

# Organizational Assessment and Recommendations for Improvements For the Colorado Division of Child Welfare

## Final Report



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# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ..... 1

    Introduction ..... 1

    Organizational Structure ..... 1

    Key Recommendations and Findings ..... 2

        Recommendation 1: Adopt a New Organizational Structure for the Division..... 2

        Recommendation 2: Fully Staff the Division with Responsibilities Assigned to Positions Based on Functions. . 2

        Recommendation 3: Establish Clear Operational Boundaries. .... 3

        Recommendation 4: Articulate and Model Leadership Culture..... 3

        Recommendation 5: Establish Value Proposition of the Division to the Counties. .... 4

        Recommendation 6: Establish Outcomes-Based Performance Measurement Program. .... 4

        Recommendation 7: Develop Formal Communications and Feedback Protocol..... 4

        Recommendation 8: Conduct and Communicate Formal Strategic Plan. .... 5

        Recommendation 9: Initiate Change Management Program. .... 5

    Managing for Better Performance ..... 5

**Chapter 1: Introduction** ..... 7

    Objectives of the Organizational Assessment..... 8

    Organization of the Report ..... 8

    Methodology..... 9

    Document Review ..... 9

    Face to Face Interviews ..... 10

    Other State Comparisons ..... 11

**Chapter 2: Assessment of Performance**..... 12

    National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) ..... 12

    Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)..... 13

    Child and Family Services Review and the Performance Improvement Plans ..... 13

        Colorado Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR) 2008..... 14

        Final Report: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) ..... 15

        Colorado Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report ..... 16

    Colorado Child Welfare Interim Report ..... 17

    Internal Division Stakeholder Perceptions..... 19

**Chapter 3: Organizational Structure and Issues**..... 25

    Overview of State-Supervised/County Administered Child Welfare Systems ..... 25

        MINNESOTA ..... 26

        PENNSYLVANIA..... 27

        WISCONSIN ..... 30

    Effectiveness of Current Organizational Structure ..... 31

**Chapter 4: Recommendations** ..... 33

    The Association Model..... 33

    Recommendation 1: Adopt a New Organizational Structure for the Division..... 34

    Recommendation 2: Fully Staff the Division with Responsibilities Assigned to Positions Based on Functions .... 36

        Associate Director for Operations ..... 36

        Associate Director for Service Delivery..... 36

        Quality Assurance and Program Monitoring..... 37

        Research Manager..... 37

        Contracts and Grants Specialist..... 38

        CPS Group ..... 38

        Permanency Group..... 38

        Special Initiatives Group..... 39



Recommendation 3: Establish Clear Operational Boundaries .....	39
Top Operational Priorities .....	39
Triage System .....	40
Non-Responsibilities .....	40
Recommendation 4: Articulate and Model Leadership Culture .....	41
Leadership from Division and Department Executives .....	42
Leadership from Division Supervisors and Staff.....	42
Division Leadership Role to the Counties .....	43
Service Delivery Expectations for County Offices.....	43
Recommendation 5: Establish Value Proposition of the Division to the Counties.....	44
Recommendation 6: Establish Outcomes-Based Performance Measurement Program.....	45
Division Staff Performance .....	46
County Office Performance.....	46
Recommendation 7: Develop Formal Communications and Feedback Protocol.....	46
Between the Division and County Offices.....	47
Connection to PAC .....	48
Recommendation 8: Conduct and Communicate Formal Strategic Plan.....	48
Recommendation 9: Initiate Change Management Program .....	49
Consensus Building and Change Management.....	50
The Role of Training in Change Management .....	50
<b>Chapter 5: Next Steps.....</b>	<b>51</b>
Implementation Plan.....	51
Staffing is Key .....	52
<b>List of Appendices .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Appendix A: Document Review Summary.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix B: Interview Protocol.....</b>	<b>55</b>
Staff Questions .....	55
Questions about your job .....	55
Questions about the Division.....	55
Administrator/Top Level Shareholder Questions .....	55
Stakeholder Interview Questions.....	56
<b>Appendix C: Decision Making Protocol Example .....</b>	<b>57</b>



## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

This report presents the results from the organizational assessment of the Colorado Division of Child Welfare Services (Division) conducted under contract with the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). The organizational assessment was conducted by Policy Studies Inc. (PSI) and American Humane to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Division and to provide a series of recommendations for organizational improvements that will enhance the utilization of existing resources and identify areas of new potential resource needs. We focused our assessment on the Division's organizational structure as it relates to the following items:

- ◆ Meeting the Division's legislative and regulatory requirements;
- ◆ The intersection of the Division's purpose, mission and vision with legislative and regulatory requirements; and
- ◆ Determining if the Division functions sufficiently well to meet the above objectives through articulated and understood expectations and performance standards.

### **Organizational Structure**

Colorado's Division of Child Welfare is located in the Office of Children, Youth and Family Services. The Division provides of a group of services intended to protect children from harm and to assist families in caring for and protecting their children. Colorado is a state supervised/county administered child welfare system. The current organizational structure consists of a Division Director and six managers who provide program oversight to six sections, including, Child Protection, Permanency, Financial Services, Information and Program Group, Administrative Unit and 24-Hour Monitoring Unit.

The Division is intended to provide leadership, supervision, technical support, and public/legislative advocacy to each of the 64 Colorado county departments of human/social services. In this way the Division serves the counties, and in turn the counties serve the children, families, and communities of Colorado directly.

However, a vision that is not adequately resourced can create a culture of frustration and resignation. Most observers recognize that the administration of child welfare services is extremely complex and made more complicated by the emergency aspect of child protective services. Typically, operating in such a difficult environment leads to an entrenched management style that is reactive and crisis-oriented. Crisis management organizes and assigns resources to meet immediate needs (i.e., child safety). Without sufficient capacity in the system, crisis management is ill-equipped to effectively address the systemic issues—family functioning, prevention services, socioeconomic factors—intended to keep children safe in their homes and relieve pressure on the CPS system.

Conversely, an organization that both responds to and anticipates the needs of children and families is adequately staffed, well-trained, seamlessly connected to its customers (the counties), and supported by a strong leadership team. In the recommendations provided in Chapter 4 of the report, we describe how the Division must become an organization capable of both responding to and anticipating needs. We further address how this will not be possible without an investment in Division personnel. Such an investment, however, must be guided by a set of priorities that the Division will implement and achieve within a specific time frame.



## Key Recommendations and Findings

In Chapter 4 of this report, PSI and American Humane identify and explain our recommendations for operational reorganization and improvement for the Division. We begin by recommending that the Division implement a new model of practice for the Division, which we refer to in this report as the *Association Model*. The association model provides a way for state and county entities to work together effectively within a traditional state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system without the need for legislative action, changes to state policy, or other intensive interventions. The relationship between the state and the counties is recast as one of membership (counties) in an association (state) to meet the needs of the members and advocate for a common cause (child welfare).

**Recommendation 1: Adopt a New Organizational Structure for the Division.** The major changes to the Division's organizational structure are as follows:

1. The Director of Child Welfare Services will now have two direct reports: the Associate Director for Operations and the Associate Director for Service Delivery. Each will be responsible for the direction of a core function of the Division: internal operations and child welfare service delivery activity, respectively.
2. Management positions will be organized around more cohesive and internally consistent functions: finance, quality assurance/program monitoring, research, and office administration for the Operations Group, and Child Protection, Permanency, and Special Initiatives for the Service Delivery Group.
3. In keeping with item 2, above, functions currently organized under the Information and Program Group will be reassigned to the Quality Assurance, Research, and Service Delivery Groups. Creation of the new Research Group will provide a dedicated resource for generating information to support best practice and performance improvement initiatives throughout the Division.
4. A grants and contracts specialist will be added to Finance, ensuring that a full-time position is dedicated to finding funding opportunities for all functions (both operational and service delivery) and helping the counties address funding shortfalls for specific programs.
5. To ensure that Child Protective Services can help the counties adequately address ongoing threats to child safety and risks to safety, three new specialist positions will be added to the program: prevention, differential response, and safety planning/intervention.
6. Program Support positions will be added to each of the Child Welfare Service Delivery groups—CPS, Permanency, and Special Initiatives—to increase the groups' capacity to interact with the counties.

**Recommendation 2: Fully Staff the Division and Assign Responsibilities to Positions Based on Functions.** The new position of Associate Director for Operations will be responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Division. This position will manage the Financial, Quality Assurance, Best Practice, and Administrative Support Unit Managers, working to ensure the activities of their units are aligned with the identified vision and mission of the department and are in accordance with the department's strategic plan. This individual would be responsible for ensuring the training and professional development needs of staff are met. This position would also ensure that the department is responsive to internal and external stakeholders by coordinating and disseminating information as needed.



The new position of Associate Director for Service Delivery will be responsible for directing the activities of the core child welfare service units. All child welfare program managers—Child Protection, Permanency, and Special Initiatives—will report to the Associate Director for Service Delivery. This position’s primary responsibility is to provide oversight, direction, and coordination of the program managers’ activities, with a focus on policy, procedure, and best practice implementation.

The Quality Assurance section will be responsible for monitoring and providing technical assistance to public and private children and youth social service agencies and facilities. This responsibility includes the assurance of regulatory and legislative compliance of agencies and facilities. Another key role of this section is the investigation of complaints made related to staff conduct and case-related issues for both counties and facilities. Annual quality assurance reviews will also be assigned to this section. Adequate field staff are needed to provide this function and ongoing technical assistance. This function could be a combination of the 24 hour monitoring and county monitoring or separate functions. However, to be effective and to address the needs of 64 counties, there is a clear need for additional staff.

A Research Manager to manage staff and coordinate the data and information system is critical to planning, funding, and accountability. This manager would collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to identify the various needs for data and generate data sets to meet those needs. This person would be responsive to internal and external requests but would also identify strategically what ongoing reporting is needed to monitor progress toward identified goals and outcomes both locally and systematically.

The Contracts and Grants Specialist will manage all grants and external contracts. The purpose of this position is to identify appropriate grant opportunities, coordinate proposal development and submission, and monitor grant deliverables if awarded. The other function of this position is contract management. This responsibility includes contract negotiations, development, and monitoring.

The Permanency Group involves the recruitment and retention of quality foster parents. There are many strategies that can be utilized to impact recruitment and retention efforts. However, these strategies require a focus and resources for effective implementation. Understanding the full range of recruitment and retention best practices as applied in multiple demographic areas requires intensive planning and collaboration with internal departmental resources and the individual counties. With 64 counties to serve, there is a legitimate need for additional positions to focus on these activities.

**Recommendation 3: Establish Clear Operational Boundaries.** Most of the challenges facing the Division relate to communication. While PSI/American Humane recommends that the Division commit to a new and ambitious approach to communication (see number 5, below), prior to making that commitment, the Division must be able to articulate its operational boundaries to both internal staff, the counties, and external stakeholders. By defining itself anew—regarding the tasks that it will take on, those it won’t take on, and how it will prioritize responsibilities—the Division can provide both clarity of the child welfare mission and thought leadership on the role that child welfare plays in the lives of Colorado families.

**Recommendation 4: Articulate and Model Leadership Culture.** When asked to articulate a model of leadership that it would endorse and support, Division leadership provided the following response:

The Division of Child Welfare is highly influenced by the participative style of leadership. This style involves the inclusion of one or more employees in the decision making process. This collaborative approach is most effective in supporting human communication and mutual problem solving.



PSI and American Humane support this leadership approach, with the caveat that Division leadership must provide operational boundaries to participatory decision making, including a structure for who should contribute ideas to decision making, at what point discussion about an issue is closed, and who is responsible for making and enforcing decisions at different levels within the Division.

**Recommendation 5: Establish Value Proposition of the Division to the Counties.** One strong theme that emerged from the interviews for this project was a lack of awareness of the value proposition of the Division among county agency staff. Within the context of the Colorado child welfare system, the value proposition is the motivation that the counties have to work with the Division. Currently, that motivation is low; except for specific instances in which county directors identified strong working relationships with their regional contacts. Most interview participants see the Division as: a) a pass-through mechanism for service delivery funds; and b) a compliance unit for the CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and other performance requirements. The Division must change this negative opinion of its capabilities by establishing a new value proposition to the counties by instituting specific reforms to demonstrate and communicate how it will deliver value to the Counties. These reforms include:

1. Adequate staffing to support all intended functions (recommendation 1)
2. Function-based reorganization of Division (recommendation 2)
3. An outcomes-based performance measurement program (recommendation 6)
4. A formal communications and feedback protocol (recommendation 7)
5. A formal strategic plan (recommendation 8)
6. A change management program (recommendation 9)

**Recommendation 6: Establish Outcomes-Based Performance Measurement Program.** A frequent comment made by interview participants was the lack of transparency surrounding performance evaluation, both at the individual and organizational levels. Accountability was a key theme in many of the interviews from both internal and external sources. PSI and American Humane recommend addressing the need by instituting an outcomes-based performance measurement program at all levels of the child welfare system. The rationale for such a program is to focus evaluation efforts not on the activities of the individual or agency, but rather on the results those activities achieve for clients. Clients of Division staff are the county agencies. Children and families are the clients of the counties

**Recommendation 7: Develop Formal Communications and Feedback Protocol.** As the Division seeks to improve its performance, feedback—both internal and external—is critical for making required adjustments. Effective communication within the agency builds morale and ensures operational success. Division staff expect timely communication regarding progress toward goals, and how those goals relate to the expected outcomes. Communication should be participatory in nature, with the agency's goals mirroring best practices. PSI and American Humane recommend that Division leadership refine communication protocols in conjunction with staff. Given the time pressures that all staff members face in the disposition of their primary duties—leadership included—the Division should consider adopting a combination of communications tools to support rapid, participatory information sharing and a sense of inclusion among staff. Such communication tools could include:

- ◆ Electronic Communications
- ◆ Cross-Training



- ◆ Videoconferencing
- ◆ Minority Reporting

**Recommendation 8: Conduct and Communicate Formal Strategic Plan.** Strategic planning is the formal consideration of an organization's future course. The Division has already completed the tasks typically associated with the early stages of strategic planning: vision, mission, and goals have all been established for both the Division and the Counties. It is clear, however, that the level of detail provided in the mission, vision, and goals of the system is insufficient to guide decision making on complex issues facing child welfare providers everyday. Therefore, the Division must apply its mission and vision to defining and articulating an approach to strategically addressing the following issues:

- ◆ Racial disproportionality in child welfare system
- ◆ Evaluation of training effectiveness and modification of training (especially TRAILS training)
- ◆ The participation of fathers and other individuals of significance in permanency planning
- ◆ Consistency of service delivery across all Counties in support of safe reunification
- ◆ The frequency, quality, and outcomes of worker visits
- ◆ The quality, consistency, and impact on service planning of needs assessments
- ◆ Establishment and responsibilities of the research and quality assurance teams

**Recommendation 9: Initiate Change Management Program.** Because any organizational reform requires a thoughtful and deliberate process for planning, implementation, and ongoing assessment, PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division implement the preceding eight recommendations within the context of a formal change management program. Organizational change management includes processes and tools for managing the people side of the change at an organizational level. These tools include a structured approach that can be used to effectively transition organizations through change. Organizational change management processes include:

- ◆ Techniques for creating a change management strategy (e.g., readiness assessments)
- ◆ Engaging senior managers as change leaders (sponsorship)
- ◆ Building awareness of the need for change (communications)
- ◆ Developing skills and knowledge to support the change (education and training)
- ◆ Helping employees move through the transition (coaching by managers and supervisors)
- ◆ Methods to sustain the change (measurement systems, rewards and reinforcement)

## Managing for Better Performance

It is important that the Division move quickly with the reorganization effort for the Division. This will capitalize on the strong internal and external support for the reorganization as well as prepare the Division to adequately address the policy and practice issues affecting child welfare service delivery in Colorado. As a result, we recommend that the Division be prepared to enact reform on three tracks simultaneously:

1. **Operations** – staffing, training, and empowering Division staff to faithfully execute duties
2. **Evaluation** – data collection, analysis, and strategic decision making necessary to set an effective course for Division activities



3. **Communication** – messaging, network building, and processing feedback to ensure that all Division stakeholders are working to support a common child welfare vision

There is complexity in addressing all three of these tracks at once, however doing so is a necessary part of establishing the inclusive association model recommended for the Division. Moreover, many of the tasks associated with the recommendations made in Chapter 4 (e.g., developing outcomes metrics, facilitation of strategic planning, and facilitation of a change management initiative) use specialized tools and skills that are not currently native to the Division. PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division solicit independent, third-party expertise in these key areas to ensure the success of the reform effort.



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

On May 30, 2008 the State of Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) released a request for a documented quote soliciting a vendor to conduct an organizational assessment for the Division and make recommendations for organizational improvement. The identified goal of the assessment was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Division. CDHS sought an independent review focused upon the Division's organizational structure as it relates to the following items:

- ◆ Meeting the Division's legislative and regulatory requirements;
- ◆ Aligning the Division's purpose, mission and vision with legislative and regulatory requirements; and
- ◆ Determining if the Division was functioning sufficiently to meet the above objectives through articulated and understood expectations and performance standards.

In June 2008, PSI and American Humane were awarded a contract to complete the above specified work.

Perhaps the most profound impetus for this review was a marked increase in child maltreatment fatalities within the state in 2007. A comprehensive child fatality review was conducted to try to illuminate factors that may have contributed to these deaths, as well as identify future directions to help eliminate the possible recurrence of tragic child maltreatment fatalities. The Child Maltreatment Fatality Report was released in April 2008 by the State of Colorado Administrative Review Division. The report provided an expert and substantive review of the issue of child maltreatment fatalities that took into consideration child, family, environmental/situational and systemic characteristics. These, in turn, were analyzed and honed into a comprehensive list of short and long-term recommendations for CDHS and the Division to implement in order to eliminate future child maltreatment fatalities. Based on the identified need to study the systemic issues addressed in the Child Maltreatment Fatality Report (e.g. difficulty of communicating new policies and practice models through many layers of child welfare professionals), the reviewers made a specific recommendation for an organizational effectiveness assessment of the Division.

As the picture of increased child fatalities within the State of Colorado became clear, the Governor's Office responded swiftly to the importance of protecting children from abuse and neglect and restated that focus as one of Colorado's highest priorities. The Governor then issued an Executive Order in April 2007 that created the Governor's Child Welfare Action Committee. The scope and purview of this committee is to provide recommendations to the Governor on how to improve the Colorado child welfare system. This provided further impetus for CDHS to aggressively pursue an organizational assessment of the Division and provide a series of recommendations for organizational improvements that will enhance the utilization of existing resources and identify areas new areas of potential resource needs.

Additional factors contributed to Colorado's solicitation of an organizational assessment of the Division. Among them was Colorado's completion of their first round of federal Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) which measured the performance of a selection of counties against key national child welfare outcome measures. Colorado, like all states, was found to have numerous areas of practice that did not substantially meet federal performance standards. The Division responded by developing a federally approved PIP to address documented insufficiencies within their CSFR. Colorado is scheduled to have their second round CFSR later in 2009.



## Objectives of the Organizational Assessment

The key objectives of this organizational assessment of the Division are to analyze current organizational functioning and climate, understand and identify organizational strengths and challenges, provide a series of recommendations for organizational improvements to facilitate meeting performance standards, and encourage the productive use of existing, limited resources while simultaneously identifying potential new resource needs.

In order to meet these objectives, PSI and American Humane provided the Division with a scope of work for the organizational assessment that focuses on rigorous data collection and analysis, necessary to provide concrete evidence for strengths and challenges within the Division and, hence, drive the recommendations made in this report. Activities within the scope of work for this report consisted of the following:

- ◆ Review the Division's purpose, mission, vision, business objectives and performance standards as related to the Division's role as the supervising State agency over child welfare.
- ◆ Review key documents related to the Division structure, policies, governance and performance.
- ◆ Interview Division staff and a sample of key stakeholders
- ◆ Conduct an assessment of the Division structure, key roles and responsibilities, and implementation of policies and requirements of the Division, to determine the effectiveness of the existing operation.
- ◆ Complete an assessment of roles and functions of each job/position in the Division as compared to the position description for the positions.
- ◆ Prepare weekly and monthly project status reports for review, coordinating the review documentation, and then disseminating to appropriate stakeholders.
- ◆ Participate in project team meetings as part of the status report process and other meetings as necessary
- ◆ Complete a final report including, at a minimum, the recommended modifications
- ◆ Develop improvements in staffing, job assignments, communication methods, and performance measures

The methodology for performing each agreed upon subtask is described below. Some objectives were reprioritized or minimally modified in consultation with CDHS leadership following a meeting that was convened to address any questions related to the proposed work so that we had a shared understanding of the project's goals and objectives, our joint expectations for outcomes, how we would proceed with the work, and what our respective roles and responsibilities would be.

## Organization of the Report

This report is organized for ease of use and clarity of flow. The intention of the report is to be comprehensive in information and detail; to be useful in reflecting on organizational strengths, challenges, infrastructure, and climate; to make recommendations that support increased organizational cohesion and effectiveness; and to identify both available and necessary resources for realigning the Division. As a result, the report has been organized in the following manner:



**Executive Summary** introduces the project, key recommendations and findings, comments on organizational structure and the concept of managing for better performance. The executive summary is followed by a series of five chapters, each with a specific point of focus and frame of reference.

**Chapter 1** provides the statement of need and objectives for this project, describes the methodology employed in undertaking this review and describes the organization of the report.

**Chapter 2** focuses on performance assessment, including criteria for judging success, and identifies the reports, tools and measures for evaluating success specific to the State of Colorado.

**Chapter 3** describes the current organizational environment and concerns at the Division. It provides insight into how similarly organized state-administered and county-operated systems are structured and funded. It then provides the a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the organizational structure of the Division, reviewing such items as relationship with counties, staffing levels and assignments, roles and responsibilities, leadership and management, communication, accountability and execution. Key findings from this analysis are then organized in the next chapter.

**Chapter 4** introduces a series of recommendations aimed at helping the Division establish an organizational infrastructure that will maximize the use of existing resources and seek the addition of supplemental resources in order to facilitate both an attitudinal and operational shift in the structure, culture and climate of the organization while increasing partnerships and achieving better outcomes with children, youth, families, community supports and counties.

Finally, **Chapter 5** provides a set of next steps to move from conceptualization of a new and better organization through the development of a series of implementation activities. This chapter provides a project plan and timeline, and discusses the expected impact of recommendations on resource needs and key stakeholders.

## **Methodology**

Three procedures were used to collect data for this organizational assessment. First, the vendor team conducted a review of pertinent documents to create a context and a perspective on the Colorado child welfare system as designed. This document review addressed pertinent State statutes, rules and regulations and Federal monitoring reports. The second procedure consisted of face-to-face interviews using a structured protocol. These interviews were conducted with Division staff, contractors and external stakeholders. The third procedure was to review the organizational structure and effectiveness of three states similar to Colorado in child welfare population size, similar urban populations and their use of county-administered and state-supervised organizational structure.

## **Document Review**

Based upon a national knowledge of child welfare, documents describing the structure of child protection and child welfare practice in Colorado were selected. A summary table of documents and their contents was assembled. This table is presented as Appendix A. These documents addressed required areas of practice. The categories used to describe the documents were:

- ◆ Name of Document
- ◆ Authors
- ◆ Stakeholders

- ◆ Date of Creation, Implementation, or Revision
- ◆ Dissemination (Who, How)
- ◆ Target Population
- ◆ Purpose
- ◆ Alignment with Mission and Values
- ◆ Key Findings
- ◆ Direction for Practice Implementation
- ◆ Alignment with other documents (NAPCWA, CFSR, PIP)

Three documents were especially closely examined: the State of Colorado Annual Progress Services Report (APSR) 2008, the Final Report: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), and the CO Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Final Report. A summary of each document is presented in Chapter 2, Assessment of Performance.

## Face-to-Face Interviews

Interview protocols were constructed based upon a criterion from the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) standards of child welfare program administration. Separate protocols were developed for Division staff, contractors and external stakeholders. These protocols were reviewed with State child welfare leadership prior to use and are presented in Appendix B. Interviews were conducted in October, November and December of 2008.

There were 51 interviews conducted with the three categories of respondents. Interviews generally lasted for one hour though some went longer. The figure below presents the number of interviews with the different types of respondents.

**Figure 1-1: Number of Interviews by Type of Respondent**

Respondent Type	Interviews Conducted
Staff	38
Administrator	9
External Stakeholder	4

These interviews were qualitative in nature. The respondents provided answers to the open-ended questions and probes. Little effort was made to guide the responses beyond encouragement to stay on the topic of the question. Respondents were further encouraged to elaborate on their answers. The interviewer recorded the answers in a summary way, capturing as many quotes as possible. Interviewers reflected information back to the respondent to get agreement on the accuracy of what was recorded.

PSI and American Humane developed a set of coding categories to reflect themes of interest that emerged from the interviews (e.g., respondent knowledge of their own job description; respondent perception of their primary stakeholder or client) and themes that became salient in the interviews (e.g., use of the statewide automated child welfare information system, TRAILS, and internal and external communications). These themes, presented in full in Chapter 2, were the structure for coding of interview summaries.

Three coders reviewed all of the interview summaries. Using a statistic of inter-rater agreement—Cohen's Kappa—the level of agreement between interviewers as to the presence of themes in an interview was



assessed. Agreement between interviewers could be based either upon agreement between both interviewers that a theme was present or agreement that a theme was not present. Agreement was reached between one pair of interviewers at a time. There were three possible pairs of the three interviewers. Initial coding reached acceptable levels of inter-rater agreement on nearly three quarters of the items. Further review of interview summaries by coders provided clarification of definition and increased agreement.

Three interview topics—How Work is Managed, How the Division should be Restructured and Perceptions of Experience of colleagues within the Division—did not reach statistically significant levels of agreement between coders. After discussion and clarification as to how management, Division restructuring and personnel experience were defined in the interviews, re-coding of these themes reached acceptable levels. A table with all of the codes and their definitions is included in Chapter 2 of this report.

Two statistics were obtained for each theme. The first was “Extent of Shared Theme.” This was measured by the number of interviews by which the theme was identified. In other words, how many respondents said something that a coder identified as the theme? The second was the “Weight of the Shared Theme.” This was measured by how many times that a theme was identified within interviews. In other words, how many instances of a theme did the coders identify in all the interviews?

## **Other State Comparisons**

Governance structure within a state, county-administered and state-supervised, was the basis of state selection. State size was a secondary consideration in selection for comparison. Other considerations included number of counties, state demographics, child population, and population disbursement (i.e., large cities vs. rural areas).

The three states examined for this report were Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. States’ websites were searched for the following data: organizational structure of human services and/or child protective services, budget information, services offered to children and families, and program collaboration. Much more detailed comparison information is included in Chapter 3 of this report. Additional information is also available at the following websites:

- ◆ Minnesota’s Department of Human Services is available at: <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>.
- ◆ Pennsylvania’s Office of Children, Youth, and Families is available on Pennsylvania’s Department of Public Welfare website: <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/About/OCYF/>.
- ◆ Information about Wisconsin’s Department of Children and Families can be found on Wisconsin’s Department of Human Resources website: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/>.





## Chapter 2: Assessment of Performance

This review employs several criteria external to state government to assess the performance of the Division. Using external criteria provides what may be considered an independent or objective view. There is also a valid and valuable view from inside the system. Informed perspectives about what is intended to be accomplished, what are the supportive factors, what are the challenges and what is the realistic capability of the system to achieve its intentions are a valuable resource that should be carefully explored.

One criterion is based upon national standards. The Federal Child and Family Services Review provides an exhaustive review of the performance of practice and the attainment of positive child welfare outcomes. This type of review is a dramatic advance over the reviews of procedural compliance used historically. Practice and outcomes standards are set at very high levels so that few states would obtain full compliance. The criteria are based upon the national legislation and stated public policy of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997. The purpose of the review is to provide a stringent assessment that allows for the development of the companion PIP. The PIP is a continuation of the review in that it addresses and continues to monitor areas of priority improvement that the State has negotiated with Federal authorities.

Another criterion is the Colorado Child Welfare Action Committee Interim Report, produced by a committee of gubernatorial appointees from stakeholders in Colorado. This committee reviewed current issues from local perspectives of lay and professional citizens. The findings and recommendations of that group present a consensus of opinion about the current performance of the Division and what may be done to improve performance.

A third criterion is the information capability of the automated child welfare information system in terms of producing data elements in a comprehensive and quality manner. All states participate in national information systems regarding child protection and child permanence. They are the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). Both of these data systems reflect the ability of a state to record and retrieve child welfare information in systematic, nationally consistent ways. Both of these data systems have extensive quality control validation procedures to assess information performance.

### **National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)**

One strength of TRAILS and the Division's information technology has been the acceptable and timely submission of Federal data extracts. The NCANDS extract addresses child protective services information and is used to address national child safety measures of repeat maltreatment and maltreatment while in custodial care of the State. These data are subjected to detailed validation for logical consistencies and other error checks. Colorado has submitted data acceptable to these high standards.

The data have been used for many years to address child safety in Colorado. There have been corrections to the system at times, particularly during the conversions from the Central Registry approach previously used in Colorado. While unfortunately limiting longitudinal information over time, the identification and correction of information problems should be considered a system strength.

These NCANDS data have proven useful in assessing program initiatives in Colorado in the absence of more detailed custom extracts from TRAILS. A valuable feature of these data are the cross links to the other national data system, AFCARS, which addresses adoption and foster care data. This is done through the anonymously encrypted child identifier, which is shared by the two systems. Though apparently



straightforward, uniformly implementing this shared identifier consistently over time is a formidable accomplishment.

## **Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)**

The second federal extract that the Division has been reporting consistently at the case level is AFCARS. This is a required Federal reporting system that has financial penalties for noncompliance. The penalties are connected through the Federal Title IV-E reimbursement for foster care and other residential expenditures.

The Division has submitted data for many years to this system. Those data have passed the rigorous validation criteria of AFCARS. The outcomes measures of AFCARS implement the concept of child permanency codified in the Adoption and Safe Families act of 1997. These permanency measures developed nationally are fundamental in understanding performance. They are not the only possible measures, but they are reasonable ones and used in all states.

These AFCARS data have proven useful, too, in assessing program initiatives in Colorado in the absence of more detailed custom extracts from TRAILS. The ability to combine safety and permanency information for the same children in order to understand the performance of the Colorado child welfare system is a significant accomplishment. To be able to do obtain the measures from administrative data without the need for special studies is a further accomplishment that results in considerable savings in money, intellectual attention and staff time.

The successful implementation of the two Federal reporting systems has not only addressed federal requirements but has provided valuable data retrieval from TRAILS for analytic purposes. One use of these data has been in the assembly of baseline and continuing monitoring information that focuses on child outcomes rather than staff member process information.

## **Child and Family Services Review and the Performance Improvement Plans**

The CFSR reviewed contextual and systemic factors of the child welfare system. This Federal review highlighted strengths and shortcomings in the Colorado system in 2002. Appendix A presents summaries of these documents. What is important for this organizational assessment has been the ability of the Division to track its performance on important measures and inform the counties (for example, through the state's CFSR electronic newsletter). The following excerpt from the December 2007 CFSR electronic newsletter reflects the type of information that is helpful in monitoring performance and prioritizing areas of system change.

### **Areas where Colorado is “Out of Compliance”**

Two prominent areas in which Colorado is out of compliance with Federal Standards include:

- Timeliness
- Periodic Review

Timeliness refers to how long it takes workers to end date a removal span in TRAILS. 694 records out of 3,813 (18.20%) in the latest AFCARS submission took more than 60 days to be entered in TRAILS from the time the removal was ended.

Periodic Review refers to the need of all children in foster care to have a periodic review every six months, either by the Administrative Review Division or by the Courts. 1725 records out of 10,612 (16.26%) in the latest AFCARS submission did not meet this requirement.



Unfortunately, this useful type of information was not present in other newsletters reviewed. This underscores the need for the systematic follow through by management and implementation of change strategies.

The reporting on the CFSR follow up is expressed in the PIP process. Regular reporting of outcomes and goals showed the successful completion of the PIP. Child safety in the community was within national guidelines at the time of the review. Maltreatment of children while in care did not appear to change over the course of the PIP through a 2007 follow up, though there was a slight decrease. Foster care reentries reached the desired outcome levels in 2004. Stability in foster care referred to any changes in placement being related to a child's service plan. It appears that this goal remained challenging through 2005 and appears to be unmet.

### **Colorado Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR) 2008**

Colorado's 2008 Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR 2008) was created on June 30, 2008 in order to outline Colorado's vision, mission, philosophy statements, guiding principles and program area information that guides the state's work with children and families. This document also described goals, action steps and baseline data that are used to accomplish and measure outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being. The 2008 APSR was submitted to the U.S. Department of Human Services' Administration for Children and Families and is available to the public on the Colorado Department of Human Services' website.

Although the APSR 2008 did not specifically state the CDHS' mission and vision, it appears upon review that the statute is in alignment with both the mission and values of CDHS. Findings from the 2008 APSR were consistent with those of the Colorado CFSR Final Report and the Colorado Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Final Report. The findings confirmed areas of concern and planning outlined in those documents, such as permanency planning, involvement of youth and non-custodial fathers in planning, consistency of services across the state, worker visits, and staff training.

Summary tables were also created from the Federal Child and Family Services Review outcome measures. These results not only showed the system capability to provide such information but also portrayed an external view of Colorado performance from a national perspective.

These summary tables clearly show the areas in which Colorado is below the national standard. Colorado fell below the nationwide standard in several areas, including incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care, foster care re-entry, stability of foster care, , permanency goal or(?) other planned living arrangement, preserving connections, relationship of child in care with parents, worker visits with child, physical health of child (initial health assessments, services provided), and 12 month permanency hearings. Colorado was able to improve performance in foster care re-entry, relationship of child in care with parents, and 12-month permanency hearings.



## Final Report: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

The Final Report: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration for Children and Families, the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, and the Children's Bureau. This statewide assessment was prepared by the Colorado Department of Human Services through interviews and focus groups that were conducted with a range of stakeholders including children, foster parents, state and local DHS personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, legislators, and attorneys. According to the federal Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, the purpose of the CFSR is to, "assess State performance during a specified time period with respect to seven child welfare outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being with respect to seven systemic factors." The Colorado CFSR Final Report is in the public domain.

In our review of the CFSR Final Report, PSI and American Humane identified several key findings relevant to this organizational assessment:

- ◆ One of the most significant concerns was the State's inconsistency in achieving permanency for children involved with the CDHS. It was found that concurrent planning is not always used and permanency goals are often changed. These practices do not support the mission and purpose of CDHS, which includes "the assurance of a permanency plan" for all children in care. In fact, inconsistent practice for all children involved with CDHS was noted in the report. There were inconsistencies in timely held 12-month permanency hearings and there were also concerns for permanency for children with developmental disabilities. The report indicated that goals for emancipation for these children were sometimes being established when the youth were 12 or 13, while, if adopted, these children were often on a waiting list for services when they turned age 21.
- ◆ Another concern discussed in the report was related to the State's inconsistent efforts, or even lack of efforts, to involve non-custodial fathers in the case planning process and in visitation plans with the children involved with CDHS. There were also inconsistent or absent efforts to involve children and youth in the case planning process. Both of these practices indicate contradictions to the agency's goal of "family and community connections" for those individuals and families who receive services.
- ◆ The CFSR final report indicated that there was inconsistent availability of services to all families across the state. For example, rural areas of Colorado do not offer the same resources and services as urban areas. In addition, there was inconsistency in the State's efforts to address children's mental health and physical health needs, and it was recognized that there is a lack of mental health services and Medicaid-accepting health services. These findings do not align with CDHS' mission to offer quality services that are "accessible" and "available statewide."
- ◆ Part of CDHS' mission is to offer relevant services "to permit timely rehabilitation and reunification." Yet, in the report, there was a concern that parents may not be receiving sufficient services to promote safe reunification following the removal of children, thereby influencing the rate of re-entry of children into foster care. In addition, family needs assessments were not always sufficiently comprehensive in capturing underlying family issues that contributed to the family's involvement with CDHS.
- ◆ The CFSR final report identified a lack of adequate preparation and a lack of services for youth moving to independent living, which does not promote the CDHS' goal for self-sufficiency and independent living of youth who are aging out of care.



- ◆ Worker and supervisor training were also identified as concerns within the report. For example, no comprehensive manual was available to workers for use following the training for TRAILS, which demonstrates a lack of necessary support for workers to use this technology. There were also gaps or waiting periods in social worker training related to specific content areas. In addition, there was no requirement for in-service training for supervisors, who also did not have availability to advanced training courses specifically designed to meet their needs.
- ◆ The CFSR final report did not state or discuss the mission and vision of CDHS and did not provide any suggestions or direction for future practice implementation. The final report contained many concerns and inconsistencies related to child welfare practice within the State of Colorado. The identified concerns and inconsistencies may indicate that practice is often counter to the mission or values of CDHS, but no such connection was made given the exclusion of the mission and vision from the report.

The CFSR Final Report did note some positive findings that aligned with areas of CDHS' mission and values. It was consistently reported that maltreatment recurrence is not currently a problem in Colorado. Additionally, despite deficits in technology and supervisory training, overall training for new caseworkers was praised, and numerous supplemental trainings were offered to caseworkers.

## **Colorado Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report**

The Colorado Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report (PIP) was created by CDHS, the Office of Child and Family Services, and the Division. The time period addressed in PIP was January 1, 2007 through March 31, 2007, and the PIP was submitted to the federal ACF Children's Bureau on July 27, 2007. The purpose of this report was to "provide a summary of Colorado's performance on its PIP. In this Final Report of Progress, the narrative [addressed] the outcomes that are out of compliance and recommendations for consideration with regard to compliance." This report is public domain. Documentation in this report that explained progress on areas of the program improvement plan reflected an alignment of policy or practice changes with the mission and vision of DHS.

In our review of the CFSR PIP Final Report, PSI and American Humane identified several key findings relevant to this organizational assessment:

- ◆ Item 6 of the PIP focused on the Stability of Foster Care. The report indicated that for "children who experience change of placement," the statewide goal was for the change be "directly related to helping the child achieve his/her goals in the case plan" for 76 percent of children. The Colorado baseline measure was 72 percent, an improvement from 2007, the last report year, when Colorado only achieved 55.85 percent. To achieve the baseline for 2008, the state developed a list of proposed changes and developed an internal question set to evaluate challenges. One of the important key questions was, "Were there sufficient resources to help accommodate and achieve appropriate placement options?" However, this question was not among those discussed in the final report; instead, the focus was on additional training and the use of consultants and specialists rather than basic resource reallocation or reallocation. Focus was also on the existence of new meeting types (e.g., Family Team Meetings; Team Decision Making) which, although potentially beneficial, are not widely utilized.
- ◆ Item 9 of the PIP was related to the Effectiveness of the County Adoption Effort and Colorado was extremely close to achieving its goal for this item. Questions remained for the writers of this report as to what the federal adoption incentives legislation could do to help assist with continued



improvement in this area and whether all county directors and staff are aware of this legislation, given its omission from the final report.

- ◆ There has been an increased emphasis by the federal government on Item 19, Worker Visits with the Child. The report reflected that Colorado has had continued difficulty achieving this goal. In response, the State provided in the report a rationale for being out of compliance and developed a recalculation plan, which was not accepted by the federal government. In fact, the chart developed by Colorado showed that the State decreased in two areas of performance and increased in two areas between the first measurable period (July – December 2003) and the last period (January – June 2006). There was not such a significant difference after three years to be notable related to face-face contacts.

Colorado offered solutions to address this issue from the final report. However, Colorado's solutions were not directly aligned with to the needs of line staff and families attempting to make a more substantial change. Recommended changes included a job video, consultants, more training, deficit tracking, and incentive dollars for achievement. A supplementary approach may be more beneficial, as it would include increasing direct resources (staff positions); advocating for shared responsibilities with case workers, secondary workers, and case aides; providing dollar infusion into the most challenged communities (not just incentives to those able to achieve); and less focus on worker performance accompanied by more focus on community resource commitment and support. In a county-led state with such a large rural constituency, it may have a profound impact on the federal government to have the state help provide leadership in articulating the feasibility of an expectation that appears reasonable, but that may be difficult to achieve in some communities.

## **Colorado Child Welfare Action Committee Interim Report**

The statewide Child Welfare Action Committee appointed by Governor Ritter produced an Interim report at the end of October 2008. There are several performance observations in that report that corroborate current results. Taking the Action Committee recommendations in order without any other prioritization allows the recommendations to be taken as an additional data point for this study. This review is not meant to be an exhaustive consideration of all recommendations, but rather this review highlights the correspondence and alignment of the recommendations with the findings of this report.

### **Action Committee Recommendation 2: Quality Assurance and State Leadership on Cultural and Diversity Issues**

Racial disproportionality is highlighted in the Interim Report right after the first recommendation addressing mandatory reporter feedback on child protective actions. This is a central issue nationally and, as the Interim Report notes, in Colorado. The Division is not equipped to respond to the information requirements of an effective child welfare response. A response to racial disproportionality is of necessity information intensive. The reporting inflexibility of the TRAILS and the lack of staff resources to produce and manage information are challenges in effectively addressing racial disproportionality in Colorado.

It is noteworthy that racial disproportionality did not spontaneously emerge in any of the Division staff interviews. While it was not specifically addressed in the interview protocols, neither was it a matter of priority discussion for any of the respondents. The fact that it was not brought up or referenced in relation to any other items may be evidence of the pressing need to address the issue of racial disproportionality.



### **Action Committee Recommendation 6: Evaluation of Training Effectiveness**

The Committee further addressed the information theme by addressing caseworker and supervisor training. This has not been information that has been tied to the experiences and outcomes of children and families in the child welfare system of Colorado. The report notes that there is a current evaluation system that reflects participant observation of training and has curricula reviewed as appropriate to the functions and core services of child welfare.

The Interim Report recommendation does call for an extension of current training evaluation to address the job performance of trainees. The recommendation perhaps does not go far enough. A further extension of information would be to evaluate how training affect the on-the-job performance of trainees, as well as how on-the-job-performance of trainees affects the experiences and outcomes of children and families.

### **Action Committee Recommendation 7: Domestic Violence Representation in Collaborative Management Programs**

The Interim Report references the Child Maltreatment Fatality Report 2007 as attributing domestic violence as a co-occurring issue in 30-40% of child maltreatment cases. A brief examination of the 2006 and 2007 Colorado submissions to NCANDS have no records with a domestic violence flag. It is not known if the TRAILS data do not support the field, that is, that the data are not kept in TRAILS. Another option is that the data are in TRAILS but are not mapped and coded into the NCANDS extract from TRAILS.

### **Action Committee Recommendation 11: Child Welfare Organizational Study and Workload Analysis**

This recommendation refers, in part, to the work of this report and to an anticipated companion piece that reflects the view from the counties. It is important that the recommendation discusses at length the need and anticipated value of a workload study. This is consistent with the dominating theme from staff interviews that the demands placed upon the Division exceed its capacity to address them. It is believed that this principle also affects the counties in the same way from strategic planning activities to direct casework services.

### **Action Committee Recommendation 12: Child Welfare Division Research and Performance Improvement Team**

The Interim Report expanded on the need for information theme first alluded to in Recommendation 2. The necessity of information and what it takes to produce information is well described. This recommendation is consistent with the ubiquitous themes related to TRAILS that were found in the Division staff interviews. Comments coded to these themes in the interviews described issues around the availability of data in TRAILS, the accessibility and retrieval of data from TRAILS, and the difficulties in getting the data into information forms. When interviewees described getting reports out of TRAILS, they most often were referring to data tables that provided counts and percentages. The interpretation of those tables is left to program staff in the Division. Inferential analyses and projective models of alternate scenarios did not appear to be part of the analytic capability of the Division.

This recommendation also references the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators model child welfare system. That model system was influential in the design of this organizational assessment as well. Professional research and analysis capability is seen as a core function in a model system.

### **Action Committee Recommendation 13.A: (from the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force (SB 07-64) Task Force recommendation #5: Oversight of Counties Compliance and Workload Study**



This recommendation is repeated from the earlier report and is consistent with Recommendation 11 above. This recommendation explicitly addressed the workload of the provision of direct services in the counties and the workload of the Division. “Conduct a workload study of county workers and state agencies and recommend workloads that reasonably and realistically support caseload compliance with Colorado Department of Human Services rules and ability to enforce rules.”

## **Internal Division Stakeholder Perceptions**

The internal view of Division staff members is an important view of the Division’s performance. The coding of 51 interviews resulted in five themes appearing to be most important: staffing, respect, plan/strategy, management and communication. These and the other codes used are defined in Table 2-1 Interview Coding Scheme.

The “Category” column lists the themes considered in the coding of interviews. The “Definitions/Examples” column provides what was considered in coding interview content to a theme. A flag for each code was entered into interview summaries as described in the Methodology section.

As indicated in the Methodology section of the Introduction, interviews with the Division included staff members, regular consultants to staff and stakeholders from other Departments of State government and private agencies. The results from all interviews were pooled. There was a different emphasis from some groups on certain themes, but in the interest of confidentiality the groups were too small to present all the differences and protect confidentiality.



Figure 2-1: Interview Coding Scheme

Category	Definition/Example
Communication	Mention of meetings to share information; adequacy of information received; opportunity to express ideas and concerns; refers to both within and outside of the Division (Internal)
Staffing	Job descriptions; enough time to do a job; enough people to cover a function; resources
Respect	People are treated well or not well; positive or negative expressions about others
Management	How work is organized and monitored; the number and organization of projects or functions
Experience	Do staff members/administrators have work backgrounds to do jobs?
Training	Do staff members/administrators have education and training to do jobs? Staff development
Restructure	How can/should the Division structure be changed?
Plan/Strategy	What are the mission/objectives of the Division? How do individuals see themselves as fitting in? How is the practice of child welfare being conducted?
Primary Customer	Primary Customer/Sense of Direction. Identify primary customer as 9A: Children/Families, 9B: Counties, or 9C: other
Counties	Mention of communication between the State and counties (External communication)
Information/Trails-Data Retrieval	Specific issues of getting the data that exists.
Information/Trails-Data as information	Changing data into useable information or wanting to have useable information; data completion by counties.
Information/Trails-Data as information	Changing data into useable information or wanting to have useable information; reports, tables, etc.

These top five themes can be seen in Figure 2-2, which presents three groups of themes, based upon the number of interviews coded to the themes. This bar graph portrays the number of interviews which had the theme identified as occurring in the responses. On this measure of extent, a theme was only coded to an interview. Later in this section, other results will address multiple occurrences of a theme in an interview.

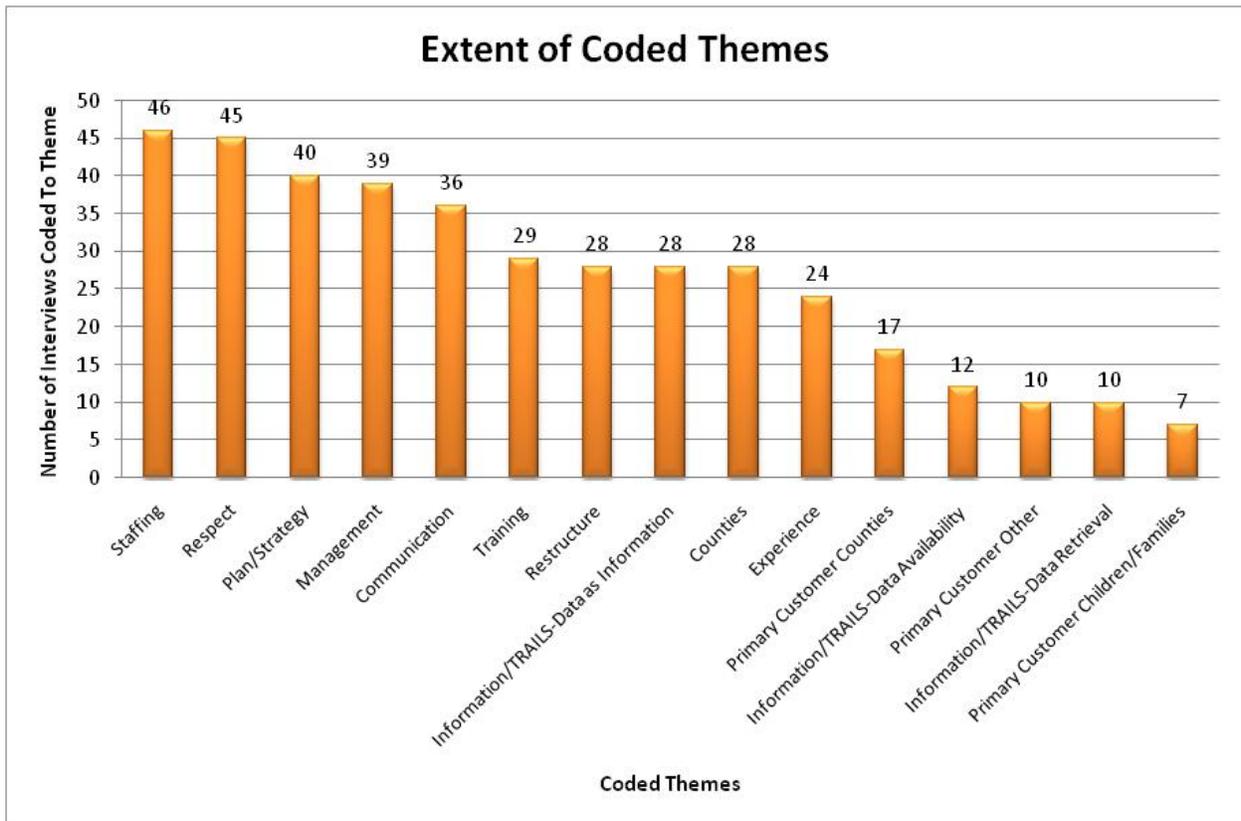


Figure 2-2 presents three groups of themes coded from the interviews. The first group is the top five themes. A “Staffing” theme was coded in 90.2% of the interviews. Not only was this theme the highest on that extent measure, but it was also highest on the weight measure. The next most frequent theme was “Respect”, which was coded in 88.2 percent of the interviews. There is a substantial drop to the next most frequent themes of “Plan/Strategy” (78.4%) and “Management” (76.5%). The occurrence of “Communication” codes (70.6%) in interviews fits better with the four highest occurring themes than it does with the next tier of themes.

The next group of themes has virtually identical extent of endorsement from interviews. “Training” (56.8%) and “Restructure”, “TRAILS Information”, and “Counties” are all at 54.9% extent of endorsement. The drop off in extent to the “Experience” theme (47.1%) made it the first theme identified in less than one half of the interviews. This was also a theme that was difficult to code reliably.

The remaining themes were specific issues related to perceived customers of the Division of Child Welfare and information processes. These themes were endorsed in one third or less of the interviews.

Figure 2-2: Themes Present in Division of Child Welfare Interviews



The top five themes reflect two principle concerns in the Division. The first is specific to the work that people do and the second is specific to the climate in which the work occurs.

The Staffing theme includes both workload and job description issues. The workload is perceived as too much to be done well. As one staff person put it, “We really don’t have enough staff. We’re really stretched”. There was a consistent message, as well, that individuals do have a sense of what they should be doing



according to their job description. While staff did not have the job descriptions, also called PDQs, in their hands a typical comment was, “Pretty much per PDQ (from recall).” At the same time, many middle level and support staff members said that what they did was beyond their level of responsibility, and they were unsure of how their activities fit into a larger mission and set of objectives for the Division as illustrated by the comments, “Most of what I do doesn't fit with the mission”, and “Need strategic planning to see where we are going and how they fit in to achieve goals”.

The Respect theme was discussed in both positive and negative terms by interview participants. Interviewees highly regarded their colleagues' dedication to the safety and well-being of children and families: “The Division is committed to serve children and families and to preserve families. The division also has knowledgeable and dedicated staff.” Positive views of leadership were that “the hope is that [senior leaders] can provide a strong leadership role and build more collaborative relationships among the program [leaders] in the Division, so that everything is less compartmentalized”; “[the current Director] helps people feel optimistic...low key, not excitable and not wound up; exudes a sense of calm and that's fine...big improvement... has done a great deal to change the way people are treated.” Staff members were generally positive about current and future directions of the Division.

On the negative side, past and current behavior of superiors towards subordinates was characterized as demeaning and dismissive. As one staff put it, “we were told they ‘could work us to death’; I felt like a piece of meat”. While there are peer-to-peer examples of lack of respect, the superior-to-subordinate examples, particularly regarding autocratic, position-based power, posed significant morale issues. Example comments in this regard are: “Very condescending to people. People get treated like dirt and are talked down to a lot. Lack of respect which is difficult to deal with”; “For example, information is not provided to employees so you hear rumors, like this position is going to be filled but this one isn't”; “Another example, staff found out about fatality report from the news; the division did not let staff know about it.” These effects on morale seemed to engender a backlash perception of lack of knowledge or lack of direction on the part of superiors because the superiors had to rely on their position power.

Communication was a theme that had two important aspects. One aspect was connected to the Management theme. There were at least half a dozen interviewees who stated the information flow from the Department of Human Services or from the Director of the Division was thought to be interrupted by middle managers. Examples of this point are : “Managers don't share information; not open so staff creates own answers; Information is used as power and for control over staff”; “Managers have too much ego, they play a big game, they don't get the information that people need because it puts others at a disadvantage”; “[I feel] no real connection with upper level management”. Staff perceived that they did not receive communications in a timely manner or found out about information as part of other or larger matters. A second aspect is the desire to understand both the larger picture and priorities of the Division and at the same time have a sense of Division activities of which they were not directly a part. Monthly staff meetings did not seem to be a satisfactory method of getting this information. The lack of satisfaction was two-edged in that, on the one hand there was not enough time to share, and on the other hand participating in meetings where people described their work was time taken away from pressing tasks.

A sub-theme in both staffing and management had to do with unexpected, urgent matters requiring immediate attention. Staff members described this as “Crisis mode on priorities, they are not proactive, they are reactive”. These types of unexpected, urgent matters interrupt planned work flow, interfere with communication, displace time and attention intended for information sharing and planning and generally contribute to perceptions of lack of direction. These matters occur at all levels of the Division. That “things come up” appears to be a fact of organizational life that the Division has not been able to come to grips with, either from an organizational culture perspective or from a workload allowance perspective.



Staff members were clear in their interview responses that they understood the management structure, from whom they received work assignments and other information and from whom they could receive organizational support. The lack of administrative support staff has created both time consuming demands on program staff and feelings of lack of support. The most clearly expressed management needs addressed Information Resources and Restructure. It is noteworthy that barely a majority of interviewees addressed Information Resources (54.9%) and Restructure (54.9%). Training was addressed from the perspective that although training was available it was not accessible due to travel costs and workload.

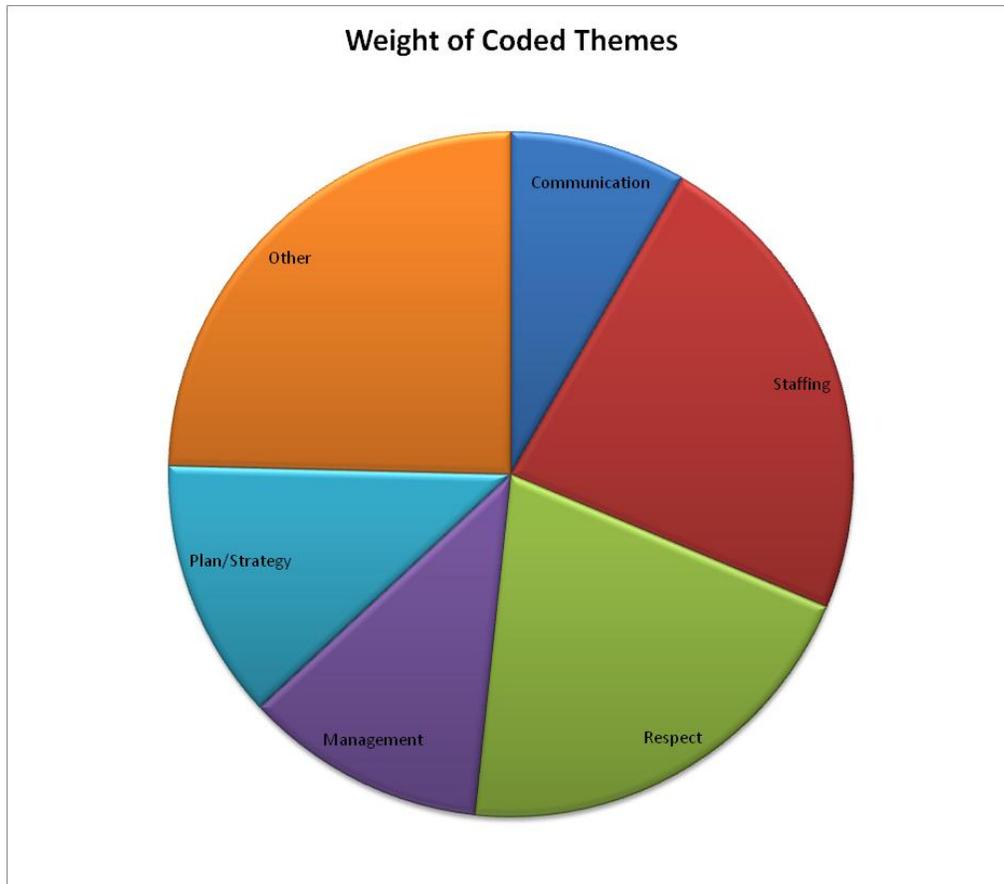
Plan/Strategy came up as a mid-level theme for interviewees in terms of feelings of lack of direction. This was expressed as, “When provided with direction there is no clarity on how things should be done. Most decisions are made unilaterally, not on a level of collaboration.” There are explicit mission statements and plans, but these do not seem to be owned by staff in terms of their day to day workload. Follow through on direction, progress and explicit reminders of management priorities were not described in the interviews in relation to planning.

A third (33.3%) of staff members and external stakeholders clearly view the Colorado Counties as primary clients or customers of the Division. The same numbers view either some other agency (within or without State government, 19.6%) or children and families (13.7%) as the primary client or customer. The final third of respondents did not provide a clear definition of either client or customer in the interview summary.

TRAILS is the primary child and family information resource of the Division. As noted above, TRAILS does provide some basic information in quite sophisticated ways and has the capability of being a valuable analytic resource. There are difficulties with both the input of data and the output of data and information from TRAILS. Recording county information in TRAILS fulfills basic requirements but does not comprehensively capture case information that is, or should be, available about children and families. Colorado is not alone among the states with this problem. Nationally, child and family risk factors and service information is a challenge to collect in automated information systems. Retrieval of data extracts from TRAILS has been kept as a highly technical function not widely available to staff members or external users. Regular consultants perform this function for division staff members. The consultants and a small number of Division staff members really know how to retrieve data extracts or “cubes” from TRAILS. This has created a choke point of information production. Federal data extracts of Colorado data has been used to get around this restriction of information flow, but that has limitations, too. The production of TRAILS information in the form of data tables, reports, has been another choke point of information flow. This has affected both Division staff and the counties.

Working relations with the counties were mentioned by 54.9 % of interviewees. Given the priority of the Division to support and monitor the counties, this percentage seems low. Generally the comments reflected substantive issues with the counties such as “State doesn't manage counties - counties need baseline rules to follow”; “having more research and evaluation work might impact practice in the counties”. Some comments reflected the negative relations with the counties; “We’re in this battle with the counties around the rule-writing process.” The counties are thought to have some antipathy towards the Division: “Counties felt criticized and oppressed”, “Some of the counties look at them disparagingly....The [counties] believe there are unrealistic expectations by the state [sic].” These direct expressions of county negative feelings toward the Division were expressed more by external stakeholders than by members of the Division staff.

The total number of times that themes were mentioned was related to the number of interviewees identified as mentioning the theme in a statistically significant way ( $r = .91, p < .001$ ). The pie chart in Figure 2-3 reflects that relationship but also provides more discrimination between the issues in terms of relative weight. The weight given to the Staffing and Respect themes reflect the number of times and ways that interview respondents returned to these themes.

**Figure 2-3: Total Number of Theme Codes for Top Five Themes**

Interview results with Division staff members and external stakeholders revealed no fundamental inconsistencies between organizational structure, job descriptions and mission. There are several points that summarize the interviews:

- ◆ The individual workloads of staff members
- ◆ The organizational climate of supervision
- ◆ The difficulties in obtaining information from TRAILS
- ◆ The passage of information within the Division
- ◆ Linkage of individual activities to mission





## Chapter 3: Organizational Structure and Issues

This Chapter includes a comparison of the Division with other state-supervised, county-administered child welfare systems and addresses the effectiveness of the Division's organizational structure—specifically staff functions, reporting structures, and inter- and intra-agency communications—necessary to ensure the Division's ability to support the county agencies.

### Overview of State-Supervised/County-Administered Child Welfare Systems

Nationally, the administration and supervision of child welfare services is provided in three organizational structures; privatization, state-administered/state-supervised, and state-supervised/county-administered. Currently two states, Florida and Kansas are privatized. thirteen states, including Colorado, are state-supervised/county-administered and the remaining thirty-five state systems are state-administered/state-supervised. Later in this chapter a description of three states similar to Colorado will be included to provide examples of other state/county systems and their organizational structures. A more in-depth review of additional similar states might be necessary to identify components compatible with Colorado. While there are similarities between these state-administered/county-supervised systems there are differences that should be explored in terms of aspects that might be most beneficial to the Colorado state child welfare system.

Colorado child welfare is a division located in the Office of Children, Youth and Family Services. The Division provides a group of services intended to protect children from harm and to assist families in caring for and protecting their children. Taken together, these programs comprise the main thrust of Colorado's effort to meet the needs of children who require, or may require placement outside of their homes for reasons of protection or community safety. The Division is intended to provide leadership, supervision, technical support, and public/legislative advocacy to each of the 64 Colorado county departments of human/social services. This responsibility includes monitoring and enforcing compliance with fiscal and programmatic requirements set by the state legislature and federal authorities.

The operational priorities of the Division are to generate public policy, support research-informed practice, and strengthen partnerships that promote safety, well-being and permanency for children, youth and families. The Division is responsive to external and internal stakeholders to ensure efforts are seamless, transparent and are supported by resources, funding and expertise. This includes the ability to develop consistent, accurate data and research capabilities. Currently the organizational structure consists of a division director and six managers who provide program oversight to the following sections:

- 1) Child Protection Services
- 2) Permanency Services
- 3) Child Welfare Financial Services
- 4) Information and Program Group
- 5) Administrative Unit
- 6) 24-Hour Monitoring Unit

If fully-staffed, there would be 54 employees in the Division, including the director and six managers.

In the county-administered/state-supervised system, local county child welfare services are approved and implemented through local authority via the county commissioner's office. This office has budgetary



authority over child welfare programs and staff and has responsibility for compliance with all relevant federal and state legislative and fiscal requirements. The relationship between the state and county government is a delicate balance requiring a sound structure that promotes effective communication, planning, monitoring, coaching, technical assistance, and collaboration. A shared vision and mission with clearly defined attainable goals and a sound plan strategically designed to align efforts is critical to the success of county and state child welfare services.

To provide a comparative perspective, three child welfare state-administered/county-supervised systems, including Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, were examined and described in this report. These states were chosen due to their relative similarity to Colorado in terms of physical size, number of counties, state demographics, and population disbursement (i.e. large cities vs. rural area). These states also resemble Colorado in terms of child population, child population per square mile, and/or child population per county. State similarities are described in the chart below.

**Table 3-1: State Comparisons**

STATE	Sq. Miles	# Counties	Child Population (2006)	Child Population per Sq Mi	Child Population per County
Colorado	104,100	64	1,169,301	11	18,270
Minnesota	86,943	87	1,257,264	14	14,451
Pennsylvania	46,058	67	2,804,873	61	41,864
Wisconsin	65,503	72	1,295,995	20	18,000

## MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Department of Human Services is organized primarily around five business functions: Chemical and Mental Health Services; Children and Family Services; Continuing Care; Health Care; and Operations. There are eight regional offices of MN DHS. Children and Family Services “helps keep children safe and provides families with supports to care for their children. It also helps families and individuals transition to work and economic stability.” This area of MN DHS is divided into six sections which are described below:

1. **Child Safety and Permanency Division:** The Child Safety and Permanency Division works with counties to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to intervene when child maltreatment occurs. It provides a statewide competency-based training system in partnership with counties and oversees early intervention services, adolescent services, emergency and transitional housing for homeless youth, family preservation services (including crisis nurseries and services to minor parents), child protection services, out-of-home placement (including foster care), Indian child welfare and adoption. This division also includes the Social Services Information System, which is an automated child welfare targeted case management system for child protection, foster care, children's mental health and out-of-home placement. This automated system helps frontline staff manage their cases, helps counties manage their programs and helps the state make better-informed policy decisions.
2. **Child Support Enforcement Division:** This division is responsible for administering the statewide child support enforcement program that includes locating absent parents, establishing paternity, and establishing, modifying and enforcing orders for child and medical support. It operates PRISM, a statewide computer system, and statewide programs, including a child support payment center.
3. **Community Partnerships Division:** The Community Partnerships Division works in partnership with communities and other state agencies to develop high quality and accessible child care options and school readiness services for families; administers the Minnesota Supplemental Aid and General Assistance programs, which provide income supports for adults who are aged, blind or disabled;



oversees the Group Residential Housing program and collaborates with Minnesota Housing on the Governor's Business Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness; administers social services, cash assistance and employment services to refugee families; and works to remove the barriers imposed by poverty on the health and development of children and families at the community level, through community action agencies, food shelves and homeless shelters.

4. **Program Assessment and Integrity Division:** This division is responsible for program data and analysis, quality assurance and outcome evaluation for the Minnesota Family Investment Program, food stamps and related programs. It supervises fraud prevention and control efforts.
5. **Transition to Economic Stability Division:** This division supervises administration of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the state's welfare reform effort that helps families work their way to economic stability. This division provides assistance to county staff through training, manuals, information and policy support.
6. **Transition Support Systems Division:** The Transition Support Systems Division oversees and maintains the statewide system that determines eligibility for cash, Medical Assistance and Food Support. This division also is responsible for the issuance of cash and food stamps benefits.

Other services provided by Children and Family Services include adolescent services, adoption, child care, child protection, child support, children's mental health, cultural competency, disability intervention, diversionary work program, foster care, Indian child welfare, and the Minnesota Family Investment Program which is the state's welfare reform program for low-income families with children. Additionally, The State of Minnesota has been a leader in differential response (referred to as "alternative" response in the state). Since February 2004, alternative response has been implemented in all 87 counties. During the mid-1990s, Minnesota began piloting child welfare reform efforts that could respond more flexibly to the varied circumstances of the families it served. These pilot programs focused on early intervention in child abuse and neglect cases using nontraditional (alternative response) methods. In 2001, 20 counties in Minnesota participated in the alternative response demonstration. (Loman & Siegel, 2004) The evaluation compared the outcomes for families randomly assigned to experimental (those who received alternative response) and control (those who received traditional investigations) groups. The evaluation revealed positive findings on the process, impact, and the cost effectiveness of the state's alternative response program.

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare runs the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF). Child welfare and juvenile justice services are organized, managed, and delivered by County Children and Youth agencies and county Juvenile probation offices. The Office of Children, Youth, and Families is divided into four bureaus:

1. **Bureau of Budget and Program Support (BBPS):** The Bureau of Budget and Program Support (BBPS) provides support functions for OCYF including: budgeting; personnel; management of federal grants and revenue; fulfillment of needs-based budget mandates; and administrative, financial and operational support. The BBPS increases fiscal accountability through cost reporting, recovery, containment, justification, and redistribution. In conjunction with program and policy staff, the BBPS develops and updates federal and state plans under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act and monitors implementation of these programs. The BBPS also provides leadership during program reviews and state or federal audits, including gathering financial and program support information, issuing responses, and acting as a liaison with other commonwealth partners. The BBPS also provides leadership in setting fiscal policy related to allowable state and federal expenditures at the county level, and related state and Title IV-B and IV-E expenditures at the program level. The BBPS prepares, analyzes, and submits financial information for the development of OCYF's



operating budget, including grants and subsidies, as well as the needs-based budget. For the general operating budget, the BBPS serves as the lead with regard to all child welfare personnel, operating, fixed asset procurement, and leasing activities

2. Bureau of Child Welfare Services (CWS): The Bureau of Child Welfare Services is primarily responsible for monitoring the delivery of services by county and private children and youth social service agencies throughout the commonwealth. The bureau conducts these functions through the four OCYF Regional Offices and its Division of Licensing. The essential functions and responsibilities of the four OCYF Regional Offices include:
  - a. Monitoring, licensing and providing technical assistance to the public and private children and youth social service agencies and facilities;
  - b. Investigating child abuse when the alleged perpetrator is a county agency employee or one of its agents;
  - c. Monitoring the county agencies' implementation of the PA Child Protective Services Law;
  - d. Ensuring regulatory compliance of agencies and facilities by investigating complaints and conducting annual inspections; and
  - e. Assisting county and private agencies in the interpretation and implementation of DPW regulations.
  
3. The Division of Licensing within the Bureau is responsible for the regulation of public and private children and youth agencies; foster care agencies; adoption agencies; and child residential and day treatment facilities, including residential services, secure care, secure detention, transitional living, outdoor, mobile, day treatment, and secure residential, that operate in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Oversight of these programs is conducted by the four OCYF Regional Offices. The Division of Licensing works with over 1,800 facilities and agencies, providing programmatic direction and monitoring for all licensing activities statewide. The division also evaluates and seeks to improve the quality of care and services provided. The essential functions and responsibilities of the Division of Licensing include:
  - a. Responding to inquiries and providing information to families, providers, stakeholders and the general public regarding the statutes, regulations and DPW requirements and processes for operating a public or private children and youth agency, child residential and day treatment facility, foster care agency or adoption agency,
  - b. Inspecting and monitoring regulated facilities and agencies for continual compliance;
  - c. Providing technical assistance and consultation to facilities and agencies;
  - d. Conducting complaint investigations to determine validity of allegations, and performing follow-up as needed;
  - e. Reviewing applications from prospective providers that wish to open a new facility or agency;
  - f. Preparing detailed reports of survey findings, recommendations for licensure status, and enforcement actions; and
  - g. Providing information regarding the certification or licensing history of a facility or agency.
  
4. The Bureau of Child Welfare Services also coordinates with the Bureau of Policy and Program Development to ensure that county and private provider operations are guided by best practice standards and in conformity with state and federal mandates. In addition, the Bureau of Child



Welfare Services coordinates with the Bureau of Budget and Program Support in reviewing annual program and budget estimates for the 67 county children and youth social service agencies.

5. Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS): BJJS is responsible for the management, operations, program planning and oversight of all the Youth Development Center and Youth Forestry Camp facilities. These facilities are designed to provide state-of-the-art treatment, care and custody services to Pennsylvania's most at-risk youth, such as those who have been adjudicated delinquent by their county judicial system. Each youth receives individualized treatment services based on his/her strengths and needs. BJJS treatment services value strong child, family and community partnerships, promote competency development and victim awareness, while advocating for the continued improvement and integration of all child-serving systems. All aspects of the BJJS facilities are based on the Restorative Justice concept thereby ensuring that all the facility programs provide equal attention to the victim, the youth, and the community. The BJJS is committed to supporting the building of strong communities and serving as a model for juvenile justice services, while fostering hope and the opportunity for success
6. Bureau of Policy and Program Development: The Bureau of Policy and Program Development plans, develops, and implements new and revised regulations; provides program clarifications; conducts training and orientation on new/revised procedures; provides analysis of and recommendations for proposed legislation; develops program reports and publications; and coordinates and provides technical assistance and training materials for OCYF regional office staff and service providers. The Bureau of Policy and Program Development develops and publishes program procedures and directives governing child welfare activities in the commonwealth related to: 1) The administration of public and private, 2) children and youth agencies; 3) Foster family care, 4) Adoption, 5) Child residential and day treatment programs, and 6) Child Protective Services.

The Bureau of Policy and Program Development is responsible for programs required by Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law and Departmental regulations governing services to dependent and neglected children. The bureau oversees and manages special grants including the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, Family Centers, and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The bureau also coordinates with OCYF's Bureau of Budget and Program Support in applying for and managing grants for the development of child welfare services. The bureau is responsible for coordinating the data collection and analysis of child welfare data for OCYF, as well as for the county and private children and youth social services agencies. The bureau is responsible for managing and operating the Child Line and Abuse Registry and the three Interstate Compacts for the commonwealth. The bureau serves as the lead for special projects such as the Federal Child and Family Services Review and the Federal Systems of Care Grant. The Bureau also works closely with Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Training Program.

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program (PACWTP), run by the University of Pittsburgh, provides County Child and Youth Agencies with individualized training and technical services. Their mission is to train and provide technical support to those working in the Child Welfare system and to support those working with families and communities to safely parent children and youth. The PACWTP maintains ongoing collaborative partnerships with County Children and Youth Agencies, the Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, private provider agencies, children, youth, families, community members, and other system partners. Services are provided through Regional Teams, who are assigned to work with County Children and Youth Agencies to assess the training and technical assistance needs, and to coordinate a seamless delivery of the Training Program's products and services. Through cross-system collaboration, the Training Program facilitates county specific assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring that leads to improved knowledge, skills and practices. This method helps ensure that the training and technical assistance needs of Child Welfare professionals are met across the state and



better prepares the system to facilitate the outcomes of safety, permanence and well-being for the children, youth and families served. In addition to the training offered to county child welfare agencies, similar or specialized training is also offered to state staff within OCYF.

For the 2009-10 Budget, Pennsylvania earmarked more than \$25.5 million for the use of evidence-based in-home services, including approaches that focus on the whole family, not just the child. The state also provided \$21.7 million for outcomes-based services known as Pennsylvania Promising Practices. The 2009-10 Budget included an increase of \$6.3 million to allow more children to be adopted and to continue to provide financial assistance to those who have already been adopted, for a total state investment of \$27.3 million. In 2008-2009, PA CPS served 283,745 people and they project that they will serve 286,983 people in 2009-2010.

## WISCONSIN

On July 1, 2008, the Department of Health and Family Services became the Department of Health Services and the new Department of Children and Families (DCF) was created. DCF was created to streamline and make more effective all of the key programs that provide support and valuable services to children and families. The mission of the Department of Children and Families is to promote the economic and social well-being of Wisconsin's children and Families. The Department of Children and Families is committed to protecting children, strengthening families, and building communities.

The goal of the Department of Children and Families is to enhance prevention and early intervention efforts throughout Wisconsin. The State asserts: "We believe if we spend a concerted effort on prevention and early intervention services that we would have a tremendous impact on child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, and poverty. We want to help families overcome the struggles that limit their ability to care adequately for their children before they come to the attention of the child protective services or juvenile justice systems. If we wait for children to be harmed...or if we wait for a child to engage in unsafe and risky behaviors...we have waited too long." Prevention Initiatives include:

- ◆ Brighter Futures Initiative (BFI): promotes healthy families and youth; school readiness for children; child safety in their families and communities; and successful navigation from childhood to adulthood. The Initiative supports evidence-based, positive youth development and prevention strategies focusing on the legislative outcomes.
- ◆ Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF): focuses on helping families stay together. It seeks to prevent child abuse and neglect, avoid the removal of children from their homes and supports timely reunification where temporary removal has been necessary, in order to ensure children's safety. The program also provides services to promote and support adoptions for those children who cannot return home safely.
- ◆ Children's Trust Fund: To advocate, support, and sustain a statewide culture that encourages family and community life in which children will develop and flourish in a safe environment free from all forms of abuse and neglect.

The DCF Organizational structure was created to reflect the priority programs and strategic foci and goals for children and families in Wisconsin. There are four divisions of the Department of Children and Families: 1) Safety and Permanence, 2) Family and Economic Security, 3) Enterprise Solutions, and 4) Early Care and Education.

In addition, there is the Office of Prevention and Service Integration, which works across all programs focused on improving collaboration and increasing coordination of services. There is also the Office of Performance and Quality Assurance, which focuses on ensuring program effectiveness leading to improved outcomes for children and families. There are five regions in DHS, each with different county and tribe



assignments. Each region is headed out of a different regional office, with the exception of the southern region, which is housed in the central office (in Madison, WI).

Wisconsin also supports a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program, which, in partnership with tribal and county child welfare systems, is committed to providing quality information for the enhancement of case practice to benefit children and families in the state. In addition, the CQI program strives to provide all of Wisconsin's county child welfare systems with the means to continuously improve services and outcomes for the children and families served. The CQI program utilizes three types of information: qualitative, quantitative, and data from the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (WiSACWIS). The CQI program uses the Quality Service Review (QSR) protocol to gather qualitative information used to evaluate the case practice models of Wisconsin's county child welfare programs. Since September 2005, the CQI has reviewed and presented service reviews for 40 of the State's 72 counties. The QSR is able to generate useful information for staff and stakeholders in the county regarding the outcomes for children and families served, the strengths of local practice, and the opportunities for improving system performance. The QSR process also provides an opportunity to gather additional information the department will use in reporting to the federal Administration of Children and Families (exit DCF) as part of the CFSR. The quantitative measures continue to be developed. WiSACWIS reports are analyzed prior to QSR reviews to provide further information to the county. The CQI committee develops quality improvement strategies for the child welfare program including implementation of a case review model and meeting the management and program information needs of the counties and the tribes.

Each of these state systems has several noticeable similarities. First, each state has a division that focuses on child welfare, safety, and/or permanency. Both Minnesota and Wisconsin have a division entitled Safety and Permanency, while Pennsylvania incorporates this function into their Bureau of Child Welfare Services. All three states also have an area devoted to program and/or policy development and oversight. In Minnesota, this division is entitled Program Assessment and Integrity. In Pennsylvania this function falls under both the Bureau of Policy and Program Development and the Bureau of Budget and Program Support. In Wisconsin, this function is maintained in the Office of Performance and Quality Assurance. Each state also has a department that focuses on economic hardship, although Pennsylvania is the only state that does not have a division focused on this function, as it is incorporated into their Child Welfare Services division.

Minnesota has two departments that address this issue: the Transition of Economic Stability division and the Transition Support Systems division. Wisconsin has a Family and Economic Security division to address economic issues. A unique division of Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families is the Office of Prevention and Service Integration, which works across all programs to improve collaboration and increase coordination of services. While having awareness and understanding of other state systems can help to inform the future direction of Colorado Child Welfare, no one system provides a transferable model. For example, Pennsylvania's Child Welfare training program, needs-based planning and budgeting process (performance based), and performance based contracting, Wisconsin's Continuous Quality Improvement program and Minnesota's Differential Response Initiative are all programs and practices individual to each state and supported by the state child welfare system that could be identified as promising strategies for Colorado. These and other state systems have programmatic structures that should be further explored that could enhance the Colorado system. However, ultimately the "right fit" is unique to the needs of Colorado children and families.

## **Effectiveness of Current Organizational Structure**

The Division is intended to provide leadership, supervision, technical support, and public/legislative advocacy to each of the 64 Colorado county departments of human/social services. This responsibility includes monitoring and enforcing compliance with fiscal and programmatic requirements set by the State



Legislature and federal authorities. In this way the Division serves the counties, and in turn the counties serve the children, families, and communities of Colorado directly. Both the county and state systems are aligned through a shared vision to support the safety, permanency, and well being of children.

However, a vision that is not adequately resourced can create a culture of frustration and resignation. Most observers recognize that the administration of child welfare services is extremely complex, made more complicated by the emergency aspect of child protective services. Typically, operating in such a difficult environment leads to an entrenched management style that is reactive and crisis-oriented. Crisis management organizes and assigns resources to meet immediate needs (i.e., child safety). Without sufficient capacity in the system, crisis management is ill-equipped to effectively address the systemic issues—family functioning, prevention services, socioeconomic factors—intended to keep children safe in their homes and relieve pressure on the CPS system.

Conversely, an organization that both responds to and anticipates the needs of children and families is adequately staffed, well-trained, seamlessly connected to its customers (the counties), and supported by a strong leadership team. The Division must become an organization capable of both responding to and anticipating needs, and this will not be possible without an investment in Division personnel. Such an investment, however, must be guided by a specific set of priorities that the Division will implement and achieve within a specific time frame. The opportunity to reorganize is a direct result of increased state and federal attention to the ability of county child welfare organizations to adequately protect children and the focus on the state's ability to provide adequate support to the counties who provide that protection.

The pending Colorado Child Welfare Action Plan report represents an exciting opportunity for the Division to reorganize along lines that support its priority areas. For this report, the Division's leadership team articulated the operational priorities for the Division as follows:

- 1) Generate public policy,
- 2) Support research-informed practice; and
- 3) Strengthen partnerships that promote safety, well-being and permanency for children, youth and families.

CDHS leadership expects the Division to stay responsive to external and internal stakeholders, ensuring that their efforts are seamless, transparent, and supported by resources, funding and expertise. This includes the ability to develop consistent, accurate data and research capabilities. In creating the organizational design consideration should also be given to recent legislation such as the "Fostering Connections" legislation which provides provisions for the release of new competitive grants. The matching grants available to states and tribes will allow the funding of three types of programs:

- 1) Kinship navigator programs designed to assist caregivers in obtaining support assistance and information to all kin families.
- 2) Intensive family-finding programs that use search technology to find and match up biological family members for children in the child welfare system.
- 3) Family group decision making for children in the child welfare system that empowers and involves family members in planning and decisions that work to protect the child(ren) from further abuse and neglect.



## Chapter 4: Recommendations

In this chapter of the report, PSI and American Humane identify and explain our recommendations for operational reorganization and improvement for the Division. These recommendations are derived from our analysis of three primary data sources:

- a.) Structured interviews conducted by PSI and American Humane with Division staff, select county office staff, and stakeholders of the child welfare system in Colorado;
- b.) Review of Division organization in similarly sized states with state-administered, county-run child welfare programs, and
- c.) Questionnaire delivered to Division leadership regarding its organizational and functional priorities for both the Division and the county offices.

All recommendations are in keeping with evidence-based best practices as defined and/or supported by the National Resource Centers and the federal ACF Children’s Bureau. These recommendations are intended to provide a solid foundation from which to organize and direct additional reform efforts at the county level.

### The Association Model

Please note that all recommendations made below are in service of implementing a new model of practice for the Division, which we refer to in this report as the Association Model. The Association Model articulates a way for state and county entities to work together effectively within a traditional state-administered, county-run child welfare system without the need for legislative action, changes to state policy, or other intensive interventions. The relationship between the state and the counties is recast as one of membership (counties) in an association (state) to meet the needs of the members and advocate for a common cause (child welfare). Characteristics of the association model include:

- ◆ Emphasis of the Division’s representation of, and advocacy for, county agencies to the Division, the State Legislature, the press, and the public;
- ◆ Solicitation by the Division of the needs of the county agency “members” to provide effective child welfare services, which the Division then works to address;
- ◆ Sponsorship by the Division of a membership congress to address issues, pursue consensus on operational expectations and child welfare best practices, and create agendas for the next year;
- ◆ Provision of tools, technical assistance, and direct support by the Division to the county agency members in areas related to best practices and operational efficiency/effectiveness; and
- ◆ Participation in a statewide quality assurance and improvement initiative that holds county agency members responsible for effective child welfare service provision, and the Division responsible for effective representation and support of the counties.

While the fundamental responsibilities of the Division and the Counties do not change by using the Association Model—counties deliver services while the state ensures best practice—they are both clarified and focused, while the relationship between the state and counties is given a formal communications protocol, feedback mechanism, performance measurement structure, and set of common priorities that will drive decision making. The intent of the association model is to help all stakeholders in the child welfare system focus on the tasks and activities that will have the greatest positive impact on outcome for children and families while maintaining the consensus building and collaborative approach to operations management and service delivery that is a hallmark of effective child welfare agencies across the country.



PSI and American Humane formally recommend that CDHS adopt the association model as its model of practice for child welfare administration. To adopt this model, we further recommend that the Division do the following:

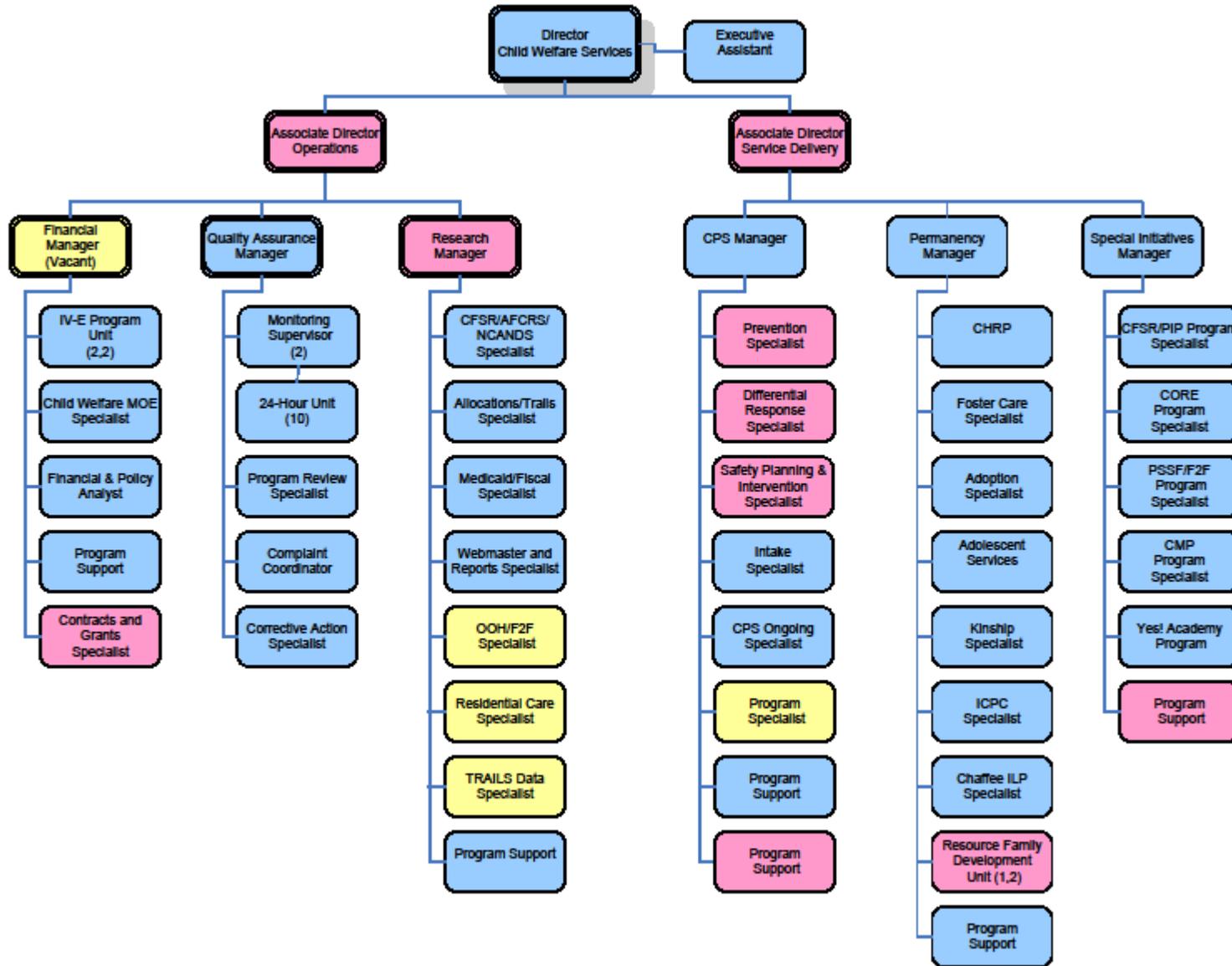
## **Recommendation 1: Adopt a New Organizational Structure for the Division**

The recommendations made for organizational changes or enhancements will focus on the staff functions, reporting structures, and inter- and intra-agency communications necessary to ensure the Division's ability to support the county agencies and the training needed for Division staff to be adequately prepared to meet those challenges and expectations. There is a critical need in this department for the addition of adequate administrative support. Within the current structure of the Division, each program area effectively operates within a functional silo, lacking a clear vision or plan for how work across program areas is inter-related. This observation is supported by many of the staff interviews for this project, during which staff has declared that they do not have a clear knowledge of various program functions and how their work is related to other program areas.

Understanding the operational priorities of the Division, and the role of each program/service and the fit into that picture, is critical to building a more effective organization. Without this knowledge and understanding the staff are functioning from day to day addressing the issue of the day. This has resulted in a clear lack of strategic direction. Additional administrative support can provide the attention, focus, and energy needed to build the internal capacity necessary to perform the difficult and important work and effectively address the many demands facing the Division.

On the following page, this report presents an organization chart to illustrate a new organizational structure for the Division, one designed to organize functions and positions into logical and manageable sets of responsibilities, build supervisory and direct-reporting relationships that emphasize accountability of individual team members, and support improved communication with—and support of—the county agencies. The chart uses a color code to highlight both existing and newly recommended positions within the organizational structure, as follows:

- **Blue** – represents no change to the position or function between the current and the recommended organizational structure;
- **Yellow** – represents an approved position that is vacant or a function that requires an increase in the number of staff. Each yellow box displays both current and recommended staffing levels.
- **Pink** – represents a new position/function in the recommended structure that does not currently exist.





Guided by the organizational chart displayed on the previous page, the major changes to the Division's organizational structure are as follows:

1. The Director of Child Welfare Services will now have two direct reports: the Associate Director for Operations and the Associate Director for Service Delivery. Each will be responsible for the direction of a core function of the Division: internal operations and child welfare service delivery activity, respectively. The addition of the Associate Directors will allow the Director to focus on the key activities of strategic planning, program improvement and best practice leadership, and relationship building with the counties.
2. Management positions will be organized around more cohesive and internally consistent functions: finance, quality assurance, research, and office administration for the Operations Group, and CPS, Permanency, and Special Initiatives for the Service Delivery Group. Managers will be charged with developing thought leadership in their respective functions, which will be shared through formal and information communications protocols among the groups.
3. In keeping with item 2, above, functions currently organized under the Information and Program Group will be reassigned to the Quality Assurance, Research, and Service Delivery Groups. Creation of the new Research Group will provide a dedicated resource for generating information to support best practice and performance improvement initiatives throughout the Division.
4. A grants and contracts specialist will be added to Finance, ensuring that a full-time position is dedicated to finding funding opportunities for all functions (both operational and service delivery) and helping the counties address funding shortfalls for specific programs.
5. To ensure that Child Protective Services can help the counties adequately address ongoing threats to child safety and risks to safety, three new specialist positions will be added to the program: prevention, differential response, and safety planning/intervention.
6. Program Support positions will be added to each of the Child Welfare Service Delivery groups—CPS, and Special Initiatives—to increase the groups' capacity to interact with the counties.

## **Recommendation 2: Fully Staff the Division with Responsibilities Assigned to Positions Based on Functions**

The following list is a description of critical positions and content areas needed to address the deficiencies noted.

### **Associate Director for Operations**

This new position, reporting to the Child Welfare Director, would be responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Division. This position would manage the Financial, Quality Assurance, Best Practice, and Administrative Support Unit Managers, working to ensure the activities of their units are aligned with the identified vision and mission of the department and are in accordance with the department's strategic plan. This individual would be responsible for ensuring the training and professional development needs of staff are met. This position would also ensure that the department is responsive to internal and external stakeholders coordinating and disseminating information as needed.

### **Associate Director for Service Delivery**

This new position, reporting to the Child Welfare Director, is responsible for directing the activities of the core child welfare service units. All child welfare program managers—CPS, Permanency, and Special



Initiatives—will report to the Associate Director for Service Delivery. This position's primary responsibility is to provide oversight, direction, and coordination of the program managers' activities, with a focus on policy, procedure, and best practice implementation.

Building a team oriented strength-based culture within the department will be instrumental to the success of this position and the department. This will require diligent focus on building the internal team, program planning, and ongoing evaluation of staff ability to meet the expectations of the department's leadership. This position will coach, mentor and provide support to the program managers. However, this position will also have a strong focus on accountability and will ensure that the management staff meets the Department's expectations.

### **Quality Assurance and Program Monitoring**

This section is responsible for monitoring and providing technical assistance to the public and private children and youth social service agencies and facilities. This responsibility includes the assurance of regulatory and legislative compliance of agencies and facilities by investigating complaints and conducting annual quality assurance reviews. Annual reviews should focus not only on the minimal standards established through regulations, ACTION Memos, etc. but should also have a deliberate focus on best practice implementation. This focus would be provided through ongoing technical assistance to the counties. This strategy would require that a yearly review process be developed.

This section would work closely with the Administrative Review Division (ARD). The ARD formed in 1991, currently monitors the Division and the Department of Youth Corrections (DYC). The ARD has two primary functions with regard to the Division: case reviews and quality assurance. The case reviews include a six month review of each child in out-of-home care. The ARD staff read and audit the file, meet with the child, parent, guardian, county and others and complete a write-up their findings and compliance on TRAILS. They write a narrative on the progress of the case and identify and report cases with safety issues. The ARD also completes quality assurance reviews, including scheduled assessments of the counties (timing depends on size of the county), in-home, screen-outs and ad hoc reviews. This section would work to make internal program improvements which could then be assessed by the ARD for further enhancements as appropriate.

Immediate feedback with recommendations, a plan for correction, and follow up is critical to an effective quality assurance process. Adequate field staff are needed to provide this function and ongoing technical assistance. This function could be a combination of the 24 hour monitoring and county monitoring or separate functions. The key to this function is the relationship and knowledge the staff has with and about the counties. The division of counties could be done regionally and should be considerate of county distance and size.

This report recommends that each field staff have responsibility for fewer than 10 counties. Coordination with other program areas is critical in the delivery of effective technical assistance. Field staff in this section must have function and content knowledge of all program areas including fiscal planning and reporting.

### **Research Manager**

A staff person who manages staff and coordinates the data and information system is critical to planning, funding, and accountability. The importance of managing data and understanding the impact data, when used appropriately, can have on program planning, development, and monitoring, is critical across all program areas. This manager would collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to identify the various needs for data and generate data sets to meet those needs. This person would be responsive to internal and external requests but would also identify strategically what ongoing reporting is needed to monitor progress toward



identified goals and outcomes both locally and systematically. This position reports directly to the Assistant to the Director.

### **Contracts and Grants Specialist**

This position manages all grants and external contracts. The purpose of this position is to identify appropriate grant opportunities (those that are aligned with the vision and mission of the department), coordinate proposal development and submission, and monitor grant deliverables if awarded. The other function of this position is contract management. This responsibility includes contract negotiations, development, and monitoring. Consideration to performance-based contracting should be given to this process but, at minimum, the monitoring of contract deliverables and outcomes should be an expectation. This position reports directly to the Assistant to the Director.

### **CPS Group**

Several additional positions within the CPS section have been identified to address specific needs. These needs focus on practice improvement, program development and program support. Given the work of the Governor's Action committee it is critical that the department is prepared with adequate program staff to respond to the recommendations put forth by that committee. It is also critical that the department be adequately staffed to respond to the ongoing program needs of the counties. Four additional staff are recommended for this section to address four departmental priorities:

1. Monitor child fatality reviews - identify policy and practice strengths and deficiencies with recommendations for practice improvement
2. Coordinate practice improvement efforts – research recommended practice models, present justification for practice change including relevant program evaluation and research, develop strategy for implementation, and execute implementation plan.
3. Focus on effective prevention and intervention strategies.
4. Program support staff that manages information. This position coordinates knowledge development and dissemination of information to internal and external stakeholders. This individual is responsible for responding to requests for information and drafting reports with relevant research and data to support the work within the CPS section.

### **Permanency Group**

The recruitment and retention of quality foster parents is critical in meeting safety, permanency, and well being outcomes for foster children. There are many strategies that can be utilized to impact recruitment and retention efforts. However, these strategies require a focus and resources for effective implementation. Understanding recruitment and retention best practices, demographic needs etc. requires intensive planning and collaboration with internal departmental resources and the individual counties. For example, one unit in program area four that has been extremely successful families and the children that receive services is Adolescent Services. We recommend further exploration of the benefits of this unit to determine whether it could be developed into a best practice that could be implemented statewide.

With 64 counties to serve there is a legitimate need for at least two positions to focus on these activities. The relationship with the counties is critical and requires strategies that include direct contact with the counties individually or regionally. In addition, the increased focus on engaging kin and the priority to maintain children within kinship care homes places an increased demand on resources. The recruitment, retention,



and monitoring needs of kinship foster care are unique and should be given the special attention needed to support kinship care families.

### **Special Initiatives Group**

A program support staff person is also needed in the community initiatives section. This position would also coordinate knowledge development and dissemination of information to internal and external stakeholders. However, the primary responsibility of this position is to provide support to staff that manage community based initiatives and assist in the coordination of community based activities.

### **Recommendation 3: Establish Clear Operational Boundaries**

Most of the challenges facing the Division—as is typical of most state-administered, county-run systems—relate to communication. As priorities shift and issues emerge in the crisis-driven daily life of a child welfare agency, issues are often addressed with the resources at hand, and the boundaries of responsibility and authority can be blurred. While PSI/American Humane recommends that the Division commit to a new and ambitious approach to communication (see number 5, below), prior to making that commitment, the Division must be able to articulate its operational boundaries to both internal staff, the counties, and external stakeholders. By defining itself anew—regarding the tasks that will take on, those it won't take on, and how it will prioritize responsibilities—the Division can provide both clarity of the child welfare mission and thought leadership on the role that child welfare plays in the lives of Colorado families.

### **Top Operational Priorities**

PSI/American Humane recommends that the Division articulate its operational priorities; those tasks and activities that form the core of daily work performed by the Division. As part of the data gathering for this report, we requested that Division leadership provide a brief summary of its operational priorities for the Division. They are as follows:

The Division of Child Welfare Services will provide leadership, supervision, support and advocacy on behalf of 64 Colorado county departments of human/social services to achieve an efficient and effective human services delivery system for the citizens of Colorado; and establish a mechanism to hold State Division and county staff accountable for program and fiscal performance.

The operational priorities of Child Welfare Services are to generate public policy, support research-informed practice, and strengthen partnerships that promote safety, well-being and permanency for children, youth and families.

Child Welfare Services is responsive to external and internal stakeholders to ensure our efforts are seamless, transparent and are supported by resources, funding and expertise. This includes the ability to develop consistent, accurate data and research capabilities.

PSI and American Humane see these operational priorities as consistent with the consensus-building and collaborative approach of effective child welfare agencies, however it will be the responsibility of Division



leadership and key stakeholders to define the priorities within the context of Colorado's implementation of the association model. PSI and American Humane provide recommendations on how to define leadership and supervision, support and advocacy, and a mechanism for program and fiscal accountability on the pages that follow. We also offer a structure for communication and feedback to define and sustain responsiveness to internal and external stakeholders.

## **Triage System**

PSI and American Humane recommend that, as part of defining its operational priorities, the Division also define the order in which those priorities are to be addressed on an ongoing basis. This is in response to two commonly reported issues identified during the interviews: a.) a tendency within the Division to take on too many issues at once, which reduces staff effectiveness on any one issue, and b.) a lack of clarity among Division staff regarding the strategic plan for the Division. For example, one interviewee stated that, "We need to make a plan, prioritize the work and give staff authority to do their jobs." Another interviewee reiterated this point by saying, "There is not a good, strong strategic plan so it's chaotic and reactive."

Part of increasing Division effectiveness is for Division leadership to set concrete expectations on how staff will organize their daily activities, giving first priority to those issues that will most significantly affect the quality of child welfare service delivery provided by the county agencies. PSI and American Humane recommend training Division staff in how to apply a "triage system" to organizing daily activities, with the following issues taking precedence (in this order):

1. Direct supervision and support to county agencies
2. Program and fiscal performance accountability
3. Advocacy on behalf of county agencies
4. Generation of policy and support of research-informed practice
5. Data and research capabilities

## **Non-Responsibilities**

Equally important to establishing the operational priorities for the Division, we recommend that the Division identify the issues and activities for which it is not responsible. This step is necessary to establish the total scope of the Division's functions, setting appropriate expectations for Division staff, county offices, and other child welfare stakeholders (e.g., State Legislature, press, and public) on the appropriate role for the Division in administering the child welfare system statewide.

In our questionnaire to Division leadership, PSI and American Humane asked for a list of activities and functions for which the Division will not be responsible in a reformed system. The list provided by the leadership included:

- [Provision of direct services to clients](#)
- [Execution of local implementation plans](#)
- [Administration of county social services](#)

The first two items in the list are fully consistent with that of traditional state-administered, county-run systems and should brook no controversy. In addition, PSI and American Humane see the last item, regarding administration of county social services consistent with the proposed association model of



statewide child welfare administration where the Division would be responsible for advocacy on behalf of the needs of the county agencies.

PSI and American Humane interprets this last bullet as a request to the county offices to be more tolerant of the budgetary and legislative priorities that are—to a degree—imposed upon the Division. We support this request provided that the Division meets two (2) criteria:

1. Communicate clearly to the county offices about the origin of specific priorities (Division, Department, or Legislature) and indicate how the Division sees the priority affecting the Counties; and
2. For priorities that are expected to have a negative impact on county budgets, staffing, or operations, articulate the expected impact clearly and quickly to the county agencies and outline a response plan that the Division will undertake on behalf of the counties to address the issue.

#### **Recommendation 4: Articulate and Model Leadership Culture**

There is a natural tension that exists within child welfare systems regarding their administration and leadership. Child welfare practitioners tend to prefer an inclusive, recursive approach to decision-making, characterized by collaboration, consensus, and frequent re-opening of issues to ensure that stakeholders continue to support decisions made. The child welfare environment, on the other hand, is crisis-driven, with quick decisions required to address fundamental issues such as threats to child safety and effective permanency solutions. When these two dynamics conflict—which they do every day in child welfare—the first casualties tend to be operational clarity, coherence of response, and an understanding of how staff members' efforts fit into a logical and effective framework.

Once again, the Division faces an issue based in clear communication with staff, the counties, and external stakeholders, this time around leadership. As observed by individuals who participated in the interviews for this report, the issue has less to do with specific people in Division leadership positions than the way in which decisions are made, communicated, and enforced. Many interviewees commented that the Division is looking for leadership, not just managers.

When asked to articulate a model of leadership that it would endorse and support, Division leadership provided the following response:

*The Division of Child Welfare is highly influenced by the participative style of leadership. This style involves the inclusion of one or more employees in the decision making process. This collaborative approach is most effective in supporting human communication and mutual problem solving.*

PSI and American Humane support this leadership approach, with the caveat that Division leadership must provide operational boundaries to participatory decision making, including a structure for who should contribute ideas to decision making, at what point discussion about an issue is closed, and who is responsible for making and enforcing decisions at different levels within the Division.

Division leadership has acknowledged that the multiple roles and functions of the Division often require a multi-faceted approach towards leadership and management styles. Where critical decisions need to be made or implemented—such as discipline over Counties' program and fiscal practices—the Division must be able to exercise genuine authority. But for that authority to be more than simply compliance-based, the Division must offer:



- a.) A transparent decision-making process
- b.) Where appropriate, a participatory decision-making process
- c.) Consistency in decision making
- d.) Explanation of the reasons specific decisions are made
- e.) A mechanism for Division staff and counties to register disagreements with decisions

Many staff indicated that consistency in decision making and transparency were key factors in improving communication in the Division. One staff person mentioned that, “We need transparency and consistent leadership and communication to improve the efficiency of the Division.”

In the subsections that follow, PSI and American Humane offers some recommendations for leadership responsibilities and decision-making protocols at various levels within the child welfare system.

### **Leadership from Division and Department Executives**

As indicated by Division leadership, the Director of Child Welfare has, and must maintain, final decision-making authority and responsibility to Department superiors for all activities within the Division. With Program Managers responsible for the day-to-day functioning of their respective units, the Director of Child Welfare maintains the authority on budgetary, human resources and policy implementation strategies unless specifically delegated.

Division leadership should institute a formal process for staff members at any level within the organization to file “minority reports” for situations in which they disagree with a decision that is made, including the reasons why they disagree and what alternate decisions they had offered. Minority reporting has been used effectively in large bureaucratic organizations (e.g., the State Department) as a means to provide constructive outlets for conflicting opinions on complex issues, while still keeping the decision making process efficient and results-oriented.

### **Leadership from Division Supervisors and Staff**

Within the Division, Program Managers are responsible for the day-to-day functioning of their respective units. Within each unit are teams made up of Supervisors (who report to the Program Managers) and staff members (who report to the Supervisors).

Division leadership expects that individuals at the Program Director, Supervisor, and staff levels will engage in decision making and problem solving through the participative style described above, and PSI and American Humane support this decision. However, to ensure that the participative style is efficient and effective, we recommend that a formal decision-making protocol be established. The purpose of a protocol is to ensure that all staff members—at all levels—engage in decision making that is appropriately inclusive, respectful, and emphasizes efficient use of the consensus model to reach decisions that all staff members will follow. A protocol provides the “rules of the road” around making and executing decisions where limited time and resources, competing priorities, and honest differences of opinion will always exist.

American Humane has a decision-making protocol, known as the Culture of Excellence, through which it establishes a work environment that parallels the humane values and vision for excellence that they strive to achieve. Shown in Appendix C, the tenets of the Culture of Excellence provide the “rules of the road” that American Humane staff use in order to engage in decision making and conflict management necessary for maintaining a strong organizational culture and allowing staff to become leaders in their individual



contributions to supporting children and families. We recommend that the Division develop a protocol similar to the Culture of Excellence and provide all staff with training in how to operate within that protocol. We additionally recommend that use of the protocol be included as an element for evaluating staff performance within the Division.

## **Division Leadership Role to the Counties**

In keeping with the association model, the Division should take the lead on articulating and amplifying the mission of Colorado's child welfare system, developing policy, and setting strategic direction for the organization. The roles include managing and empowering staff; supporting and supervising county practices; assuring accountability; and advocating for and providing state and federal revenues to the counties.

## **Service Delivery Expectations for County Offices**

Enforcing performance accountability is one of the most challenging tasks for the Division in a state-administered, county-run child welfare system. Progressive discipline is only used to govern the performance of private provider agencies; the Division lacks a similar "big stick" intervention to use with the county agencies.

As part of a longer-term strategy, PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division work with its Departmental and Legislative stakeholders to invest additional powers in the Division, powers that will aid the Division in enforcing performance and budgetary compliance among the county agencies. Discussion of the specific tools to be used is beyond the scope of this report, however we suggest that funding penalties, discipline of county personnel, and Division intervention in county operations should be examined for their merits and challenges. PSI and American Humane additionally are aware that investing additional powers in the Division presents a political challenge that will have to be addressed through such forums as the State Legislature and the PAC, hence the caveat that this be a longer-term strategy.

In the meantime, the Division should be working with counties that are in danger of performance or budgetary violations through training, technical assistance, and policy support (see Services and Supports subsection). PSI and American Humane also recommend that the Division re-iterate its expectations for the counties independent of any specific violation or underperformance. The Division leadership has articulated its expectations of the counties as follows:

- County departments are expected to understand and implement Department rules, program standards, policies and procedures
- Counties are expected to be responsive to requests for information requested by the State
- Counties should be fiscally responsible
- Counties are expected to be accountable to the public through clearly defined quality assurance and grievance processes that are promoted, published, and practiced
- Counties should have management practices in place to promote quality of care and effective utilization of resources
- Counties should recruit and retain highly qualified staff, within accepted merit practices



Articulating these expectations of the county agencies is not intended as antagonistic: the Division must ensure the counties are clear on their responsibilities for making the county/state partnership work. As a result, each of these performance expectations should be tied to a specific performance metric that will be used to evaluate all counties. For more information on recommended metrics to evaluate outcomes-based performance, see recommendation 6 below.

## **Recommendation 5: Establish Value Proposition of the Division to the Counties**

One strong theme that emerged from the interviews for this project was a lack of awareness of the value proposition of the Division among county agency staff. Within the context of the Colorado child welfare system, the value proposition is the motivation that the counties have to work with the Division.

Currently, that motivation is low. Except for specific instances in which county directors identified strong working relationships with their regional contacts, most interview participants see the Division as: a) a pass-through mechanism for service delivery funds; and b) a compliance unit for the CFSR PIP and other performance requirements. Interview participants indicated that they wanted the Division to take on a stronger leadership role in establishing best practices and providing technical assistance to the counties, but felt that the Division could not fulfill that responsibility because of understaffing, inappropriate staffing, and communication difficulties both within the Division and between the Division and the counties.

The Division must change this negative opinion of its capabilities by establishing a new value proposition to the counties. This cannot be accomplished, however, through a simple internal PR exercise; the reputation of the Division for limited effectiveness and poor communication requires demonstration of substantive change before these perceptions will be overcome.

PSI and American Humane asked the Division leadership to describe the value proposition that the Division should have for the counties. The response of the leadership is as follows:

- Provide program expertise to counties and stakeholders
- Allocate funds to assist in program service delivery including a venue to access federal dollars to minimize the General Fund impact and local cash funding
- Clarify policies and Colorado Revised Statutes for other states, national organizations, state and county departments, the public and community agencies
- Provide technical assistance and guidance on casework practice, supervision, and administration
- Interpret federal and state statute and state policy as they relate to child welfare programs
- Provide supervision and support and technical assistance
- Develop system enhancements to maximize the efficient collection and storage of data
- Affiliate with other states and with national organizations to strengthen programming and to expand program operations and resources



*Performance. Service. Integrity.*

- Provide a level of quality assurance to the counties that protect state and county dollars by assuring the programs are compliant with all state and federal requirements through audits and assist with corrective action plans when deficiencies are identified

PSI and American Humane interpret this list of services and supports as entirely consistent with the association model of practice: they are county-focused, proactive, and appropriate for an umbrella organization such as the Division to provide for its “membership”. However, this list of services and supports does not constitute a value proposition in itself; the Division must also institute specific reforms to demonstrate and communicate how it will deliver value to the Counties. These reforms include:

1. Adequate staffing to support all intended functions (recommendation 1)
2. Function-based reorganization of the Division (recommendation 2)
3. An outcomes-based performance measurement program (recommendation 6)
4. A formal communications and feedback protocol (recommendation 7)
5. A formal strategic plan (recommendation 8)
6. A change management program (recommendation 9)

The Division’s value proposition to the Counties, therefore, becomes an articulation of the benefits that will result from implementing the reforms identified above. This value proposition must be county focused first, then child and family focused, to have meaning to the county agencies. And it must be made part of the formal communications and feedback plan (see recommendation 7) to ensure appropriate presentation to the Counties.

## **Recommendation 6: Establish Outcomes-Based Performance Measurement Program**

A frequent comment made by interview participants was the lack of transparency surrounding performance evaluation, both at the individual and organizational levels. One interviewee stated that, “a master plan or strategy should be developed and then staff should be held accountable”. Accountability was a key theme in many of the interviews from both internal and external sources. For the Division, this issue is especially challenging because of significant understaffing relative to operational requirements and the need to balance reform efforts with retention of the expertise and institutional knowledge of change-resistant staff members.

The Division must address the perception of idiosyncrasy and inconsistency in its evaluation of staff and agency performance. PSI and American Humane recommend addressing the need by instituting an outcomes-based performance measurement program at all levels of the child welfare system. The rationale for such a program is to focus evaluation efforts not on the activities of the individual or agency, but rather on the results those activities achieve for clients. In the case of Division staff, the clients are the county agencies. Regarding the Counties, their clients are the children and families that they serve.

PSI and American Humane understand that the use of outcomes-based performance measurement has its detractors in child welfare, with the most compelling arguments against the practice being the difficulty of identifying causal relationships between service delivery activities and improvements for clients (agency functioning, family functioning, child safety, etc.). However the complexity of child welfare service delivery, coupled with the high level of autonomy of the counties, necessitates an outcomes-based approach for



Colorado: Counties can maintain local authority over how services are delivered—within the confines of best practice—so long as they achieve objectively verifiable results for the children and families they serve.

## Division Staff Performance

As was articulated by the Division leadership, the Division is committed to the ongoing training, growth, and development of staff in their roles as program specialists, leaders, and individuals. The Division follows DHS Human Resource guidelines for completion of performance planning, mid-year and annual evaluation, and progressive discipline processes. To make this process outcomes-driven, PSI and American Humane recommend that Division supervisors and leadership receive training and consultation in conducting results-based assessment of subordinates' job performance, and to make this a formal part of the annual performance review. A results-based assessment for the Division staff should be based on observable behaviors and guided by the priorities set for showing leadership qualities at all levels. Priorities should include:

- ◆ **Participatory Decision Making** – How effective is the staff member in collaborating with others to contribute to solutions to the Division's challenges?
- ◆ **Communication** – How well does the staff member use the communication and feedback protocols (see Recommendation 7) to keep superiors, subordinates, and peers informed about activities that impact the mission of the Division?
- ◆ **County Support and Advocacy** – How does the staff member execute job responsibilities to improve the Counties' ability to provide services to children and families?
- ◆ **Best Practices** – How does the staff member contribute to the definition, articulation, promotion, and implementation of best practices in their own job and throughout the child welfare system?

The Division can use information gathering tools such as the 360 review process and confidential staff surveys to solicit information on how effective a staff member is in meeting the priorities described above.

## County Office Performance

County evaluation occurs through review of county data in the TRAILS system, county on-site and record review, review of consumer complaints, information provided by the administrative review division, field administration, audits division, behavioral health and Colorado Works.

As the Division implements its vision regarding establishing research and quality assurance units, counties will be evaluated over time on their improvement in outcomes for children and families. The Division will also use information gained from federal reviews of the state, and the Legislative Audit Committee to evaluate county practice. Counties' completion of program improvement plans will allow for the opportunity to evaluate improvement in county practice and service delivery. The measurement of improvement will be tied to the Division's quality assurance and research activities.

## Recommendation 7: Develop Formal Communications and Feedback Protocol

As the Division seeks to improve its performance, feedback—both internal and external—is critical for making required adjustments. Effective communication within the agency builds morale and ensures operational success. Division staff expect timely communication regarding progress toward goals, and how those goals relate to the expected outcomes. Communication is participatory in nature, with the agency's goals mirroring best practice.



While monthly Division Meetings exist, interview responses indicate that this is insufficient for meeting the information needs of Division staff. Minutes are distributed after each Management Team meeting, and information and decisions are referred to the Employee Group, where more global issues related to the Division are discussed, and the needs of all team members are addressed. However, these communication tools are either underutilized or the results are poorly distributed to staff members. Regardless of the intention of leadership with regard to internal communication, the results are generally considered insufficient.

As a result, PSI and American Humane recommend that Division leadership refine communication protocols in conjunction with staff. Given the time pressures that all staff members face in the disposition of their primary duties—leadership included—the Division should consider adopting a combination of communications tools to support rapid, participatory information sharing and a sense of inclusion among staff. Such communication tools could include:

- ◆ **Electronic Communications** – use of email for internal communications should be discouraged unless an information trail is required to justify specific decision making. Instead, PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division focus on using electronic communications to build a “body of knowledge” about effective internal operations that can be tapped by staff members at any time. Use of wikis, online policy manuals, and Web-based information sharing portals such as Microsoft Sharepoint can help to make daily information sharing more efficient, allowing face-to-face meetings to focus on solving specific problems.
- ◆ **Cross-Training Presentations** – where functional silos exist, team members from the non-communicating disciplines should be partnered together. Each team member will have the responsibility to provide training in his or her job to the other team member. Then, at bi-weekly or monthly staff meetings, the trained team member reports to the group on the job they learned. This type of experiential training and reporting has a strong track record of breaking down operational barriers and stimulating problem-solving behavior.
- ◆ **Videoconferencing**—new technologies such as Skype and Oovoo have made voice and image sharing over the internet free, and the process of videoconferencing easy. In meetings where the inclusion of outside stakeholders (county directors, off-site leadership, members of the judiciary or legislature) is appropriate, consider bringing them into the discussion with videoconferencing.
- ◆ **Minority Reporting** – described in recommendation 4, above, this process should be linked to all activities in which decisions regarding policy, procedures, and practice are made and must be enforced. Minority reporting does not obviate the decision, but rather provides more information on the context in which a decision was made. This is an important practice in high-functioning teams that use participatory decision making, and provides an information trail to follow when revisiting critical decisions.

## Between the Division and County Offices

Communication with county departments will be timely and inclusive, through departmentally defined processes as well as through networking groups. The Division will develop a communication plan for counties. Input from county departments will be requested to ensure the county departments are included in the implementation of the communication plan. The Division will be responsive to communication/feedback from its stakeholders and will use this feedback as part of the blueprint to achieve higher performance standards for both the state and the counties.



## Connection to PAC

In 2008, the Department initiated a statewide communication and feedback initiative aimed at applying the consensus model of decision making to child welfare policy, procedure, and best practice. Called the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), this group of child welfare stakeholders convenes at the local, regional, and state levels throughout the year to address issues that impact child safety, permanency, and well-being, and to make recommendations on policy revisions that will support more effective practice.

The PAC is an extremely ambitious undertaking that, because it is egalitarian in nature—both agency staff and outside stakeholders are involved in the PAC—requires rigorous management and regular distribution of information. Policy decisions will be initiated by and communicated through the PAC and Sub-PAC by-laws and rules, ensuring that changes in policy are supported state-wide and are implemented in a consistent manner throughout the state.

## Recommendation 8: Conduct and Communicate Formal Strategic Plan

Strategic planning is the formal consideration of an organization's future course. All strategic planning deals with at least one of three key questions:

- 1) "What do we do?"
- 2) "For whom do we do it?"
- 3) "How do we excel?"

The Division has already completed the tasks typically associated with the early stages of strategic planning: vision, mission, and goals have all been established for both the Division and the Counties. Moreover, evidence from the interviews for this report indicates that both the Division and the Counties are aligned in the mission, vision, and goals of a high-functioning child welfare system in Colorado. It is clear, however, that the level of detail provided in the mission, vision, and goals of the system is insufficient to guide decision making on complex issues facing child welfare providers everyday. Therefore, the Division must apply its mission and vision to defining and articulating an approach to strategically addressing the following issues:

- Racial disproportionality in child welfare system
- Evaluation of training effectiveness and modification of training (especially TRAILS training)
- The participation of fathers and other individuals of significance in permanency planning
- Consistency of service delivery across all Counties in support of safe reunification
- The frequency, quality, and outcomes of worker visits
- The quality, consistency, and impact on service planning of needs assessments
- Establishment and responsibilities of the research and quality assurance teams

**Please note** that the issues identified as the focus of the strategic plan are consistent with the issues identified as areas needing improvement in Colorado's CFSR PIP. With the significant attention that Colorado's child welfare system is receiving currently, the recommendations for strategic change will be coming from various authorities (the Action Committee, the Children's Bureau, this report, etc.) and are likely to overwhelm Division leadership and staff alike with their detail. It is the leadership's responsibility to provide clarity for the Division's strategy, the most obvious way being to insist that all components of the strategic plan have a



direct and measurable impact on one or more elements in the CFSR PIP. By ensuring that “all roads lead to the PIP,” the leadership will greatly simplify both the communication and enforcement of the strategic plan.

## Recommendation 9: Initiate Change Management Program

The recommendations made in this report are designed for rapid implementation and quick impact on Division organizational functioning, however any organizational reform requires a thoughtful and deliberate process for planning, implementation, and ongoing assessment. For this reason, PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division implement the preceding eight recommendations within the context of a formal change management program.

Organizational change management includes processes and tools for managing the people side of the change at an organizational level. These tools include a structured approach that can be used to effectively transition organizations through change. Organizational change management processes include:

- Techniques for creating a change management strategy (e.g., readiness assessments)
- Engaging senior managers as change leaders (sponsorship)
- Building awareness of the need for change (communications)
- Developing skills and knowledge to support the change (education and training)
- Helping employees move through the transition (coaching by managers and supervisors)
- Methods to sustain the change (measurement systems, rewards and reinforcement)

Most change management models recognize change as a continuum, and establish several stages through which an organization must pass before desired change becomes the standard operating procedure adopted by all staff within the organization. Within the Health and Human Service arena, most change theories are derived from the five-stage Kübler-Ross model of grief<sup>1</sup>. To function in an organization, staff must invest themselves in the structure of that organization, and the process of investment is often an emotional one. When confronted with change to the structure, staff will often display similar emotional states to those associated with the loss of a loved one. Even where staff are in favor of change—as is the case with the Division—anxiety over “what comes next” typically leads staff to cling to patterns they understand until the benefits of imposed change become clear to them, placing an enormous burden of inertia on the change process.

PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division adopt a change management strategy derived from the Kübler-Ross model, known as ADKAR. This model describes five required building blocks for change to be realized successfully on an individual level. The building blocks of the ADKAR Model include:

- 1) **Awareness** – of why the change is needed;
- 2) **Desire** – to support and participate in the change;
- 3) **Knowledge** – of how to change;
- 4) **Ability** – to implement new skills and behaviors; and
- 5) **Reinforcement** – to sustain the change.

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<sup>1</sup> This model was originally articulated in Kübler-Ross’ book, “On Death and Dying”, and was used to describe the stages of grieving for a lost loved one.



Management's responsibility in ADKAR is to estimate what impact a change will have on employee behavior patterns, work processes, technological requirements, and motivation. Management must assess what employee reactions will be and craft a change program that will provide support as workers go through the process of accepting change. The program must then be implemented, disseminated throughout the organization, monitored for effectiveness, and adjusted where necessary.

## **Consensus Building and Change Management**

Organizations exist within a dynamic environment that is subject to change due to the impact of various change "triggers" (e.g., the recommendations from the Action Committee Report, or response to the CFSR). Effective change management requires an understanding of the possible effects of change upon people, and how to manage potential sources of resistance to that change.

Obtaining the sponsorship from all staff is needed to promote ownership and support for the needed change. PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division leadership identify an implementation team consisting of staff representatives. This team would inform the strategic planning process and act in an advisory capacity informing future implementation and assess planning effectiveness. To obtain ownership in the plan, it is critical that all staff be offered an opportunity to participate in a strategic planning process. Providing a facilitator from outside the division would allow everyone to participate and could assist in the development of a strategic planning document that guides implementation. This facilitator could act as a consultant participating in future implementation meetings as a resource to the team providing expertise in addressing barriers and strategic direction.

## **The Role of Training in Change Management**

Training is a resource and can be an effective strategy in moving a vision forward. Colorado's State Academy of Training is currently delivered through contracts with four Universities and nine private companies as a result of a competitive procurement process. Within the state's role is the responsibility to provide oversight and supervision of county departments. It is important for the State to manage and supervise training activities to assure that they address new statutes, policies and best practices and support the diversity of 64 counties in service delivery. It is also important that the training academy support state executive staff, state program staff and local county leadership. In focusing on state staff, it is recommended that a thoughtful and deliberate plan be considered that prioritizes the training needs of the state child welfare division including a process for ongoing communication, planning and collaboration in the development and delivery of training needs. Included in this process is attention to the development of an orientation program for all newly hired state child welfare staff and cross- training for staff and managers related to the program focus of each section within the child welfare division. This training focus should thread across all program sections within the Division.



## Chapter 5: Next Steps

In this chapter of the report, PSI and American Humane recommend a set of next steps to move from conceptualization of the possibility of a new and better organization through the development of a series of implementation activities, project plan and timeline, and the expected impact of recommendations on resource needs and key stakeholders.

PSI and American Humane recognize the importance of moving quickly with the reorganization effort for the Division, not only to capitalize on currently strong internal and external support for the reorganization, but also to prepare the Division to adequately address the policy and practice issues affecting child welfare service delivery in Colorado. While the recommendations made in Chapter 4 of this report are significant, and some are necessary to drive a fundamental change in Division culture to embrace the recommended association model of practice, it is critical for the Division to demonstrate rapid and substantive changes to earn the ongoing support of the Counties, the legislature, and the public. This will be especially important when addressing complex issues such as risk assessment, adequacy of service delivery, and child and family outcomes at the county level. Simply put, the Division must be prepared to enact reform on three tracks simultaneously:

4. **Operations** – staffing, training, and empowering Division staff to faithfully execute duties
5. **Evaluation** – data collection, analysis, and strategic decision making necessary to set an effective course for Division activities
6. **Communication** – messaging, network building, and processing feedback to ensure that all Division stakeholders are working to support a common child welfare vision

There is complexity in addressing all three of these tracks at once, however it is a necessary part of establishing the inclusive association model recommended for the Division. Moreover, many of the tasks associated with the recommendations made in Chapter 4 (e.g., developing outcomes metrics, facilitation of strategic planning, and facilitation of a change management initiative) use specialized tools and skills that are not currently native to the Division. PSI and American Humane recommend that the Division solicit independent, third-party expertise in these key areas to ensure the success of the reform effort.

### Implementation Plan

Figure 5-1, below, is a 12-month timeline for implementation of tasks and activities necessary to support the recommendations made in this report.

**Table 5-1: Implementation Time Frame**

Task	3/09	4/09	5/09	6/09	7/09	8/09	9/09	10/09	11/09	12/09	1/10	2/10
Hire Associate Director for Operations												
Hire Associate Director for Service Delivery												
Hire Quality Assurance Manager												
Hire Research & Information Manager												
Hire CPS Specialists												
Hire Program Support Staff												
Finalize Association Model of Practice Guidelines												



Task	3/09	4/09	5/09	6/09	7/09	8/09	9/09	10/09	11/09	12/09	1/10	2/10
Finalize New Division Organization Chart	█											
Finalize New Organization Job Descriptions		█										
Establish Priority-Based Triage System		█	█	█								
Establish Communications & Feedback Protocol	█	█	█	█	█							
Convene Strategy Plan Council				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Design Performance Outcomes				█	█	█	█	█				
Design Outcomes-Based Evaluation Model						█	█	█	█	█		
Write Change Management Plan					█	█	█					
Execute Change Management Plan						█	█	█	█	█	█	█

To ensure that the implementation process stays on task and meets necessary timelines, PSI and American Humane recommend that Division leadership name an “implementation czar” for the duration of the reform effort. We believe that the proposed Associate Director for Operations is the appropriate candidate for this position, given the daily operational responsibilities this position has, and its direct reporting structure to the Director of Child Welfare.

### Staffing is Key

Please note that for successful implementation of the recommended reforms in this report, key among them is the adequate and appropriate staffing of the Division. In this era of doing more with less, PSI and American Humane will caution the Division to first ensure that they have the right model of practice for Colorado, and then staff, train, work, evaluate, and revise according to that model. We are confident that the association model is the correct one for Colorado, and urge the Division to work with its stakeholders to ensure that the model can be appropriately implemented and supported. There is much work still to be done at the county level to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. Let this be the first step on the road to success.



*Performance. Service. Integrity.*

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Document Review Summary

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Appendix C: Decision Making Protocol Example



## **Appendix A: Document Review Summary**

See attached document.

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Federal Documents Reviewed**

<i>Name of Document</i>	<b><i>FINAL REPORT: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)</i></b>	<b><i>CO Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report</i></b>
<i>Authors</i>	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau	CO Department of Human Services, Office of Child & Family Services, Division of Child Welfare
<i>Stakeholder Involvement</i>	Statewide assessment prepared by CDHS; interviews or focus groups with range of stakeholders (children, parents, foster parents, state & local DHS personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, legislators, attorneys)	Not addressed in the document.
<i>Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision</i>	Aug-02	1/1/07 - 3/31/07; Submitted 7/27/07
<i>Dissemination (Who? How?)</i>	Public domain	Public domain
<i>Target Population</i>	Public domain	Public domain
<i>Purpose</i>	"The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) assess State performance during a specified time period with respect to seven child welfare outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being with respect to seven systemic factors." This final report shares the findings of the first CO CFSR, that was conducted in 2002.	"This report will provide a summary of Colorado's performance on its Program Improvement Plan. In this Final Report of Progress the narrative will address the outcomes that are out of compliance and recommendations for consideration with regard to compliance."
<i>Alignment with Mission &amp; Vision</i>	Agency mission and vision not mentioned or discussed in this document. Key findings below that include concerns or inconsistent efforts are often reflective of practice that is counter to the mission or values of DHS.	Documentation to explain progress on areas of the PIP reflect an alignment of policy or practice changes with the mission and vision of DHS.

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Federal Documents Reviewed**

<i>Name of Document</i>	<b><i>FINAL REPORT: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)</i></b>	<b><i>CO Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report</i></b>
	CO did not achieve substantial conformity with 6 of 7 CFSR outcomes	Discussion of "rule change" - counties not required to have monthly contact with children with an open child protection case, still living in their homes; previous rule required contact every other month. Range of performance on this contact was from 83.1% to 88.4% - still relatively low compared to the performance on visits to children in out-of-home care or DYC youth.
	Most significant concern: state's inconsistency in achieving permanency for children in foster care (inconsistent practice for all children involved with DHS); indications that concurrent planning not always used and permanency goals changed. Contradictory to DHS mission of assuring a permanency plan for all children in care.	The identified activities that are intended to increase caseworker visits to children residing in their homes are not activities that would directly lead to an increased rate of visitation. For example, the plans included creating a "Realistic Job Overview" video for new caseworkers. While this activity might be beneficial in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers, this particular item does not directly correlate with increased visitation between caseworkers and children.
	Inconsistent efforts (or sometimes lack of efforts) to involve non-custodial fathers in the case planning process, in visitation with children.	Additional activities identified to increase caseworker-child visitation include bringing in child protection contract consultants to emphasize the importance of visitation to caseworkers, RFPs with financial incentives for increasing visitation, and providing incentive dollars to county departments who meet their goals all. It seems that the resources used to support such activities might be better spent by hiring additional caseworkers, decreasing caseloads and thereby allowing for increased visitation activities to occur.

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Federal Documents Reviewed**

<i>Name of Document</i>	<b><i>FINAL REPORT: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)</i></b>	<b><i>CO Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report</i></b>
	<p>Inconsistent efforts (or sometimes lack of efforts) to involve children and youth in the case planning process.</p>	<p>In Item 6: Stability of Foster Care...the statewide goal was 76% wthi CO having a baseline measure of 72%. However, in the last report year (07), Co only achieved 55.85%. They developed a list of proposed changes and developed an internal question set to evaluate challenges. Ultimately, one of the key questions that we find important was not among those listed..."Were there sufficient resources to help accommodate and achieve appropriate placement options?" Instead, much focus was on the existence of new meeting types (FTF/TDMs) which may help, but are not widely utilized yet, additional training, use of consultants and specialists vs. basic resource reallocation or new allocation.</p>
	<p>"Agency policy does not require face-to-face contact as part of initiating an investigation"; "telephone contact is permitted as a substitute for face-to-face contact" - is this still the policy?</p>	<p>Item 9 related to Adoption Effort which the state was extremely close to achieving. One question we have is what will the federal adoption incentives legis. Do to help assist with continued correction and are all county direcotrs and sw staff aware of this?</p>

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Federal Documents Reviewed**

<i>Name of Document</i>	<b><i>FINAL REPORT: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)</i></b>	<b><i>CO Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report</i></b>
<i>Key Findings</i>	Consistently reported that maltreatment recurrence is not currently a problem in the state of CO due to the availability of services, resources and supports for families.	On Item 19...worker visits with the child, there has been an increased emphasis by the federal government and CO has had continued difficulty achieving the goal. CO provided a rationale for being out of compliance and developed a recalculation that was not accepted by the feds. In fact, if you look at the chart CO developed and looked at first measurable period (97/03-12/03) and then last period (1/06-6/06) CO decrease in two areas of performance and increased in two. There was not such a significant difference after three years to be notable related to face-face contacts. Again, solutions to this area were not directly in line with what we perceived to be most helpful to line staff and families in order to make a more substantial change. Recommended changes were a job video, consultants, more training, deficit tracking, incentive dollars for achievement, etc. We might recommend a supplementary approach that would include: increased direct resources (staff positions), advocating for shared responsibilities with case worker, secondary worker, and case aides; provide dollar infusion
	Inconsistency of availability of services to all families across the state; rural areas do not offer same resources and services as urban areas. Contradicts DHS mission to offer quality services that are "accessible" and "available statewide."	
	Inconsistency in state's efforts to address children's mental health and physical health needs - recognized lack of mental health services and Medicaid-accepting health services.	
	Concern that parents may not be receiving sufficient services to promote safe reunification following the removal of the children; could be an indicator for the rate of re-entry of children into foster care. Counter to mission to offer relevant services "to permit timely rehabilitation and reunification."	

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Federal Documents Reviewed**

<i>Name of Document</i>	<b><i>FINAL REPORT: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)</i></b>	<b><i>CO Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan Final Report</i></b>
	Lack of adequate preparation of youth for independent living - recognized lack of services for this population (does not promote self-sufficiency of youth aging out of care).	
	Family needs assessments are not always sufficiently comprehensive in capturing underlying family issues that contribute to the family's involvement with DHS.	
	Concern for permanency for children with developmental disabilities - if adopted, on a waiting list for services when they turn 21; goals of emancipation sometimes being established for these youth at the age of 12 or 13.	
	No comprehensive user manual available for use following training for TRAILS (demonstrates lack of necessary support for workers to use this technology).	
	Inconsistency in timely held 12-month permanency hearings.	
	Overall, training for new caseworkers and supervisors was praised. Concern expressed over waiting periods for training and gaps in training related to specific content areas. ***Note: While many supplemental trainings are offered to case workers, supervisors do not have the same availability of advanced training courses specifically designed to meet their needs.	
	No requirement for in-service training for supervisors.	
<i>Direction for Practice Implementation</i>	This document contains the results of the CFSR, but not any suggestions or direction for future practice implementation (see PIP).	

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Federal Documents Reviewed**

**Notes on FINAL REPORT: Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)**

<p>Reviewer: LW</p>	<p>Other areas to explore if helpful: emancipation of minors, resources for them, resources for spec. needs children, diligent search.limits of visitation and implication on possibly having unintended consequence of increasing TPRs, Trails has history within CO Sup training of being inaccurate when we used it for practice session</p>
<p>Reviewer: KJ</p>	<p></p>

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Federal Documents Reviewed**

**Notes on *CO Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (PIP)***

*Reviewer: LW*

*Reviewer: KJ*

*Reviewer: LM*

**CO State Documents**

Name of Document	Authors	Stakeholder Involvement	Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision	Dissemination (Who? How?)	Target Population	Purpose	Alignment with Mission & Vision
<b>Staff Personnel Description Questionnaire</b>	<b>Not available</b>						
<b>APSR 2008</b>	State of CO DHS	None specified	6/30/2008	Submitted to U.S. DHS Administration for Children and Families;		To outline CO's vision, mission, philosophy statements, guiding principles & program area information that guides the state's work with children and families & to outline	Mission and vision not stated in the statute, but upon review it appears that the statute is in alignment with DHS mission and vision.
<b>CO Statute 19-3-203: Services - County Required to Provide - Rules</b>	None specified (state legislature)	None specified	7/1/1993	Public domain	Children in out-of-home placement and their families	To specify the services that should be provided by the county to children who are in out-of-home placement or who meet the criteria for such placement and their families.	Mission and vision not stated in the statute, but upon review it appears that the statute is in alignment with, if not guiding, the DHS mission and vision.

## CO State Documents

Name of Document	Authors	Stakeholder Involvement	Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision	Dissemination (Who? How?)	Target Population	Purpose	Alignment with Mission & Vision
<b>CO Statute: 26-5-102. Prvision of Child Welfare Services - System Reform Goals</b>	None specified (state legislature)	None specified	Amended bill in 1998	Public domain	State and county human services departments	To specify the objectives and goals for child welfare system reform in Colorado.	Mission and vision not stated in the statute, but upon review it appears that the statute is in alignment with DHS mission and vision.
<b>CW Annual Report</b>	Judy Rodriguez, Information & Program Team Manager, Division of CW Services		State Fiscal Year 2006 (7/1/05 - 6/30/06)	Public domain		"This Annual Report reflects the State of Colorado's performance and activities in the areas of child and family safety, permanency, and well-being for the State Fiscal Year (SFY) July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006."	Mission stated as "everything we do enhances the delivery of child welfare services so that Colorado's children and families are safe and stable." - mission has been updated since this document was produced

## CO State Documents

Name of Document	Authors	Stakeholder Involvement	Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision	Dissemination (Who? How?)	Target Population	Purpose	Alignment with Mission & Vision
<i>CFSR Newsletters</i>							
<i>Fatality Report</i>	CDHS Administrative Review Div.		Apr-08	Public Domain	Children involved with CPS over time...and children more broadly in CO. It specifically examined 13 recent child maltreatment fatalities in CO where CPS had prior involvement in the last 5 years.	It was created as a response to an increase in child maltreatment fatalities where the victim and family were previously known to CPS agencies. It specifically examined 13 recent child maltreatment fatalities in CO where CPS had prior involvement in the last 5 years.	Mission and vision not stated in the document, but upon review it appears that the statute is in alignment with trying to better achieve the DHS mission and vision.

## CO State Documents

<i>Name of Document</i>	<i>Authors</i>	<i>Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision</i>	<i>Dissemination (Who? How?)</i>	<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Alignment with Mission &amp; Vision</i>
<b>Governor Executive Order</b>							
<b>Child Welfare Handbook</b>	Available for review as necessary						
<b>CORE Services Annual Report</b>	Same as APSR						

## CO State Documents

Name of Document	Authors	Stakeholder Involvement	Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision	Dissemination (Who? How?)	Target Population	Purpose	Alignment with Mission & Vision
<i>State IV-B Plan</i>	State of CO DHS	CO 3 Citizen Review Panels (Children's Justice Task Force, State Inst. Abuse Team, and Pueblo CO. Child Protection Team), Promoting Safe and Stable Families Adv. Council, Chaffee Youth Group, and Tribes. The general public was also asked to complete a survey. with approx. 350 responses. 32 legal reps, 31 comm. partners, 55 foster parents, 46 parens all completed an online survey as well.	2005-2009 period	ACF, public domain	ACF, Public Domain	Outlines goals and action steps to accomplish the outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being for children and families in CO.	It specifically states Vision, Mission , Philosophy and Principles of Child Welfare.

## CO State Documents

Name of Document	Authors	Stakeholder Involvement	Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision	Dissemination (Who? How?)	Target Population	Purpose	Alignment with Mission & Vision
<b>Agency Letters</b>	No specific authors ID'ed, author assumed CDHS; contact person specified on each	None specified	4 letters reviewed: CW-07-15-P (Use of NCFAS/NCFAS-R as part of CAC and Case Planning), 4/5/07; CW-05-21-P (Implementation of FSP, Part 4 D, Plan for Transition to Independent Living, 9/26/05; CW-05-10-A (Transition protocol for children aging out of child welfare with developmental disabilities), 4/28/05; CW-06-20-1 (Special Immigrant Juvenile Status), 9/28/06]	Dissemination specified by letter - inconsistency between "proposed" distribution, "recommended" distribution, and "should be distributed" across letters; 1 letter did not have a distribution section included	Varied	Varied (mainly to communicate policy or procedure or to inform)	Mission and vision not stated in the statute, but upon review it appears that the statute is in alignment with DHS mission and vision.

**Document Review Mapping**

Reviewed								
Key Findings				Direction for Practice Implementation	Alignment with NAPCWA?	Alignment with CFSR?	Alignment with PIP?	
<p><b>Effective until 10/3/08</b></p>								
Findings from this report are consistent with the CFSR and PIP findings. Confirmation of areas of concern and planning.				Progress report regarding areas of concerns being addressed through range of programming across the state.	N/A	✓	✓	
County or city required to provide listed services, but they can enter into agreement with any other county, city, group of counties or with private entities for provision of the services.	Goals of services enumerated: promoted immediate health, safety and well-being of children; reduce risk of future maltreatment and protect siblings in same household; avoid unnecessary placement of children into foster care; facilitate speedy reunification with parents; take into account racial background of child for out-of-home placement (unless that will delay such placement); promote best interests of child.	Based on funding and necessity, following services should also be provided: transportation to services; child care; in-home homemaker services; diagnostic, mental health and health care services; drug and alcohol treatment; after care services following reunification; family support services; family preservation services. However, while item (l) speaks to case assessment and individual case plans, the remainder of the document does not further reinforce case individuality (aside from culture) and could have benefited from a greater degree of focus so as to not support the notion of "cookie cutter" case plans.	Following services should be available & provided: screening, assessments & individual case plans; home-based family and crisis counseling; information and referral services; visitation services for parents; placement services.	Guides service provision for children in out-of-home care and their families.	✓	✓	✓	

**Document Review Mapping**

Reviewed							
Key Findings				Direction for Practice Implementation	Alignment with NAPCWA?	Alignment with CFSR?	Alignment with PIP?
State department is responsible for establishing a program of child welfare services, administered either by the state or by the county departments.	Child welfare services should be provided for any child living or present in the state of Colorado who is in need of such services. * Note: This is now directly in line with the State of Colorado's response to meeting the safety, permanency and well-being needs of children with parent's of immigrant or mixed status in the U.S.		Objectives for child welfare reform: more efficient and responsive service systems for children, youth and families; increased flexibility and collaboration across multiple agencies and funding sources; encouragement for a truly integrated service system; focus on quality and outcome-drive services; development of data systems; successful training for professionals and families involved in managed care service systems; promotion of family-centered community-based strategy for placement decisions (FGDM); recruitment and support of family foster homes within the communities in which children in need of care reside.	Provides guiding objectives for any practice reform that might occur within the child welfare system. One challenge of both pieces of legislation reviewed is that it provides very open and generalized expectations, which while providing for great flexibility, also does not create any measurable objectives or way to know how the intent of this legislation was actualized.	✓	✓	✓
Report lists relevant activities conducted across the state, but headings of "Safety," "Permanency" and "Well-Being"	Number of reports received by the Division of Child Welfare in SFY 2006 represented an increase of nearly 15% over last 4 years			Mostly a summary of activities completed, but does offer a "next steps for child welfare" section with a few activities related to practice change/implementation	N/A	✓	✓

**Document Review Mapping**

Reviewed							
Key Findings				Direction for Practice Implementation	Alignment with NAPCWA?	Alignment with CFSR?	Alignment with PIP?
					✓	✓	✓
Majority of child maltreatment death victims (34-51%) were Caucasian. Parents tended to have personal hx of CPS involvement and were younger (in their 20s) at the birth and death of victim. 70% were DV involved and 54% had substance abuse issues. Findings until 2007 matched national trends. In 2007, more Hispanics were victims and perpetrators. 90% of children who died were under 5 yrs. old. 41% were infants. Only 5 of the 13 cases had fathers who were active in the case. Mobility was an issue with 40% of families living in location for one year or less. 2/3 of families had a recent change in family constellation.	Data process for tracking child fatalities was inconsistent (Trails, Access). Also, beyond data...intersects many segments of report specifically with Vol. 7.	Policy and Practice Conflict: Safety model change in 2/07. Concerns raised in other states using Action model and those are shared in CO (p.30)...mostly related to accurate use of format, leading to acc. Assessments. 80% prob. Meeting respnse times. In the fatlality cases, some appeared ot be open and so the assumption was a new report would be addressed by existing worker, when often they were not really receiving services or visits. Safety and Risk Assess. were seen as not being used correctly. Short term (90 day) and long term recommendations were developed to address issues identified in report.***** On p. 38 they discussed communication and collaboration that should be reviewed in the context of this evaluation, as should state oversight	Throughout former Admin. Interagency communication was found to be a systemic factor. Communication across counties was also found to be a factor. There was also found to be a lack of communication between service providers and CDHS (e.g. mental health)	CDHS staff completed a survey on experience and performance, educ and legal background check also conducted. Caseworkers in position ave. of 5 yrs, sups 5.2. 60% had BS, 36% had masters. 91% had completed 6 hrs of inservice training. Some sups were older in longevity and were not retrained.	✓	✓	✓

**Document Review Mapping**

Reviewed							
<i>Key Findings</i>				<i>Direction for Practice Implementation</i>	<i>Alignment with NAPCWA?</i>	<i>Alignment with CFSR?</i>	<i>Alignment with PIP?</i>
					✓	✓	✓

**Document Review Mapping**

Reviewed							
<i>Key Findings</i>				<i>Direction for Practice Implementation</i>	<i>Alignment with NAPCWA?</i>	<i>Alignment with CFSR?</i>	<i>Alignment with PIP?</i>
<p>Outlines 5-YR Plan including a service continuum, describe how they have administered existing services and attempts to access new funds. This is very much in line with the comprehensive materials of other documents reviewed here...but is a more complete picture within one document. Where in other documents items were broadly defined...specific outcomes and objectives are identified here.</p>				<p>Guides service provision for children, their families and staff.</p>	✓	✓	✓

**Document Review Mapping**

Reviewed							
<i>Key Findings</i>				<i>Direction for Practice Implementation</i>	<i>Alignment with NAPCWA?</i>	<i>Alignment with CFSR?</i>	<i>Alignment with PIP?</i>
Letters seemed to be addressing specific issues or concerns raised, or specific populations of concern	Except regarding dissemination, letters were concise and consistent in format and type of information provided	Concern by reviewer that dissemination of information might not be reaching caseworkers, who these seem to be written for (as it relates to practice)		Some of the agency letters are written and disseminated to communicate or clarify policy, procedure or practice changes	N/A	✓	✓

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**Volume VII Document Review**

<i>Name of Document</i>	<i>Authors</i>	<i>Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Date of Creation, Implementation or Revision</i>	<i>Dissemination (Who? How?)</i>	<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Alignment with Mission &amp; Vision</i>	<i>Key Findings</i>	<i>Direction for Practice Implementation</i>	<i>Alignment with NAPCSWA?</i>	<i>Alignment with CFSR?</i>	<i>Alignment with PIP?</i>
<b>7.000</b>										✓	✓	✓
<b>7.100</b>										✓	✓	✓
<b>7.200</b>										✓	✓	✓
<b>7.300</b>										✓	✓	✓
<b>7.400</b>										✓	✓	✓
<b>7.500</b>										✓	✓	✓
<b>7.600</b>										✓	✓	✓

**CO Organizational Assessment - Document Review Mapping**

**CO State Documents Reviewed**

Notes on *Volume VII*

<i>Reviewer: LW</i>	
<i>Reviewer: KJ</i>	
<i>Reviewer: LM</i>	



## **Appendix B: Interview Protocol**

### **Staff Questions**

#### **Questions about your job**

- 1) Please give me an overview of a typical work day for you.
- 2) What are your job duties?
- 3) Are the tasks and duties you perform the ones you think you should be doing in your role?
- 4) How does the work you do fit into the mission and vision of the Division?
- 5) What use do you make of data from Trails in your work?
- 6) A customer/shareholder is an individual or group who affects or who is affected by the work you do. Given that definition, who, in your opinion, is your primary customer?
- 7) What process do you use to make decisions in the course of your work? Whom do you consult in your decision making?
- 8) Who is involved in overseeing your work?
- 9) What opportunities do you have for professional growth within the Division?
- 10) What motivates you to do your best work?

#### **Questions about the Division**

- 1) In your opinion, what are the strengths of the Division? What things are working well?
- 2) In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of the Division? What things are not working well?
- 3) What recommendations do you have for improving the Division?
- 4) How do you keep informed about all the Division's priorities and/or work that others are doing in the Division?
- 5) What outcome would you like to see from this organizational study?

### **Administrator/Top Level Shareholder Questions**

1. What's the vision for the (organizational assessment) project? [Project vision]
- 2a. How does the Child Welfare (CW) Division interact with the other divisions of the Department of Human Services (DHS)? [Inter-div rels]
- 2b. What do you want the relationship to be? [Vision for inter-div rel]
- 2c. What are CW's current challenges and strengths? [Div Challenges and strengths]
3. How do the activities and findings of the Governor's Action Committee bear on the project? [Gov's AC impact]



- 4a. What use do you make of data from Trails in your work? [Trails use]
- 4b. How accessible is the data? [Trails access]
- 4c. What would you like to know from Trails if you could get it? [Trails vision]
- 5a. What kind of leadership does CW need? [CW leadership type]
- 5b. What would demonstrate this leadership? [CW leadership indicators]
- 6a. What outcomes do you want CW to achieve with counties and families? [Desired CW outcomes]
- 6b. How are these outcomes related to resources available? [CW outcomes vs. resources]
- 7. How do you see the State's finances affecting the project outcomes and recommendations? [State finance impact]

### ***Stakeholder Interview Questions***

- 1. How is your work aligned with CW's mission?
- 2. How do you use the CW Division as a resource in your work?
- 3. Who are you most connected with in the CW Division?
- 4. Describe your relationship.
- 5. What does CW do best?
- 6. What are their challenges?
- 7. Is CW organized in a way that meets your needs and the needs of children, families, and the community?



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## Appendix C: Decision Making Protocol Example

**CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE**



AMERICAN HUMANE

*Protecting Children & Animals Since 1877*

At American Humane, we are committed to a work environment that parallels the humane values and vision for excellence that we strive to achieve on behalf of the children and animals we protect. We know that our people are our most valuable asset. In order to attract and retain the best and the brightest, we will create a culture of excellence that directly supports the accomplishment of our mission.

1. We will promote open, honest, and effective communication by:
  - Actively and respectfully listening to each other;
  - Sharing all necessary information with all stakeholders;
  - Communicating face-to-face or by phone when possible, relying on e-mail when simply sharing information;
  - Responding to written and verbal communications in a timely manner, responding to voicemails and e-mails within 24-48 hours.
2. We realize that in any workplace, disagreements and differences of opinion will arise. We will address these differences of opinion by going directly to the source to resolve the issue at hand using open and honest communication.
3. We will encourage positive problem-solving, consider diverse perspectives, and we will resolve issues without blame, learn from our mistakes, and move on.
4. We will treat coworkers with respect and behave in a professional manner by:
  - Recognizing the value and contribution of each employee;
  - Soliciting, accepting, and learning from constructive feedback;
  - Refraining from gossip or negative comments;
  - Respecting colleagues' time, opinions, and priorities;
  - Living up to the trust others place in us;
  - Starting and ending meetings on time; following agendas;
  - Refraining from doing other work during meetings;
  - Expressing appreciation and sharing credit with other teams or individuals.
5. We recognize and reward personal initiative by pursuing creative solutions and growth opportunities. We will experiment, take chances, try new ways, learn from our mistakes, and be open to change.
6. We recognize that success is dependent upon our working together, within departments, as well as across departments. We will promote teambuilding, educating each other, and provide a continuous learning environment to advance all staff members both personally and professionally.



7. We will work hard to dedicate ourselves to the mission of American Humane and take responsibility and accountability for understanding and supporting all strategic initiatives and programs that further our mission.
8. We will approach all our work, both internally and externally, with an attitude of superior customer service.
9. We will treat our partners and competitors with integrity and a spirit of collaboration and cooperation.
10. We will embrace and celebrate diversity in religion, race, color, national origin, age, gender, or sexual orientation and will make every effort to be inclusive, understanding, and respectful.



