

## **Joint JCIP-ODHS Safety Questions Project**

### **Context:**

This project is one of the required projects through the CIP grant. JCIP is required to have “a joint project with the title IV-B/IV-E agency to improve a specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome or outcomes.” Here is some additional language from the Children’s Bureau, which funds the CIP grant:

“State courts are required to plan and implement a joint project with the title IV-B/IV-E agency that will focus on improving a specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome. The plan must identify the specific outcome(s) that will be addressed and the specific measures that will be used to track progress and ensure continuous quality improvement. The plan must also identify the data that were used to identify the selected outcome as a priority such as CFSR findings.”

### **Overview of JCIP’s Project:**

JCIP’s Joint Project Subcommittee members identified at the outset that it wanted to focus on a project that would improve time to permanency, as this is a CFSR measure in need of improvement and an area with significant system-wide responsibility and/or ability to impact. Specifically, it wanted to focus on time to reunification.

The Subcommittee used the CBCC CQI framework to identify needs and conduct a root cause analysis on needs. Through this process, as well as additional conversations between JCIP and ODHS, the Subcommittee selected a project to develop safety decision questions for key hearings and decision points, starting with protective custody order requests and shelter hearings.

The safety questions are for judges to ask of ODHS and would be provided to all other court participants in advance. Judges who pilot this project will commit to asking these at every request for a child to be placed in substitute care with ODHS. Knowing these will be asked, attorneys, tribes, CASAs, and other court participants will be able to talk to parents, children/youth, and others present to gather information from them to support increased family engagement in this critical safety decision.

This project was modeled after a successful, similar project in Iowa, [the 4 Questions, 7 Judges Project](#), that led to a nearly 50% reduction in removals in the courts in which it was piloted. What Iowa found was that the questions both reduced the number of removals granted by court and reduced the number of requests for removals in the first place.

### **Outcomes Project Intends to Impact:**

- Reduce unnecessary removals of children and youth
- Increase child, youth, parent, and family engagement in safety decision making

- Reduced time to reunification
- Improved time to permanency for non-reunification permanency goals

Data Used to Identify Project:

- CFSR data
- OJD court data
- Feedback from courts, ODHS, and system/court partners

Measures to Track Progress: In development, but likely to include

- Court observation

**DRAFT Safety Questions for Shelter Hearings:**

1. **What can we do to manage the danger instead of removing the child?**
2. **What is the parent already doing to provide safety and can this be further supported to manage the danger?**
3. **Can someone the child or family knows help the family manage the danger?**
4. **Is there a support or resource that could help the family manage the danger?**

**Then...**

5. ***[If the court is placing the child in substitute care]* What needs to change for it to be safe for the child to go home?**
6. ***[If the child is going to remain home on an in-home plan]* What supports or resources does the family need to ensure the child continues to be safe at home?**

Next Steps:

- JCIP staff met with the CBCC's Lead Researcher to discuss development of a plan to measure progress and impact of this project. This will be discussed with the Subcommittee.
- Questions will be finalized after incorporating feedback.
- Judges will be invited to participate in pilot implementation.