

Right Support, Right Placement, Right Permanency

North Dakota respectfully submits this Program Improvement Plan (PIP) under the pilot framework outlined in Administration for Children and Families Technical Bulletin #14.

North Dakota's "A Home for Every Child" PIP focuses on strengthening safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families through targeted, data driven strategies. Three priority areas were identified after the Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) statewide assessment, case reviews, stakeholder engagement, and careful review of the R4 CFSR Final Report. This PIP is designed to support transparency, federal alignment, and statewide collaboration as North Dakota advances its vision of ensuring that every child is connected to the right support, in the right placement, with the right permanency at the right time.

Priority 1 – Prevent unnecessary entry into foster care and reduce length of stay (prevention and diversion)

Strategies:

- Standardized screening and referral pathways for FamilyFirst services and increase access to in-home supports and crisis stabilization
- Comprehensive safety assessments and early case staffing to reduce risk of removal
- Enhance post-permanency support to reduce the risk of adoption or guardianship disruption or dissolution

Lead Measures:

- Number of eligible children receiving FamilyFirst services
- Number of children who utilized shelter care and respite care services
- Percentage of timely initiation for accepted child maltreatment reports
- Percentage of children who reenter foster care after adoption or guardianship

Priority 2 - Increase identification and placement into relative/kin settings for children in foster care

Strategies:

- Early relative/kin search within 96 hours
- Kinship ND support for (a) relative resources and (b) referral for foster care licensing

Lead Measures:

- Time to first kin placement

Priority 3 - Increase recruitment and retention of family foster care providers

Strategies:

- Targeted recruitment for Native American homes and homes willing to accept children with complex needs
- Standardized onboard and ongoing training to include trauma informed and culturally responsive topics
- Increase the Caring Connections mentorship available to newly licensed foster care providers
- Increase respite support to all licensed foster care providers to preserve placements and retain providers

Lead Measures:

- Number of newly licensed foster care providers
- 12-month foster care provider retention rate
- Number of children utilizing respite care and dollars expended each month