

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 cross-center team, the Center for Courts will include the Assessment of Foundational Capacity items to Court Improvement Programs (CIPs) as part of its annual self-assessment process. In that assessment process, a single reporter completes the self-assessment on behalf of the CIP, and then submits it to the Center annually in December.

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 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.

Dear Court Improvement Program Staff,

Your feedback is needed for a study being conducted by the Cross-Center Evaluation team (an independent evaluator funded by the Children's Bureau). As a recipient of Capacity Building Services through the Center for Courts, we would like your perspective of the current functioning of the dependency courts in your state/territory on several key indicators, including organizational resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnerships. The responses from this survey will provide contextual information to help interpret the impact of the services provided by the Center for Courts.

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 Courts 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 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 Dr. James DeSantis at James Bell Associates via email at desantis@jbassoc.com or toll-free 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 the majority of your state's dependency courts capacities:

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

In my opinion, in the majority of dependency courts across my state, there is/are:

Organizational Resources

1. *A sufficient number of court personnel and stakeholders to perform the work of dependency courts effectively*
2. *An acceptable level of judiciary stability*
3. *An acceptable level of stability among non-judicial court staff and stakeholders*
4. *Acceptable facilities to conduct the business of dependency court*
5. *Acceptable materials and technology to perform the work of dependency court*
6. *Direct and easy access to information, materials, and tools on best practices to guide judicial leadership and management*
7. *Dependency court data systems that store accurate and current information about children and families*

Organizational Infrastructure

Competency

8. *An effective orientation process for court stakeholders who are new to dependency court*
9. *An effective process for ongoing training of court stakeholders*
10. *A system to provide consultation, support, and mentoring as is appropriate to court stakeholders to improve their ability to work effectively with the child welfare agency*

Administration

11. *Procedures that allow our CIP to get useful data from court data systems in a timely manner*
12. *Processes by which our CIP can internally review the performance of CIP and dependency court work and make improvements in response to what we find*
13. *Written policies and protocols that guide the day-to-day functions of dependency court personnel and interactions with the child welfare 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 court experience, which inform the CIP at the organizational level, not only with individual families*

Knowledge and Skills

Workforce

16. *Court stakeholders with the specialized training and skills needed for dependency court*
17. *Court stakeholders with an understanding of the relationship between court indicators and child welfare outcomes, such as timeliness of court hearings and achievement of permanency*

Analytic/evaluative

18. *Internal expertise among our CIP staff in collecting and analyzing data to assess dependency court processes and whether or not they are conducted as planned*
19. *Internal expertise in collecting and analyzing court data to determine whether or not dependency court processes are leading to the results that they want*
20. *Leaders at the judicial level and select court stakeholders that are skilled at finding solutions to problems encountered within the dependency court system*
21. *Among court stakeholders, a deep knowledge of and respect for the role of culture in the families*

Using a scale of 1 to 5, please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements about the majority of your state's dependency courts capacities:

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

In my opinion, in the majority of dependency courts across my state, there is/are:

they work with

Organizational Culture & Climate

- 22. *A shared sense of mission and values toward the children and families we work with in dependency court*
- 23. *An organizational environment in which court stakeholders feel understood and perform their job with maximum effectiveness*
- 24. *An organizational climate of inclusion in which diversity of court stakeholders and viewpoints are valued*
- 25. *An organizational climate in which court stakeholders value and use multiple sources of formal and informal data to inform their work*
- 26. *A sense of mutual trust between the CIP and Judiciary*
- 27. *Judiciary that is open to and supportive of change*
- 28. *Judiciary that understands and values the work of the child welfare agency*
- 29. *Court stakeholders are able to accomplish personally meaningful things in their work, remain personally involved in their work and treat clients in a personalized way*
- 30. *Court stakeholders are able to manage stress, conflicting demands and high work volume*

Organizational Engagement & Partnership

- 31. *Effective collaborative partnerships with the children and families that we serve*
- 32. *Effective collaborative relationships between CIP staff and other community agencies such as law enforcement and education*
- 33. *Effective collaborative relationships with the tribal court system*
- 34. *Effective collaborative relationships with the tribal child welfare system*
- 35. *Effective collaborative relationships with state/county child welfare system*