

**Child Welfare System Changes  
Federal Improvement Plan Implementation**

**Session Law 2016-94, Section 12C.1.(a)**



**Report to  
The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on  
Health and Human Services**

**By**

**North Carolina  
Department of Health and Human Services**

**August 1, 2016**

## **Reporting Requirements**

Section 12C. 1.(a) of Session Law 2016-94 requires the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services to report semiannually on the implementation and outcomes of the federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP) commencing August 1, 2016 through February 1, 2019.

## **Federal Approval of Program Improvement Plan**

This initial report includes the draft of the federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP), as required for submission to the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau on July 11, 2016. The Child Welfare PIP development team is in frequent communication with federal staff assigned to work with North Carolina. The collaborative process has been utilized throughout the review and continues in the development of the improvement plan.

Although the PIP has not yet been federally approved several of the activities identified in the PIP have begun. The necessary planning and partner engagement has begun for all 5 goals identified and described below. Outreach to partners who may be able to assist is underway.

## **County Child Welfare Services Oversight and Accountability**

The Governor's budget sought to address the oversight of child welfare services and accountability, as did the General Assembly, by appropriating funds through S.L. 2016-94. With these funds, the Division of Social Services will be enhancing the training and technical assistance provided to county departments of social services to deliver timely and effective child protective services. These additional positions are being posted for recruitment and subsequent human resource processing. The training component includes developing new curriculum based on the specific areas identified in the Child and Family Review results. The development of this curricula has begun with university partners and key stakeholders. To enhance the capacity and quality of the Family Foster Care system, six positions are approved which will focus on timely processing of applicants as well as improving the recruitment and support for prospective families willing to care for children.

## **Child Welfare Program Improvement Plan**

As further recommended by the Governor's budget, S.L. 2016-94 provided additional resources to address the identified needs of families that have been brought to the attention of the Child Welfare System, and require quality interventions. Intensive Family Preservation services and Triple P – Positive Parenting Program interventions are two nationally recognized family strengthening programs. By directing these funds to that existing provider infrastructure, a greater percentage of the need will be met. Along with increased capacity to collect, access, analyze and publish program data, the Division of Social Services will be better positioned to direct scarce resources in areas most needed.

*North Carolina: Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP)*

**Goal 1: Improve the outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being through the establishment of clear performance expectations for practice in CPS Assessments, In-Home services and Foster Care services (Safety 1, Safety 2, Permanency 1, Permanency 2, Well-Being 1, Well-Being 2, Well-Being 3, and Staff and Provider Training)**

Strategies/Activities:

1. Strengthen and clarify North Carolina's child welfare policies and practices [based on support received from the Capacity Building Center] (Items 1-18, 20)

Review, assess, and revise the current policies and practices including, but not limited to, frequency, consistency, quality and documentation of: timely initiations of child protective services; risk assessments that inform safety plans and services; involve children, parents and foster parents in needs assessments and identification of and securing the appropriate services (including educational, physical, dental and mental health services); meaningful engagement of children, parents and foster parents in the development and implementation of case plans; meaningful engagement of children, parents and foster parents in the development of timely and appropriate permanency goals; concerted efforts to achieve permanency goals and promote placement stability; child, family, siblings and caseworker visits that reinforce the continuity and connections of family relationships; case decision making including case closures	Begin Date: Q1 Completion Date: Q2
Publish the revised manuals governing child welfare policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q1 Completion Date: Q3
Assess and develop capacity for implementation of the revised policies and practices in the 10 OSRI counties.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q3
Pilot the revised policies, practices and training in the 10 OSRI counties.	Begin Date: Q3 Completion Date: Q4
Incorporate lessons learned from the pilot in the 10 OSRI counties and develop a plan for the statewide implementation of the revised policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q4 Completion Date: Q5
Develop and execute a statewide communication plan regarding the revised policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q4 Completion Date: Q5
Execute the statewide implementation plan for the revised policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q5 Completion Date: Q7

2. Enhance the training system to support the consistent application of the revised policies and practices [based on technical assistance received from the Capacity Building Center in consultation with National Child Welfare Workforce Institute] (Initial and Ongoing Training: Items 26 and 27)

Identify the key competencies necessary for the revised policies and practices and compare to current curricula for initial and ongoing training to identify gaps.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q3
Revise the training curricula and delivery methodology based on the gaps assessment to include the competencies necessary to ensure staff have the basic skills necessary to do their work.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q4
Strengthen the transfer of learning model for all curricula and mandate the utilization of the transfer of learning tool for county staff to ensure the social work competencies identified in the revised policies and practices are implemented consistently after staff attend training.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q4
Develop a series of “in-service” trainings (examples include scripted PowerPoints, webinars, role play scenarios, videos, etc.) to be used by county supervisors and training divisions to reinforce consistent implementation of the revised policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q5

3. Strengthen the capacity of county departments of social services to sustain the consistent application of the revised policies and practices through the development and implementation of a supervisor academy (Initial and Ongoing Training: Items 26 and 27)

Identify the supervisor competencies necessary to support the consistent implementation of the revised policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q4
Develop the supervisor academy based on identified competencies.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q4
Implement a pilot for the supervisor academy beginning with select supervisors in the 10 OSRI counties.	Begin Date: Q4 Completion Date: Q6
Incorporate lessons learned from the 10 OSRI counties and develop a plan for the statewide use of the supervisor academy using a regional approach.	Begin Date: Q7 Completion Date: Q8
Develop and execute a statewide communication plan regarding the supervisor academy.	Begin Date: Q6 Completion Date: Q6
Use data from supervisor academy graduates to evaluate the supervisor academy.	Begin Date: Q6 Completion Date: Q8

4. Strengthen and implement a technical assistance model for NC DSS to provide support to county staff regarding the consistent application of the revised policies, practices and training [based on technical assistance received from the Capacity Building Center] which will clarify the roles and responsibilities of both state and county staff (Safety 1, Safety 2, Permanency 1, Permanency 2, Well-Being 1, Well-Being 2, Well-Being 3)

Assess the current technical assistance model to support the consistent implementation of the revised policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q1 Completion Date: Q2
Revise the technical assistance model to counties based on the assessment.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q3
Document the revised North Carolina technical assistance to counties model.	Begin Date: Q3 Completion Date: Q3
Develop and pilot an implementation plan for the revised technical assistance model beginning in the 10 OSRI counties to identify additional gaps and/or areas that need to be strengthened.	Begin Date: Q4 Completion Date: Q5
Incorporate lessons learned from the 10 OSRI counties and execute the implementation plan for the technical assistance model using a regional approach to support the consistent use of the revised policies and practices.	Begin Date: Q5 Completion Date: Q8
Develop and execute a statewide communication plan regarding the technical assistance model.	Begin Date: Q6 Completion Date: Q7
Expand and utilize the TA Gateway to support the consistent application of the technical assistance model.	Begin Date: Q3 Completion Date: Q8

5. Develop and implement a state level child welfare parent leadership model which will provide parent “voice” to inform state plans [CBCAP, CFSP/APSR, CAPTA], policies and practices [based on support received from FRIENDS: Family Resource Information, Education and Network Development Services - the National Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention, and the Capacity Building Center for States] (Permanency 2)

Review available parent leadership strategies and adopt/adapt components as needed.	Begin Date: Q1 Completion Date: Q2
Conduct a readiness assessment for the state to implement a parent leadership model.	Begin Date: Q2 Completion Date: Q3
Formalize the support mechanisms for parent leadership engagement and create a North Carolina Child Welfare Parent Advisory Council.	Begin Date: Q3 Completion Date: Q4
Engage the NC Child Welfare Parent Advisory Council on the Community Child Protection Team Advisory Board, policy development workgroups, and other opportunities to support practice changes that promote family engagement.	Begin Date: Q4 Completion Date: Q8