



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Colorado Practice Initiative in Child Welfare?

It is a project led by the Colorado Division of Child Welfare that will involve staff and stakeholders across the state to collaboratively design, implement and evaluate a new child welfare practice model for the state.

What is a practice model?

A practice model, guided by a vision, mission, and beliefs, is a set of written guidelines that include core practice principles, values, standards of practice, and intervention strategies, methods, and tools at the state and county level that guide what child welfare and its partners do to achieve safety, permanency, and well being for children of Colorado with clear measurable outcomes.

Why do we need a practice model?

Practice models provide a best practices framework for child welfare systems to improve in the areas of shared ownership, clarity of expectations, consistency in decision-making, accountability and use of data, practice, training, resource allocation and support of staff and relationships with stakeholders. Colorado has historically not had a statewide practice model for its child welfare system.

Who is involved in efforts to build the practice model?

The Practice Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Colorado Department of Human Services and county departments of human services. The initiative is receiving technical assistance and support from the Mountains and Plains Child Welfare Implementation Center (MPCWIC), one of five regional implementation Centers in the country, and serving Federal Regions VI and VIII. The goals and objectives of the initiative are being accomplished by working groups of state and county staff, consumers, community and tribal stakeholders. Areas of focus include project operation and implementation, communication, practice model design, research and evaluation, training and education, policy and data. The framework for the practice model will be presented for feedback to child welfare staff at all levels, as well as clients, stakeholders, providers and other child and family serving systems across the state.

How long will the Initiative take?

The first phase of the Initiative will take place between September 2009 and May 2010, and will focus on providing an overview and introduction to the project, forming working groups and developing infrastructure for the project. The second phase will take place between June and September 2010, and will involve the design of the practice model framework and garnering feedback from stakeholders across the state. The third phase will begin in October 2010 and will involve phased-in implementation of the practice model at the county level. Counties' implementation will take place in stages, and counties will be selected based on criteria that consider their interest, readiness, and capacity. The fourth and fifth phases involve ongoing evaluation of the practice model. In Phase 4, each county will install a continuous quality improvement (CQI) system. In Phase 5, continuous quality improvement teams will be trained and begin to identify, analyze and solve performance-related problems in their work teams.

How is the Initiative funded?

Colorado submitted an application and was selected as an implementation site for MPCWIC, which is funded through a cooperative agreement awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau to the University of Texas at Arlington and project partners Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver and the Native American Training Institute. Colorado is one of four recipients in the MPCWIC region and will receive in-depth, three-year consultation and support for its practice model initiative to improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

How can I provide feedback on the practice model?

Any interested individual is welcome to provide feedback on the practice model later this summer (August and early September) as well as throughout the implementation and evaluation phases. Tools for providing feedback will be introduced and made widely available in the coming weeks.

How will this new practice model affect me?

The new child welfare practice framework is anticipated to affect every child welfare staff and stakeholder in Colorado by engaging him or her in a process to define and establish consistency and quality in child welfare practice across the state.

How can I learn more?

You are welcome to learn more about the practice model by visiting the web page at www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare/CPI.htm.