act Managers, In-Home Services Managers, & Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) State Leads. Each focus group will include 10-15 participants and run for approximately 1 hour.

## Focus Group Objective

The objective is to learn from various meeting attendees about their agencies' needs that are identified during the grantee meetings and which can be supported in the future by the Center for States' services. This is a mechanism for the Center to collect timely Needs Assessment data.

## Focus Group Staffing

The focus groups will be facilitated by senior Center for States staff and supported by note takers who are knowledgeable about the field and the stakeholders. The Needs Assessment Lead will provide an one hour training for the facilitators and note takers that includes a review of the objectives of the focus groups and effective focus group strategies. The facilitators will attend the meetings so will have the context for leading the focus groups.

## Focus Group Logistics

- ICF meeting planner will identify the 3 rooms at the Marriot to hold the focus groups
- An invite will be sent earlier to all attendees to sign up for the focus groups
- An announcement will be made in the morning and at the end of the last session to remind participants about the focus groups
- An information sheet about the focus group, the locations and times will be provided at the registration table

**Instructions for the Facilitators:**

- The seating arrangement should either be conference or U shaped.
- Have a participant sign in sheet that includes First and Last Name, Job title, Agency Name, City and State. Let participants complete this after they enter the room.

**Overview for the Facilitator**

**Purpose of Focus Group:** To learn more about the needs that have emerged for child welfare professionals in States and territories as a result of participating in the meetings.

**How the information will be used:** To inform and improve the services (products, training opportunities, technical assistance) provided by the Capacity Building Collaborative.

**Participants:** State Child Welfare Directors, State Adoption Managers, Foster Care Managers, In-Home Services Managers, Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) State Leads, State Liaison Officers, & Children’s Justice Act Managers.

**Table below to be completed by the Facilitator**

<p><b>Event:</b> Coordinated State Child Welfare Program Grantee Meetings</p> <p><b>Location:</b> The Crystal Gateway Marriot, Arlington, Virginia</p> <p><b>Meeting Dates:</b> August 10–11, 2017</p> <p><b>FG Date:</b> August 10, 2017</p> <p><b>FG Start and End Times:</b></p> <p><b>FG Facilitator Name:</b></p> <p><b>FG Notetaker Name:</b></p>
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**FOCUS GROUP OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTIONS: (5 minutes)**

My name is <insert name>. I will be facilitating this focus group. I am the <insert role within the center> at the Center for States Thank you for agreeing to join us today. This focus group will last for approximately 1 hour. This is an opportunity to gather information about your resource and support needs, especially those identified during today’s meeting discussions, and which can inform the development of products, peer networks, and learning experiences offered across the Collaborative and within the Center. I will ask the group a few questions. There are no wrong answers—this is an opportunity to share and learn. The only limitation is to help us to stay on time in order to cover all of the questions.

Your participation in the focus group is voluntary and confidential. Any input gathered will not be attributed to you individually, but will be combined with others' comments for a fuller picture of the issues and to inform support for your state. We will use this information to guide and improve our services, not disseminate our findings to the public. Please let me know if there are any concerns about this process.

Before we get started, let's see who's participating in this focus group. We would like everyone to briefly introduce themselves and tell us what agency or organization you work for, and State you work in.

### Focus Group Discussion Guide

#### Questions:

1. You heard preliminary **CFSR Round 3 findings from Dr. Milner during the plenary session**. How do these findings inform your state's current and future work?

#### PROBE:

- o Can you provide examples?

2. How is your state using partnerships to support its improvement/change efforts?

#### PROBES:

- o In which areas does your state have the greatest needs for additional support?
- o What types of technical assistance or support would be really helpful?
- o What role do technical assistance providers currently play?

3. Let's talk about the discussions you had in your **state working sessions**. What successes, barriers and challenges, and action plans did your breakout group identify?

#### PROBES:

- o What types of services and resources would be most useful to your agency in its efforts to build on the successes and address barriers, challenges and action plans?
- o Do the types of services and resources needed differ by professional level in the agency? (E.g., manager, supervisor, caseworker)
- o How urgently are these services and resources needed? Is there a particular time frame during which these opportunities or resources would be most helpful?
- o Where can/do you go to find these types of services and resources?

4. Now let's talk about the discussions you had in your **professional cohort breakout session #1**. What successes, barriers and challenges, and strategies did your breakout group identify?

**PROBES:**

- o What types of services and resources would be most useful to your agency in its efforts to build on the successes and address the barriers, challenges and strategies?
  - o Do the types of services and resources needed differ by professional level in the agency? (E.g., manager, supervisor, caseworker)
  - o How urgently are these services and resources needed? Is there a particular time frame during which these opportunities or resources would be most helpful?
  - o Where can/do you go to find these types of services and resources?
5. How familiar are you with the services and resources offered by the Center for States?
  6. Do you have any noteworthy experiences, positive and negative, with the Center's services and resources to share? What are they? When did this occur?
  7. Do you have any questions about the types of services and resources that the Center can offer you?
  8. Is there anything else that we haven't discussed today that you would like to share?
  9. Would you like our Center staff to follow up with you on any supports identified for your state during this focus group?
  10. Do you have any questions for us before we end?

**Facilitator:** We greatly value your input and suggestions. As a reminder, your input is confidential and the information will not be attributed to you individually in reporting, but will be combined with others' comments for a fuller picture of the issues. We look forward to using the information to improve our services across the Collaborative and within our Center.