

Family First –Programs and Service Array Workgroup Charter - Revised December 2020

This charter creates a clear and mutually agreeable description of the Connecticut Programs and Service Array 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 has embraced the legislation as a tool for system transformation and outcomes improvement. Connecticut seeks to engage families, youth, experts, sister agencies 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 and kin are better equipped, supported and informed to raise their children, resulting in overall better outcomes for children and families;
- Children maintain their culture, connection to community ties, and access to their extended families;
- Workers gain access to tools, resources and services to assist in their efforts to better serve children and families;
- Connecticut continues to build upon its prior efforts to ensure the delivery of quality services to include evidence-based practices; and,
- Where appropriate, there are overall cost savings to the system of care.

Workgroup Goals & Key Deliverables

The goal of the Programs and Service Array workgroup is to 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. The deliverables of this workgroup span two phases of work:

Phase 1. *Target – ~~Early February 2020.~~ Revised January 2021*

- (1) Map and assess the scope, quality and volume of the existing service array relevant to Families First (i.e., parenting, substance use disorder and mental health).
- (2) Recommend additions to the service array that fill unmet needs of children and families identified as candidates, once defined by the Candidacy Workgroup.
- (3) Identify specific EBPs within the current service array that may align with the needs of the candidacy population, once defined by the Candidacy Workgroup, including the specific outcomes the EBPs will address.

Phase 2. Target – ~~End of February 2020~~ **Rev. March 2021**

Building off the work in Phase 1, and pending the definition of candidacy to be provided by the Candidacy Workgroup, the Program & Service Array Workgroup will:

- (1) Further evaluate and assess the current service array for families in need of services to align those services with the candidacy target populations once defined by the Candidacy Workgroup.
- (2) Identify opportunities to understand capacity of program/services and explore a gap analysis.
- (3) Identify those services which may need to be added to the proposed revised service array to fill gaps that have been identified for the defined candidacy population.
- (4) Provide recommendations for the revised services array to other Workgroups for review/feedback.

Phase 3. Target – ~~End of December 2020~~ **Rev. April 2021**

- (1) Continue to further inventory and assess Connecticut's service continuum to inform recommendations for CT's 5-year prevention plan.
- (2) Identify strategies necessary to enable the matching of family and child needs to the revised service array.
- (5) Identify barriers and strategies for procuring or scaling the service array to meet needs.
- (6) Identify data, evaluation and CQI strategies to support understanding the performance of programs and services.

Scope & Governance

The Programs and Service Array 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 committee comprised of DCF executive level staff along with various stakeholders and partners. 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 Programs and Service Array workgroup's scope is to use data and qualitative information, the experiences and expertise of workgroup members and other invited guests to identify recommendations that will ensure that Connecticut's programs and service array matches the needs of the population. A primary input in assessing needs will be the Candidacy's workgroup's definition of candidacy and identification of a broader prevention population, but the scope of this group expands out to identify the needs of families who are involved with DCF. A primary focus is recommendations that will inform the development of the Prevention Plan, but this workgroup's recommendation may also inform the title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Plan and title IV-E Kinship Navigation Plan.

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

- *Candidacy* – Develop a data-informed definition of candidates for the Prevention Plan and the target population for broader prevention efforts.
- *Kinship and Foster Care* – Increase the state's ability to support children's safe, supportive and nurturing care in the most family-like caregiving setting possible when children cannot be with their parents.

- *Fiscal & Revenue Enhancement* - Enhance and maximize Connecticut's federal reimbursement claiming.
- *Community Partnership & Family and Child Engagement* - Support full participation of parents, youth, legislative officials, community providers, and other state agencies in the planning, development and communication of Connecticut's plan.

It will be the responsibility of Programs and Service Array 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 Programs and Service Array workgroup co-leads will create a running list of *Parking Lot* issues and questions that are more appropriately discussed in other workgroups and present these to CT Families First co-leads for discussion on biweekly planning calls. As needed, the Programs and Service Array workgroup will work in collaboration with these other groups, answering questions and sharing information generated by the Programs and Service Array 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 have 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 material that may be provided in advance.
- Actively participate in any workgroup breakout activities designed to accomplish meeting objectives.
- Actively contribute to proposal, 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 the needs of children at risk of foster care placement and at risk of congregate care placement; the existing processes and quality of services, and to test perspectives and justify recommendations.

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 particular to ensure robust feedback from families and youth with lived experience in collaboration with the Community Partnership Workgroup. Co-leads may assign this additional feedback gathering task as an action item to one or more members.

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 every two weeks until April 2020. A subsequent meeting cadence will be determined through agreement so that the workgroup can respond to governance committee feedback and/or successfully accomplish its remaining goals. Below follows a high level description of the agenda for each scheduled meeting.

Meeting Date	Time	Topic
December 13	9 - 11am	Workgroup orientation, purpose and planning.
January 9	1 – 4pm	Overview of current service array related to parenting, mental health and substance use disorders; identification of additional supportive services that may fit need. Discussion of benefits and potential elements of a charter for the workgroup.
January 23	1 – 4pm	Continue to inventory current service array related to parenting, mental health and substance use disorders; continue identification of additional supportive services that may fit need. Discuss updates on definition of candidacy by the candidacy workgroup; Review/revise charter for the workgroup.
February 6	1 – 4pm	Finalize charter. Pending definition of candidacy by the Candidacy workgroup, identify candidate characteristics and begin to align candidacy population (as submitted to/decided on by the governance committee) with specific EBPs with CT's current service array; identify gaps and EBPs for additional exploration of prospects for implementation.
February 20	1 – 4pm	Continue to align candidacy population (as submitted to/decided on by the governance committee) with specific EBPs with CT's current service array; identify gaps and EBPs for additional exploration of prospects for implementation.
March 5	1 – 4pm	Finalize EBP service recommendations for candidates; document EBP fit, desired outcomes, trauma components, and other rationales for EBP selection.

October 8	1:30 - 3 pm	Review accomplishments to date; introduce new meeting cadence; remind members of deliverables and next steps.
October 22	1:30 - 3 pm	Review expanded list of models classified on FFPSA Clearinghouse; finalize review of all models identified by workgroup in Phase 1; begin "slicing and dicing" process by reducing potential programs and services list to models that meet, or likely meet, FFPSA Clearinghouse criteria - focus on models that meet needs across multiple candidacy groups.
November 5	1:30 - 3 pm	Continue "slicing and dicing" - focus on models that address needs most associated with child removal (that are "matchable" to a research-supported program or service) and models that address needs that are often exclusionary from other programs or services or where there is a current gap that places families at risk of child removal if there is research-supported model addressing specialized need.
November 19	1:30 - 3 pm	Continue "slicing and dicing" - focus on EBPs that could provide cross-system support. Discuss gaps and summarize workgroup recommendations.
December 3	1:30 - 3 pm	Review findings from Kinship and Foster Care workgroup, compare to broader inventory of Connecticut programs and services; begin identifying programs and services, including Kinship Navigator EBPs, in alignment with those needs.
December 17	1:30 - 3 pm	Finalize initial Phase 1 recommendations for Governance Committee and Fiscal workgroup for inclusion in FFPSA plan for Title IV-E reimbursement
January 28, 2021	1:30 - 3 pm	Updates from Governance and discuss next steps for Phase 1. Outline timeframe for remaining deliverables through April.

Proposed 2021 PSAWG Meeting Dates: 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month from 1:30 - 4 p.m. with the co-chairs having discretion to cancel meetings where convening the larger workgroup is not necessary. Holds for the 2021 meetings will include:

- February 11th & 25th
- March 11th & 25th
- April 8th & 22nd