

DCF Family First Infrastructure Practice and Policy Workgroup Charter v. 11.11.2020

This charter creates a clear and mutually agreeable description of the DCF Infrastructure Practice and Policy Workgroup's role and purpose. The Charter may be revised as better ways of functioning emerge and will be reviewed when major changes to the group's structure or function occur to ensure relevance and appropriateness to the work.

Purpose

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) was passed in February 2018, introducing historic reforms with the potential to dramatically change child welfare systems across the country. Among other provisions, Family First includes provisions to help keep children safely with their families and avoid the traumatic experience of entering foster care, while helping to ensure that children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to their special needs when foster care is needed.

Connecticut Department of Children and Families has embraced the legislation as a tool for system transformation and outcomes improvement. Connecticut seeks to engage families, youth, experts and staff in developing its response to Family First, by focusing on the opportunities to become a prevention-oriented system. Connecticut seeks to ensure that:

- Parents are better equipped, supported and trained to raise their own children, resulting in overall better outcomes for children and families;
- Children maintain their culture, connection to community ties, and access to their extended families;
- Changes to child welfare and prevention related practice are designed to address and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities and to ensure positive outcomes for children, youth and families of color
- Workers gain access to tools, resources and services to assist in their efforts to better serve children and families;
- Connecticut continues to build and expand upon its delivery of evidence-based practices; and,
- Where appropriate, there are overall cost savings to the system of care

The Governance Committee approved the following candidacy definitions for Connecticut's Prevention Plan in January 2020:

1. Families with accepted Careline calls
2. Families who have been accepted for Voluntary Services
3. Pregnant and parenting youth in foster care
4. Siblings of children in foster care
5. Youth exiting to permanency or youth aging out of DCF foster care
6. Families with certain characteristics who are identified through a community or neighborhood pathway:
 - a. Children who are chronically absent from preschool/school or are truant from school
 - b. Children of incarcerated parents
 - c. Trafficked youth

- d. Unstably housed/homeless youth
- e. Families experiencing interpersonal violence
- f. Youth who have been referred to the juvenile review board or who have been arrested
- g. Caregivers who have, or have a child with, a substance use disorder, mental health condition or disability that impacts parenting
- h. Infants born substance-exposed (as defined by the state CAPTA notification protocol)

Workgroup Goals & Key Deliverables

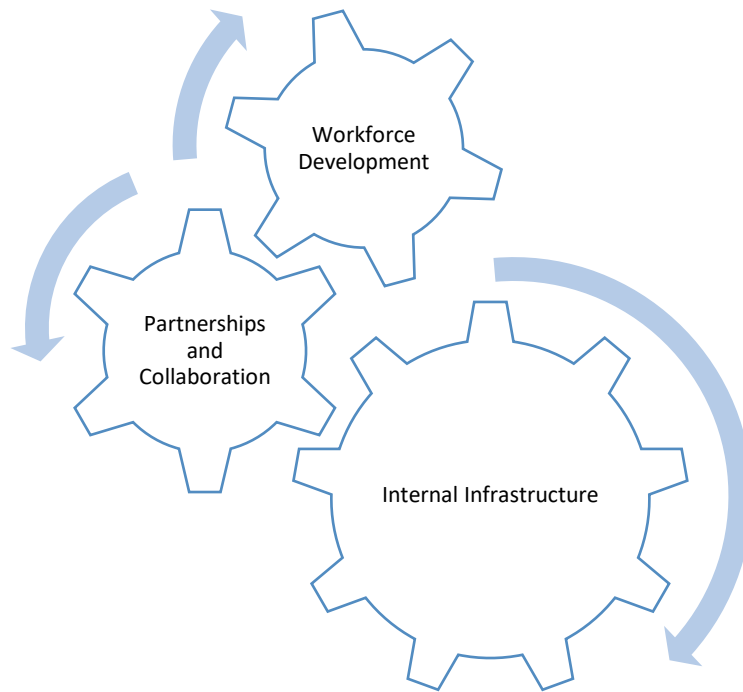
The goals of the Infrastructure Practice and Policy workgroup are to:

- (1) Develop and Align Infrastructure: The IPP workgroup will recommend modifications or additions to current policy, practice, and ~~internal~~ infrastructure to align with the revised model of care under Family First, including:
 - a. Developing a community pathway to services, *Target January 2021*
 - b. Defining the parameters of the care entity *Target January 2021*
 - c. Outlining the responsibilities of the care entity including:
 - i. screening and eligibility, *Target February 2021*
 - ii. developing the child-specific prevention plan, *Target February 2021*
 - iii. monitoring safety and risk *Target March 2021*
 - d. Other infrastructure needs, such as information technology to support the work

- (2) Enhance Partnerships and Collaboration:
The IPP workgroup will:
 - a. Recommend the ways in which DCF will collaborate with partners and families to build a community pathway to service and develop a prevention-oriented system. *Target February 2021*
 - b. Recommend ways to enhance partnerships as new infrastructure is developed. *Target March 2021*
 - c. Assess current contracting and projected service needs within the state, develop recommendations bridging the gap between current capacity and projected usage. *Target June 2021*

- (3) Establish Workforce Development Plan:
The IPP workgroup will:
 - a. Recommend strategies needed to equip the workforce to more effectively engage families through these new pathways to services *Target February 2021*
 - b. Assess workforce capacity, training curriculum, supervision, and make recommendations to support implementation of new model. *Target April 2021*

- (4) Develop Messaging: The IPP workgroup will identify messaging strategies that will convey the goals of this new prevention model, specifically clarifying the heightened role of community/sister agencies and decreased surveillance from DCF. *Throughout*



Scope & Governance

The Infrastructure Practice and Policy workgroup will report its recommendations to a governance committee, which is then responsible for making all decisions related to Family First. The governance committee is a DCF committee comprised of executive level staff. The governance committee will review all workgroup recommendations, raise questions as needed and make decisions about the incorporation of those recommendations into the state’s title IV-E Prevention Plan and related plans. The Infrastructure Practice and Policy workgroup’s scope is to develop data-informed recommendation(s) of how to: 1) modify DCF’s internal infrastructure; 2) strengthen partnership and collaboration; 3) identify training, coaching, supervision supports needed to prepare the workforce to accommodate a prevention-oriented system, and; 4) develop messaging to convey the new prevention model. These recommendations will go to the governance committee so that they can make decisions about the title IV-E Prevention Plan details and inform Connecticut’s larger prevention system efforts.

Other workgroups are tasked with related work, a description of their charges follow:

- *Programs and Service Array* – Align Connecticut’s vast array of services and programs to the identified needs of the children and families served, while ensuring a focus on quality services and interventions.
- *Kinship and Foster Care* - Identify barriers to Kinship Care, mitigate such barriers, and expand strategies to ensure relative engagement at the onset of a case, while building a culture that supports relatives and kin as “real” supports to children and families engaged in the child welfare system.
- *Fiscal & Revenue Enhancement* - Enhance and maximize Connecticut’s federal reimbursement claiming.
- *Intensive Residential Treatment*– Develop standards in Connecticut for intensive residential treatment and ensure those facilities that are Qualified Residential Treatment Providers meet

federal requirements including ensuring accreditation, developing assessment processes, developing a judicial review process, and delivering a continuum of aftercare services.

It will be the responsibility of the Infrastructure Practice and Policy workgroup co-leads and Family First co-leads to reinforce the distinctions between the groups and to raise questions to the governance committee when workgroup charges need clarification. Additionally, the Infrastructure Practice and Policy workgroup co-leads will create a running list of *Parking Lot* issues and questions that are more appropriately discussed in other workgroups. As needed, the Infrastructure Practice and Policy workgroup will work in collaboration with these other groups, answering questions and sharing information generated by the Infrastructure Practice and Policy workgroup to allow other workgroups to meet their responsibilities.

Membership, Roles and Responsibilities

The members of this workgroup have been selected to serve based on their lived experience, expertise and perspectives. To support a collaborative environment where each member's contributions can inform the recommendations, the role of each workgroup member is to:

- Respect each other's ideas, provide constructive feedback, and exhibit balanced participation so that we hear perspectives of family, public agencies and providers.
- Attend all meetings, unless extenuating circumstances do not permit it.
- Come prepared to each meeting by reviewing agendas, meeting minutes and other materials that may be provided in advance.
- Actively contribute to proposals, recommendations and deliverables by participating in meetings and following up on assigned action items outside of regular meetings.
- Use quantitative and qualitative data to understand system and population dynamics, test perspectives and justify recommendations.
- Incorporate a racial justice lens in the discussion and recommendations of the workgroup.

Workgroup co-leads will be primarily responsible for setting meeting agendas and facilitating the meetings with group input. The co-leads will also be responsible for collecting additional feedback on workgroup deliberations, products and deliverables outside of regular meetings. In order to ensure robust feedback, there will be a series of focus groups held throughout the engagement. The focus group members will be comprised of families with lived experience, community members and providers to offer input on proposed recommendations.

Workgroups co-leads will be the only persons responsible for inviting new members or guest speakers to the workgroup. It is not necessary for members to send other persons in their stead to meetings, but may do so after confirming the appropriateness of a substitution with Workgroup co-leads.

Recommendations & Decision-Making

Recommendations to the governance committee will be a direct result of the work of the workgroup. The governance committee is ultimately responsible for decision-making regarding Family First and system prevention efforts. Workgroup consensus is not necessary for recommendations; rather, a majority of the workgroup can decide to move a recommendation forward. Minority or non-consenting

opinions may be provided to the governance committee along with majority recommendations. In the event of a need to break ties, the co-leads will serve as tie-breakers.

Meeting Cadence

The workgroup will meet approximately biweekly until the end of April 2021. A subsequent meeting cadence will be determined through agreement so that the workgroup can successfully accomplish its remaining goals. Below follows a high-level description of the agenda for each scheduled meeting:

October 23 rd	Reengagement, discuss previous work, discuss workgroup, review work plan
November 6 th	Workgroup charter norms, workgroup charge clarification, review Infrastructure Practice and Policy definition to determine if any refinements are needed. Care Entity/Pathways to Service: Begin discussion of pathways to service including assessment of existing systems to determine what strategies are successful. Review existing pathways to service via partners and whether a new care entity is necessary to support a community pathway.
November 16 th	Care Entity/Pathways to Service: Continue to discuss pathways to service and care entities and make preliminary recommendations. Discuss implications for partners, workforce, and messaging.
December 4 th	Family Engagement Screening and Eligibility: Review current screening tools and mechanisms and determine how to leverage existing tools and/or whether new strategies are needed to engage families, assess family need equitably and ensure the intended children and families are identified for service population. Determine the workforce who will be responsible for administering any screening and/or eligibility determination and redetermination processes and the policy changes and/or protocols necessary for doing so. Identify IT modifications or specifications needed to support family engagement, screening and eligibility determinations
December 18 th	Family Engagement Screening and Eligibility: Continue to discuss Family Engagement, Screening, and Eligibility and make preliminary recommendations. Discuss implications for partners, workforce, and messaging.
January 8 th	Child-Specific Prevention Plans: Review current service planning processes and determine how to leverage and align with child-specific prevention plans requirements. Determine who will be developing those plans, and how those plans will be monitored and refined throughout the duration of service for children and families. Identify IT modifications or specifications needed to support the development and monitoring of prevention plans.
January 21 st	Child-Specific Prevention Plans: Continue to discuss Child-Specific Prevention Plans and make preliminary recommendations. Discuss implications for partners, workforce, and messaging.
February 2 nd	Risk and Safety Monitoring: Assess existing mechanisms for risk/safety monitoring and determine how to leverage and align with requirements for

	ongoing evaluation of risk. Determine who will make such assessments and, as necessary, appropriate feedback mechanisms to DCF. Identify IT modifications or specifications needed to support risk and safety monitoring.
February 19 th	Risk and Safety Monitoring: Continue to discuss Risk and Safety Monitoring and make preliminary recommendations. Discuss implications for partners, workforce, and messaging.
March 5 th	Workforce Development: Review workforce development discussion from previous meetings. Continue to assess workforce capacity, training curriculum, supervision, etc. and make recommendations to support implementation of new model. Conduct prevention caseload analysis for inclusion in the five-year plan.
<i>TBD</i>	Procurement and Scaling: Assess current contracting and projected service needs within the state. Develop recommendations bridging the gap between current capacity and projected usage.
<i>TBD</i>	Procurement and Scaling: Continue to discuss Procurement and Scaling and make preliminary recommendations. Discuss implications for partners, workforce, and messaging.