

Center for States Needs Assessment Focus Group



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

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Facilitator Instructions: Introduction and Overview

Introductory language and instructions are included in italics.

My name is <insert name>. I am the <insert role within the center> at the Center for States. I will be facilitating this focus group. Thank you for joining us today. This focus group will last for approximately 1 hour.

The Capacity Building Center for States (the Center) is conducting a needs assessment to establish a current and comprehensive understanding of urgent and ongoing challenges and needs experienced by child welfare systems that hinder improvements in outcomes for children, youth, and families. The assessment will help the Center and the Children's Bureau to set goals for the Center, target needs of its primary audiences (typically child welfare agency leaders, midlevel managers, and decision makers), and guide the development of its products and services. This year's assessment includes a focus on needs related to building prevention-oriented CW systems, supporting primary prevention, and implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act.

The goal for this focus group is to learn more about the needs of the child welfare system(s) in your states and regions, including the child welfare agency and its work in collaboration with the courts. There are no wrong answers—this is an opportunity to share and learn. We will ask for your help in ensuring everyone has a chance to speak and that we stay on time in order to cover all of the questions. Your responses will be kept private in that we will not associate your name with your responses in the Needs Assessment report we will be developing for the Children's Bureau. Before we get started, let's do quick introductions—name, agency, and position. Thank you for the introductions let's get started!

Focus Group Questions

1. What are the child welfare agency and Court Improvement Program in your state currently working together on?
2. The Children's Bureau has made a call to action for state child welfare agencies to join with their partners to develop coordinated systems focused on preventing maltreatment by strengthening families not only addressing problems after they have occurred.
 - a. What do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities that child welfare agencies and their partners face right now related to this vision for prevention?
 - b. What is the role of the courts in partnering with child welfare agencies to support the prevention of child abuse and neglect?

3. What are some of the particular needs, barriers or challenges related to the work you have talked about so far? (*Note for facilitator: this is for further inquiry into 1-2 key themes/topics that emerged from the first set of questions*)
 - *Optional probe: Thinking about it another way, if child welfare agencies and/or the courts did X, they would start to see movement in this area.*
4. What types of services and supports would make the greatest difference for your states as they attempt to overcome these challenges?
 - *Optional probe: What about services that could be provided by a Technical Assistance provider?*
5. Now to turn our attention to FFPSA, in particular. The Family First Prevention Services Act provides a critical opportunity to help agencies keep more families safely intact and establishes requirements for ensuring that children's time in congregate care is limited. What are the most pressing and immediate challenges in your states right now right now related to the prevention services provisions of Family First?
6. What are some of the biggest challenges child welfare agencies are facing in developing the 5-year Statewide Prevention Plans?
7. What needs have surfaced in your state conversations about reasonable efforts to prevent removal, particularly in light of the opportunities presented by Family First?
8. Also, regarding Family First- what are your systems' most pressing and immediate challenges right now related to the provisions for ensuring the necessity of non-family foster care (reducing congregate care)?
9. What other Family First provisions or requirements pose particular challenges?
10. What are other critical priorities of your child welfare systems right now for improving safety, permanency and well-being outcomes?