

Assessment of Foundational Capacity

Overview

The Assessment of Foundational Capacity is designed to measure the extent to which jurisdictions have key, foundational organizational capacities in place that are considered to be indicators of the health and functioning of child welfare systems. These capacities include organizational resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership. The data from this assessment will provide contextual information helpful to interpreting the effects of the services provided by the Capacity Building Collaborative.

Administration

The assessment will be administered to all jurisdictions in conjunction with the assessment processes that the Centers undertake with jurisdictions, before a work plan is developed.

- In partnership with the Center for States, the cross-center team will administer the assessment items via electronic survey to States one month prior to the Center's annual assessment with the State. The Center for States will provide the cross-center team with a list of participants and contact information prior to each State onsite assessment. The Center for States will have access to the results of the Assessment of Foundational Capacities so that the information can be used during the onsite assessment.

Survey items

While similar constructs will be measured across Centers, the content and language of the assessment items below will be tailored to some extent to align with the approaches used by the three Centers in their assessment work with States, Tribes and Court Improvement Programs (CIPs). The items shown here are organized by the foundational capacity they are intended to measure.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: Through this information collection, ACF is gathering information to identify the factors associated with the effectiveness of capacity building services provided by the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 6 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. This is a voluntary collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. If you have any comments on this collection of information please contact James DeSantis, Project Director, by email at DeSantis@jbassoc.com.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Center for States' assessment process. The primary goals of the assessment process are to:

- Build a shared understanding of your child welfare system, its functioning and performance, ongoing initiatives, strengths, and needs
- Inform strategic decision-making about which services and strategies can best address your system's unique conditions, support efforts to achieve change, and improve programs and practices
- Enhance organizational capacity for self-assessment

We invite you to complete this brief survey as part of the Center for States' assessment process. The Center and your jurisdiction will use the survey responses to jointly identify your system's needs. The Center will also use survey findings to help identify national trends and inform planning for future Center services and priorities.

The Cross-Center Evaluation Team (an independent evaluator also funded by the Children's Bureau) has designed this survey so that responses can be combined from multiple jurisdictions to examine relationships between organizational context, Center services, and service results. Evaluation findings will be used to improve services and to report on the work of the Collaborative.

The survey will take approximately 6 minutes to fill out. Your participation in this survey is voluntary - your views are very important, but you are not required to take the survey. Survey data will be safeguarded by the Center for States Evaluators and the Cross-Center Evaluation Team. Data will be kept private. Your individual responses will not be shared with others in your agency, Center Liaisons and consultants, or the Children's Bureau.

The Cross-Center Evaluation will use survey results to help interpret the effectiveness of Center services. Evaluation findings will be reported to the Children's Bureau and other audiences, but individual respondents will not be identified. The Children's Bureau also intends to share evaluation findings based on this survey and other data sources with the public in future evaluation reports. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact your State's Liaison or Dr. James DeSantis via email at desantis@jbassoc.com or toll-free via phone at 1-800-546-3230.

Using a scale of 1 to 5, please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your child welfare agency's capacities:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

In my opinion, in my agency, there is/are:

Organizational Resources

1. A sufficient number of staff to perform the work of our agency effectively in the majority of jurisdictions across the state
2. An acceptable level of stability among child welfare agency leadership, such as agency directors, administrators, and program managers
3. An acceptable level of staff retention across our child welfare agency
4. Acceptable facilities to conduct the business of our child welfare agency
5. Acceptable materials and technology to perform the work of our child welfare agency
6. Direct and easy access to information, materials, and tools on best practices to guide child welfare agency leadership and management
7. A data system that stores accurate and current information about the children and families we serve

Organizational Infrastructure

Competency

8. An effective process for training new state child welfare agency staff
9. A sufficient and accessible process for ongoing training and professional development of state child welfare agency staff
10. A system to provide feedback to staff to develop and improve their skills, through support, consultation, or coaching

Administration

11. Procedures that allow us to get useful data from our data systems in a timely manner
12. Processes by which we can internally review the performance of our work and make improvements in response to what we find
13. Written policies and protocols that guide the day-to-day functioning of our agency
14. A sufficient array of services available to meet the needs of children and families
15. Structured ways, such as workgroups, regular meetings, and anonymous surveys that allow families and youth to provide feedback on their experience in our system, which inform practice and decision making at the organizational level, not only with individual families

Knowledge and Skills

Workforce

16. A workforce with the professional educational preparation, such as an MSW, if required, needed for our agency's work
17. A workforce with the specialized training and skills needed for our agency's work
18. A workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary for our agency to achieve needed improvements to outcome measures of safety, permanency, and well-being

Analytic/evaluative

19. Internal expertise or ability to access external expertise readily in collecting and analyzing data to assess our child welfare work, and whether or not it is conducted as planned
20. Internal expertise, or ability to access external expertise readily, in collecting and analyzing the outcomes of our work, to determine whether our activities are leading to the results that we want
21. Leadership/management that is skilled at facilitating solutions to perceived barriers to the

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In my opinion, in my agency, there is/are:

implementation process

22. *A deep knowledge of and respect for the role of culture in the families we work with*

Organizational Culture & Climate

23. *A shared sense of mission and values toward the children and families we work with in our agency*

24. *An organizational environment in which staff feel valued and perform their job at their full potential*

25. *An organizational climate of inclusion in which diversity and culture of staff and viewpoints are valued*

26. *An organizational climate in which staff value and use multiple sources of formal and informal data to inform their work*

27. *A sense of mutual trust between staff and leadership/management*

28. *State leadership open to and supportive of change*

29. *State leadership that understands and values the work of the child welfare agency*

30. *Staff are able to accomplish personally meaningful things in their work, remain personally involved in their work and treat clients in a personalized way*

31. *Staff are able to manage stress, conflicting demands and high work volume*

Organizational Engagement & Partnership

32. *Effective collaborative relationships with the children and families that we serve*

33. *Effective collaborative relationships with service providers in our community*

34. *Effective collaborative relationships with the tribal court system*

35. *Effective collaborative relationships with state/county courts*

36. *Effective collaborative relationships with tribal child welfare system in our state/county*