Wyoming Department of Family Services: Pilot PIP Proposal

October 28, 2026

To Whom it May Concern:

Please find the Wyoming Department of Family Services Pilot Program Improvement Plan version 2. We look forward to speaking with you after your review.

I. Philosophy and Values: Setting the Tone

The Wyoming Department of Family Services (the Department) is guided by the **WY Home Matters** framework. This framework is built on the fundamental belief that children, youth, and vulnerable adults do best when they can stay safely at home. Our approach is rooted in three core values:

- **Safe at Home:** We believe all individuals deserve to be safe in their own homes and communities. We strive to serve families before a crisis occurs by building on their strengths and connecting them to necessary supports.
- **Opportunities for Success:** We believe every family deserves a fair chance at success. We provide access to concrete economic supports and community-based services that promote stability and self-sufficiency.
- **Supporting the People who Support the Families:** Our greatest resources are our staff and partners. We promote system partnerships that focus on prevention and family well-being.

By adopting this Pilot PIP, Wyoming reaffirms its commitment to a Prevention Continuum—shifting focus from intensive court-ordered services to primary and secondary prevention that keeps families together.

II. Wildly Important Goal (WIG) and Data Metrics

To measure the success of this Pilot PIP, Wyoming will track a primary **1:1 Ratio** to ensure our capacity to care for children in family-like settings matches the number of children in care.

- **WIG:** Achieve and maintain a **1:1 Ratio** of licensed/unlicensed relative and kinship homes to children in care.
- **Current Baseline:** 0.82 (502 homes / 612 children in care).
- **Ratio Formula:**

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- **Numerator:** Licensed homes (with or without kids) + unlicensed relative/kin homes with a child placed at the end of the month.
- **Denominator:** Total number of children in foster care on the last day of the month, excluding detention, WBS, and WGS.

- **Data Reporting Requirements:** Reporting will include Provider IDs, license types, child age groups (1-5, 6-12, 13-17), and placement status.

III. Proposed Strategies

To achieve the 1:1 ratio and further our "Safe at Home" value, the Department will implement the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Strengthen Prevention Efforts and Service Provision:

- Service Accessibility
  i. Maintain and expand the Department Resource Guide and use of 211 and local resources. We will ensure staff are trained to use these tools to connect families to concrete and economic supports before removal becomes necessary.
- Standardized Assessment
  i. Expand the consistent use of the Family Needs Assessment to identify strengths and underlying needs, including medical, dental, and vision, preventing escalation through proactive intervention and services.

Strategy 2: Strengthen Safety Efforts:

- Safety vs Risk
  i. Support efforts to accurately assess safety and risk in the homes where children reside by strengthening policies, procedures, and tools regarding expectations for assessing safety and risk and development of safety plans.
- Safety Planning
  i. Implement all-state training on safety planning specifically focused on our staff being proficient in assessing safety, protective factors, and mitigating risk by providing services and supports to keep children safe at home or with relatives/kin as alternative caregivers (diversion) rather than formal court-ordered placements. Ensure the alternative caregivers' needs are met.
- Quality Face-to-Face Visits with Child(ren), Parent(s), and Caregiver(s)
  i. Provide clear expectations through training and the case review process regarding frequency and quality of face-to-face visits for parents, children, and caregivers to include initial and ongoing assessment of strengths and needs, engagement in case planning development, and monitoring of case plan and service delivery by improving engagement of families by staff.

Strategy 3: Optimize Support for Relative, Kinship, and Non-Relative Retention to Support Placement Stability

- Caregiver Support:
    i. Sustain the Kinship Connections Program to continue supporting relatives and kin across the state.
    ii. Expand recruitment for foster homes for relatives, kin, and non-relatives, specifically for youth ages 12–17.
    iii. Increase individualized, culturally appropriate, and family-centered recruitment of relatives, kin, and non-relatives, specifically for youth ages 12 and older.
    iv. Improve support for all caregivers through high-quality training and consistent licensing standards.
    v. Increase individualized assessment of foster care provider needs and access to support to meet identified needs.

Support family/kin identified in the transition and sustainability of a child from congregate care.

Strategy 4: Optimize Placements and Transitions:

- **Kinship-Supported Transitions:** Use diligent family and kin finding to support children exiting congregate care and ensure sustainable placements.
- **Accelerated Discharge & Step-Down Planning:** Establish individualized discharge plans within seven (7) days of admission, integrated into monthly clinical reviews to accelerate permanency pathways.
- **Synchronized MDT Participation:** Ensure active facility representation in all case planning and Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings to align care plans with Department goals.
- **Life Skills & Independent Living Integration:** Embed formal transition preparation and independent living services directly into daily care for youth aged 14 and older.

Strategy 5: Sustain Improvement

- Quality Assurance
    i. Develop a quality assurance manual to support supervisors in gathering and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data.
    ii. CQI unit to perform reviews using portions of the Onsite Review instrument.
- Continuous Quality Improvement
    i. Finalize CQI manual
    ii. Implement CQI process in all Districts

IV. Lead Measures

The Department will monitor the following lead measures to track the progress of the strategies above:

- **Timeliness of Initial Response:** Increase the percentage of children who receive an initial face-to-face contact within the timeframe required by DFS policy following a maltreatment report.
    - Numerator: Number of children who receive an initial face-to-face visit as required by DFS policy
    - Denominator: Number of children who receive a maltreatment report in the previous month.
- **Successful Safety Planning:** Improve the percentage of timely safety plans when there are safety threats to keep children safe at home and prevent entry into foster care.
    - Numerator: All safety plans completed within 7 days when a recognized safety threat was marked in the previous month
    - Denominator: All in-home cases regarding child maltreatment that occurred in the previous month
- **Timely Face-to-Face:** Increase the percentage of all children with a case open for services is seen at minimum once a month.
    - Numerator: Number of face-to-face visits with children in child welfare cases open for services the previous month
    - Denominator: All children in open child welfare cases open for services the previous month
- **In-Home Stability:** Increase the percentage of children who remain in the home within 12 months of initial Department contact.
    - Numerator: Number of children who remain in the home within 12 months of initial Department contact
    - Denominator: Number of children part of a case open for services in the previous 12 months
- **Relative and Kinship Utilization:** Increase the percentage of children placed with relatives or kin rather than in “stranger” foster care.
    - Numerator: Total number of children placed in a relative or kin home within the first 45 days of placement the previous month
    - Denominator: Total number of children in placement the previous 45 days
- **Diligent Search Completion Rate:** Increase the percentage of cases where an initial diligent search for relatives and kin was documented within the first 30 days.
    - Numerator: All documented diligent searches that occurred within the prior 30 days
    - Denominator: All new placement cases opened in the previous 30 days

V. Chaser (Contextual) Measures

In addition to the 1:1 ratio, Wyoming will report on "no negative impact" indicators to ensure system health.

- **Maintain Connections:** Percentage of children in care placed with a relative or kin at the end of the month.
- **Congregate Care Usage:** Percentage of days children spend in congregate care settings.
- **Placement Stability:** Number of home disruptions to ensure children remain in stable environments.

- **Recent Maltreatment History:** Percentage of children who had a prior substantiated or indicated maltreatment report that reached disposition within the prior 182 days.

VI. Implementation, Change Management, and Internal Success

1. Communication and Change Management

To ensure the WY Home Matters philosophy is operationalized at every level, we will implement a phased communication plan:

- "Why" Messaging: Division Leadership will conduct monthly standup meetings and issue newsletters to connect the 1:1 ratio goal directly to our value of "Supporting the People who Support the Families".
- Reducing Court Demands: A key focus of our change management is identifying where safety planning and kinship diversion activities can replace more intensive court-ordered processes.
- Staff Feedback Loops: The Department will utilize Google Forms and regional staff meetings (as modeled in our Strategic Plan development) to gather real-time feedback from field staff on implementation challenges, ensuring that the Pilot remains a supportive tool rather than a burden.

2. Strategic Use of Data (Decreasing the Burden)

- **WYOSAFE Enhancements:** Focus on improving the "user experience" of data entry by providing training on required fields for demographics and placement goals. The intent is to make documentation in WYOSAFE a "one-and-done" process that automatically populates monthly ACF reports.
- **Real-Time Data Monitoring:** District Managers will have access to monthly data and engage in data discussions to monitor the 1:1 ratio and chaser measures, allowing for rapid adjustments without state-level "penalties".
- **Internal Implementation Milestones Pre-Implementation / Work Already Underway:** Begin foundational work prior to formal PIP approval, including development and refinement of the Kinship Diversion tools, initial work on the QA tool and case review process, engagement with supervisors and staff, and planning for statewide implementation. This work will establish the foundation for implementation once the PIP is approved.
    - **Months 1-3:** Communication rollout and development of workgroups for each strategy.
    - **Months 4-6:** Use Implementation Science to implement strategies in all districts, including statewide training on "Safety Planning vs. Removal" and the new Kinship Diversion tools. Continue work on CQI manual and QA tool.
    - **Months 6-12:** Quarterly feedback loops via staff surveys to ensure the Pilot PIP is successfully reducing work friction and improving family outcomes. Finalize QA tool.
    - **Months 9-12**: Integrated QA/CQI/Coaching Manuals.

4. Reporting

Monthly reporting to ACF on the 1:1 ratio and chaser measures begins 30 days after approval.

- **Year 1:** Full implementation of strategies with quarterly CQI feedback loops to adjust tactics as needed.
- **Year 2:** Continued reporting and evaluation of outcomes.
- **Evaluation:** Ongoing monthly data submission to ACF to monitor the "Hold Harmless" period and track improvements.

Summary of Monthly Data Points for ACF

Category	Data Elements	Source
Placement Capacity	Provider ID, License Date, License Type, Age Group Capacity	WYOSAFE Placement Resource Account
Current Utilization	Child in Home (Y/N) as of Last Day of Month	WYOSAFE Placement Record
System Demand	Total Kids in Care (Ages 1-5, 6-12, 13-17)	WYOSAFE Placement Record & Person Account
Safety/Stability	Maltreatment after determination, Discharge timing	WYOSAFE Allegation Record, Child Removal Episode Record

Minor formatting adjustments may have been made to this document for 508 compliance. Content is unaffected.