



# NEW MEXICO FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Child and Family Services Reviews Round Two Report



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## Introduction and Acknowledgements

The New Mexico Family Advocacy Program (NMFAP) is administered by the State's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The objective of the NMFAP is to improve parent engagement with the child welfare system and outcomes related to child permanency and child well-being through implementation of an interdisciplinary model of legal representation. Parents are assigned to the NMFAP and only one parent/respondent is assigned in each selected case to prevent any conflict of interest with the interdisciplinary teams. The program is funded through a federal grant (Grant #90C01136 Program Service Office: ACF/ACYF/CB-Central Program Office Program: Children's Bureau Grant Program: CO-Adoption Opportunities) awarded by the Children's Bureau. This report summarizes the findings of the Round Two review of the program. The review was conducted for the purposes of program evaluation and to identify the strengths and challenges of the model as the state transitions from the grant program. The review team acknowledges the support of the NMFAP administrators, Corrie Griffith, Twila Hoon, and Jennifer Vieira.

This review was conducted with the collaboration and support of the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD). In facilitation of the review, the AOC and the CYFD entered into an agreement permitting the review team access to the case files maintained in the state's case management system FACTS, access to the state's designated Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) Online Monitoring System (OMS) portal as well as child welfare outcome data sharing and CYFD participation in case review interviews and stakeholder surveys. The review team was Nora Romo, completing the case review, Karla Young, completing the stakeholder surveys and the longitudinal study, and Judy Mayfield conducting second level quality assurance and providing consultation. The review team acknowledges the support and assistance of the CYFD Liaison to the NMFAP, Deputy Director Natividad Posada, CYFD Director of the Office of Performance and Accountability Sarah Meadows, and CYFD Quality Assurance Manager Edie Lewis.

## Review Methodology Summary

The Round Two NMFAP Child and Family Services Reviews Plan (February 2, 2023) is available upon request. In summary, the Round 2 review includes Case Reviews, Parent Interviews, Stakeholder Surveys and Interviews, and Longitudinal Case Reviews of the cases reviewed as part of the Round 1 Review.

### Case Review

The Child and Family Services Reviews were developed to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement within the child welfare agency and programs. The purpose of the CFSR is to assess conformity with federal child welfare requirements, determine what is actually happening to children and families engaged in child welfare services, and enhance capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being.

A simple random sample of 15 cases was selected from all families served by the New Mexico Family Advocacy Program across all site counties (Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, Cibola, San Juan, and McKinley) during the sampling period: January 2021 to date of review. This sampling process ensured that all cases served by the NMFAP had an equal chance of being selected for review. In order to ensure all sites and cases assigned a parent mentor were included in the case review, a minimum number of cases in each of these domains was established, and a modified sampling process was employed as needed to ensure

representation. In selected cases with more than one child in custody, the NMFAP manager randomly identified the target child.

The minimum requirements for site representation and parent mentor assignment were not met for the Round 2 Review. All site counties were represented except Cibola County. Cibola County had low assignment to the NMFAP during the sampling period due to a low number of legal filings by CYFD and case eliminations due to not being able to reach parent participants. Cibola County was represented in the Round 1 review and in the longitudinal study. Two of the 15 cases reviewed were assigned a parent mentor. Based upon the review plan, a minimum of 20% (3) cases assigned a parent mentor were targeted for review. The final review did not meet this threshold due to case eliminations. Case eliminations overwhelmingly were the result of an inability to locate and contact parents for participation in the review.

The review was conducted utilizing the CFSR Round 3 OnSite Review Instrument (OSRI). Information for the review was gathered through a review of the CYFD record in FACTS (the agency’s automated system), court documents, and case participant interviews. The period under review was 12 months. A minimum of five cases were required to be submitted for second level quality assurance review.

Specific permanency and well-being items expected to be positively impacted by the NMFAP interdisciplinary model were targeted for this review.

Table 1: NMFAP Targeted Performance Items

<b>NMFAP Targeted Performance Items</b>	
<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</b>	
Item 4	Stability of Foster Care Placement
Item 5	Permanency Goal for Child
Item 6	Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
<b>Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.</b>	
Item 7	Placement with Siblings
Item 8	Visitation with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care
Item 10	Relative Placement
<b>Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.</b>	
Item 12B	Needs Assessment and Services to Parents
Item 13	Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning
Item 15	Caseworker Visits with Parents

### Supplemental Participant Parent Interview

Parents assigned to the NMFAP were interviewed to inform the case review. In addition, the reviewer asked the parents supplemental interview questions to solicit their feedback about their experience with the New Mexico Family Advocacy Program, the strengths and challenges with the program, and recommendations for program improvement. The parent assessment was entered into SurveyMonkey by the reviewer.

## Stakeholder Survey and Interviews

Stakeholder surveys were sent via email to key stakeholder groups. The surveys were collected in SurveyMonkey. Respondents were able to opt in for individual interview and those participants were contacted for a follow-up interview by phone or video conference. The individual interviews were de-identified and documented in SurveyMonkey. The stakeholder groups that received the survey were NMFAP Respondent Attorneys, NMFAP Social Workers and Parent Advocates, NMFAP Administrators, Guardian ad Litem and Youth Attorneys in the NMFAP site counties, Judges and Hearing Officers in the site counties, and CYFD Permanency Workers, Supervisors, and Children’s Court Attorneys in the site counties.

## Longitudinal Case Review Study

A limited case review of the 30 children reviewed in Round 1 was completed as part of this review. The purpose of this review was to assess specific outcomes related to repeat maltreatment, re-entry into foster care, and ongoing engagement in services. This review is based upon a record review of FACTS. Parents who were assigned to NMFAP were contacted for interview and the feedback of those who could be reached and consented to participate were de-identified and documented in SurveyMonkey.

Table 2: Summary of Round 1 and Round 2 Review Plans

<b>Round</b>	<b>Case Review</b>	<b>Supplemental Participant Parent Interview</b>	<b>Stakeholder Feedback</b>	<b>Longitudinal Case Review</b>
Round 1	30 Cases Sampled from 5 Counties	30 Parent Interviews	Stakeholder Group Interviews (6 Groups)	Not Applicable
Round 2	15 Cases Sampled from 6 Counties	15 Parent Interviews	Stakeholder Surveys  Individual Stakeholder Interviews	Record reviews of the 30 cases reviewed in Round 1  Parent interviews with parents who opted in

## Results

### Case Review

The Child and Family Services Reviews helps states identify the strengths and areas needing improvement within the child welfare agency and programs. Following are the results of the Round 2 Review and comparison data from the Round 1 Review and CYFD.

Table 3: Demographic Information of the Target Children Reviewed

Demographic Information of Target Children Reviewed (n=15)				
Race*	Ethnicity	Gender	Age at End of PUR	Reason for Agency Involvement**
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native:</b> 13.33% (2)	<b>Hispanic:</b> 46.66% (7)	<b>Female:</b> 60% (9)	<b>Younger than 6:</b> 46.66% (7)	<b>Neglect (not including medical):</b> 80% (12)
<b>Asian:</b> 6.66% (1)	<b>Non-Hispanic:</b> 53.33% (8)	<b>Male:</b> 40% (6)	<b>6-12 years:</b> 33.33% (5)	<b>Emotional maltreatment:</b> 53.33% (8)
<b>Black or African American:</b> 13.33% (2)			<b>13 years and older:</b> 20% (3)	<b>Physical Abuse:</b> 46.66% (7)
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:</b> 6.66% (1)				<b>Mental/Physical health of parent:</b> 40% (6)
<b>White:</b> 93.33% (14)				<b>Substance abuse by parent(s):</b> 33.33% (5)
<b>Multiracial:</b> 20% (3)				<b>Medical neglect:</b> 26.66% (4)
<b>American Indian or Alaskan Native:</b> 13.33% (2)				<b>Mental/Physical health of child:</b> 20% (3)
<b>White:</b> 66.66% (10)				<b>Domestic Violence:</b> 20% (3)
				<b>Child behavior:</b> 20% (3)
				<b>Other:</b> 13.33% (2)
	<b>Substance abuse by child:</b> 6.66% (1)			
	<b>Sexual abuse:</b> 6.66% (1)			

\*The percentages of race do not equal 100% since three of the children were identified as multiracial.

\*\*More than one reason for agency involvement can be designated and thus the total does not equal

15.

Although the Child and Family Services Reviews is based upon the state agency efforts/results, the hypothesis is that outcomes related to the targeted performance areas will be improved due to enhanced advocacy and support provided by the NMFAP interdisciplinary team. The results of the NMFAP case review are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: NMFAP Rating Summary

NMFAP Rating Summary			
	N=15		
	Performance Item Ratings		
Performance Item	Strength	Area Needing Improvement	Not Applicable
<b>Item 4:</b> Stability of Foster Care Placement	40% (n=6)	60% (n=9)	n=0
<b>Item 5:</b> Permanency Goal for the Child	66.67% (n=10)	33.33% (n=5)	n=0
<b>Item 6:</b> Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, Or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	33.33% (n=5)	66.67% (n=10)	n=0
<b>Item 7:</b> Placement with Siblings	88.89% (n=8)	11.11% (n=1)	n=6
<b>Item 8:</b> Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	60% (n=9)	40% (n=6)	n=0
<b>Item 10:</b> Relative Placement	73.33% (n=11)	26.67% (n=4)	n=0
<b>Item 12B:</b> Needs and Services to Parents	14.29% (n=2)	85.71% (n=12)	n=1
<b>Item 13:</b> Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	53.33% (n=8)	46.67% (n=7)	n=0
<b>Item 15:</b> Caseworker visits with parents	42.86% (n=6)	57.14% (n=8)	n=1

The data presented in Table 5 are the ratings for the targeted items based upon the ongoing periodic reviews by the CYFD Quality Assurance Team. The data includes all foster care case reviews conducted in the NMFAP sites in 2022 and 2023. The site counties are Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, Cibola, San Juan, and McKinley Counties. A total of 40 foster care cases were reviewed.

Table 6 illustrates a side by side comparison of the NMFAP Round 1 Review, the CYFD Review Summary from Round 1, the Round 2 NMFAP Results, and the CYFD Review Summary for Round 2. The data for Round 2 includes the difference in the ratings. The results highlighted green represent ratings that were higher in the NMFAP review and results highlighted orange were lower in the NMFAP review. There was no change in the one rating without a highlight.

**Please note that this data is presented for context and informational purposes. It cannot be concluded that differences in performance ratings are the result of NMFAP involvement.** There are several limitations to consider when comparing the data. The OnSite Review Instrument evaluates the performance of the child welfare agency. The NMFAP does not have direct case responsibility for the items reviewed. Furthermore, the data related to the CYFD quality assurance reviews are a sample of all cases served in the selected counties, including children in foster care for extended periods of time, children with permanency goals of adoption, guardianship, and Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement. Since NMFAP is a relatively new program, most of the cases reviewed had goals of reunification and the target children were in care for less than two years. In addition, the data does not directly reflect systemic issues that likely impacted performance in these practice areas including the



impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on practice, worker and supervisor turnover and vacancy rates within the Children, Youth, and Families Department, and service array gaps especially evident in the state’s rural communities.

Inter-rater reliability between the two reviews is supported because the NMFAP reviewers are trained in the CFSR process, have experience conducting and overseeing reviews with the CYFD Quality Assurance Team, and the NMFAP review process utilized the same contractor, Judy Mayfield, for initial quality assurance review and consultation. Ms. Mayfield has extensive quality assurance experience with CYFD and federal reviews across the country. A total of seven cases were submitted for second level quality assurance review, exceeding the minimum requirement.

Table 5: CYFD Reviews Rating Summary

<b>CYFD Reviews Rating Summary</b>			
	<b>N=40</b>		
	<b>Performance Item Ratings</b>		
<b>Performance Item</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area Needing Improvement</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Item 4:</b> Stability of Foster Care Placement	85% (n=34)	15% (n=6)	n=0
<b>Item 5:</b> Permanency Goal for the Child	68.42% (n=26)	31.58% (n=12)	n=2
<b>Item 6:</b> Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, Or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	22.5% (n=9)	77.5% (n=31)	n=0
<b>Item 7:</b> Placement with Siblings	82.76% (n=24)	17.24% (n=5)	n=11
<b>Item 8:</b> Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	60% (n=15)	40% (n=10)	n=15
<b>Item 10:</b> Relative Placement	65% (n=26)	35% (n=14)	n=0
<b>Item 12B:</b> Needs and Services to Parents	57.14% (n=16)	42.86% (n=12)	n=12
<b>Item 13:</b> Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	73.53% (n=25)	26.47% (n=9)	n=6
<b>Item 15:</b> Caseworker (CYFD) visits with parents	50% (n=14)	50% (n=14)	n=12

Table 6: NMFAP and CYFD Reviews Rating Comparison

NMFAP and CYFD Reviews Rating Comparisons					
	Performance Item Ratings				
Performance Item	Round 1		Round 2		
	NMFAP Strength (n=30)	CYFD Strength (n=56)	NMFAP Strength (n=15)	CYFD Strength (n=40)	Difference
<b>Item 4:</b> Stability of Foster Care Placement	60%	82.14%	40% ↓	85%	-45%
<b>Item 5:</b> Permanency Goal for the Child	70%	67.31%	66.67% ↓	68.42%	-1.75%
<b>Item 6:</b> Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, Or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	60%	30.36%	33.33% ↑	22.5%	10.83%
<b>Item 7:</b> Placement with Siblings	81.25%	86.49%	88.89% ↑	82.76%	6.13%
<b>Item 8:</b> Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	63.33%	68.75%	60%	60%	0%
<b>Item 10:</b> Relative Placement	66.67%	73.21%	73.33% ↑	65%	8.33%
<b>Item 12B:</b> Needs and Services to Parents	46.67%	58.97%	14.29% ↓	57.14%	-42.85%
<b>Item 13:</b> Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	56.67%	78.43%	53.33% ↓	73.53%	-20.2%
<b>Item 15:</b> Caseworker (CYFD) visits with parents	36.67%	48.72%	42.86% ↓	50%	-7.14%

The data presented in Table 7 are the strength ratings for specific items in which the parents are rated. The table includes the strength ratings for the item overall in comparison to the performance in the item for only the NMFAP client. In Round 2, nine of the parents assigned to NMFAP were fathers and six of the parents were mothers. For informational purposes, the Round 1 sample included 24 mothers, 1 paternal grandmother, and 5 fathers assigned to the NMFAP.

The data from the Round 1 Review is included for additional context. The NMFAP model specifies that one parent/respondent is assigned to the interdisciplinary team to prevent conflict of interest with the NMFAP team. In Round 1, parents assigned to the NMFAP experienced better outcomes in the four items that assess parent engagement. The results of the Round 2 review showed that NMFAP clients had better outcomes in Item 12B (Needs and Services to Parents) and Item 15 (Caseworker Visits with Parents). There was no difference in Item 8 (Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care) and Item 13 (Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning).

Although the outcomes from Round 1 and Round 2 support the hypothesis that parents receiving advocacy and support through the NMFAP engage more effectively with the child welfare system, the results in Round 2 were not as robust. Some factors that may have impacted these outcomes were the status of the program, the staffing in the rural communities, and a difference in working with fathers. The NMFAP program is phasing out and services are being developed through a new state funded

program, The Office of Family Representation and Advocacy. Given that this change is underway, there may have been momentum lost in the NMFAP. Secondly, the NMFAP provided services in rural communities and because of staffing issues, the teams supporting parents in these communities traveled in from the metro area. This resulted in more remote meetings and may have impacted the level of advocacy. Lastly, more fathers were rated in this sample. In 9 of the 15 cases reviewed (60%), the father was assigned to NMFAP. Although the review did not identify a gender bias in how the teams engaged fathers; it would be beneficial to identify the specific challenges fathers face in the child welfare system and explore how to best work with and advocate for fathers. For context, in Round 1 fathers were assigned to NMFAP in 5 of the 30 cases reviewed (16%).

Table 7: Overall NMFAP and NMFAP Client Only Rating Comparison.

NMFAP and NMFAP Client Only Rating Comparisons					
	Performance Item Ratings				
Performance Item	Round 1		Round 2		
	NMFAP Client Only Strength	Overall NMFAP Strength	NMFAP Client Only Strength	Overall NMFAP Strength	Difference
<b>Item 8:</b> Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	75.86%	63.33%	60%	60%	0%
<b>Item 12B:</b> Needs and Services to Parents	56.66%	46.67%	21.42%	14.29%	7.13%
<b>Item 13:</b> Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	73.33%	56.67%	53.33%	53.33%	0%
<b>Item 15:</b> Caseworker (CYFD) visits with parents	50%	36.67%	57.14%	42.86%	14.28%

#### Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement

This item evaluates whether the target child is in a stable placement and if any changes in placement were in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal. In 40% of the cases reviewed, this item was rated as a strength. In five of the six cases rated as a strength, the target child only experienced one placement during the review period and the placements were stable. Cases that were rated as an area needing improvement reflected children who experienced multiple placement disruptions, shelter and other temporary placements, office stays and runaway episodes. The instability in these placements reflected a lack of support services for foster parents and placements that were not equipped to address the behavioral health needs of the children in care.

#### Item 5: Permanency Goal for the Child

This item evaluates whether the agency established appropriate permanency goals for the child in a timely manner. Of the 15 cases reviewed, 13 had a goal of Reunification, 1 had Adoption, 1 was Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA). The number of reunification cases reflects the relatively recent sampling period of cases served by NMFAP since January 2021. In 66.67% of the cases reviewed the item was rated as a strength and in these cases the goals were established timely and were appropriate given the case circumstances. Reunification goals were all established within 30 days of the child’s entry. Five of the 15 cases reviewed were rated as an area needing improvement. In these cases,

it was determined that given the case circumstances and the length of time the children were in care, reunification was no longer an appropriate goal, and the plan should have been changed. In the case with the OPPLA plan it was noted that other permanency options such as adoption or guardianship should have been explored before establishing an OPPLA goal.

#### Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

This item evaluates whether the agency made concerted efforts to achieve the permanency goal in a timely manner based upon established timeframes. The following timeframes for achievement were considered for each goal:

- Reunification: 12 months
- Guardianship: 18 months
- Adoption: 24 months

33.33% of the cases rated as a strength and reflected good efforts to achieve permanency in a timely manner. The cases that rated as areas needing improvement reflected multiple factors including court delays, gaps in service delivery that impacted reunification, and agency staff turnover.

#### Item 7: Placement with Siblings

This item evaluates whether the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings. Eight of the nine applicable cases rated as a strength. In three of the strength cases, the target child and siblings were placed together throughout the period under review. In the remaining five strength cases, there was a separation required to meet the needs of a child in care and ongoing efforts to address the separation were evident. The one case that rated an area needing improvement reflected a lack of agency efforts to reunify the sibling group after a placement disruption.

#### Item 8: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

This item evaluates whether the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings placed separately was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote the continuity of the child's relationships with these close family members. For this item to rate a strength, each applicable participant (mother, father, sibling) must be determined to have sufficient frequency and quality of visits during the period under review. In 9 of the 15 cases reviewed (60%) this item was a strength.

Since the NMFAP team is assigned to work with a respondent, further analysis of the item ratings was conducted to determine if the parent receiving NMFAP advocacy experienced better outcomes in this performance item. In the Round 2 review there was no difference in outcomes for the parent receiving NMFAP services. Several factors impacted this rating including gaps in visitation and lack of sufficient efforts to provide frequent visits. When visits did occur, they were usually of adequate quality.

#### Item 10: Relative Placement

This item evaluates whether the agency made concerted efforts to place the child with relatives when appropriate. This item was rated as strength in 11 of the 15 cases reviewed (73%). In four of the cases reviewed the current or most recent placement was with a relative. In the cases that rated as an area

needing improvement there was a lack of efforts to identify and evaluate relatives on both the maternal and paternal sides of the family.

#### Item 12B: Needs Assessment and Services to Parents

This item evaluates whether the agency made concerted efforts to assess the needs and provide services to parents that were necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family. In 2 of the 14 applicable cases (14%) this item was rated as a strength. Parents assigned to NMFAP rated higher in this area, with 21% of NMFAP parents being rated as a strength. Factors that impacted the cases rated as an area needing improvement included a lack of formal assessments, delays in service provision, and unidentified needs. This is an area that potentially could have been positively impacted by increased advocacy by NMFAP and CYFD.

#### Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

This item evaluates whether the agency made concerted efforts with parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis. Actively involved in case planning is defined as engaging the mother and father in identifying their strengths and needs, identifying services and providers, establishing goals, evaluating progress toward goals, and discussing the case plan on an ongoing basis. Of the 15 cases reviewed, 8 were rated as a strength. When the parent receiving NMFAP advocacy was evaluated there was no difference in this outcome. Factors that impacted this rating included insufficient efforts to engage parents over the review period, a lack of documentation in the case record, formulaic case plans, and insufficient efforts to incorporate parent input into the case plan. This is an area that potentially could have been positively impacted by increased advocacy by NMFAP and CYFD.

#### Item 15: Caseworker Visits with Parents

This item evaluates whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child was sufficient to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being and promote achievement of case goals. Visits are defined as face to face contact. In determining the quality of visits, factors considered include the duration and location of the visits, and the topics discussed. Six of the 14 applicable cases (42%) rated as a strength. Considering only parents who received advocacy through NMFAP, 57% of the cases were rated as a strength. In the cases rating as an area needing improvement, the frequency of visits was insufficient, and the agency did not make concerted efforts to engage the parent.

#### Supplemental Parent Interview (Round 2)

The supplemental parent interview was administered to each parent interviewed for the case review. At the onset of the interview the parent was provided with a brief overview of the purpose of the review, an overview of the NMFAP, confidentiality, and information about how their feedback will be used to inform the review. The interviewees were asked standardized questions about their lived experience as participants with NMFAP. Data collected related to the frequency of contact with their NMFAP team and the quality of the NMFAP advocacy.

The interview questions included the frequency of meetings with the NMFAP Attorney, the NMFAP Social Worker, and NMFAP Parent Mentor, the types of activities that NMFAP supported, and qualitative questions related to the program. The parent interview form is included in the review plan document and is available upon request.

Table 8: Typical Frequency of Meeting Between Parent and NMFAP

<b>Typical Frequency Between the Parent and NMFAP</b>			
	<b>NMFAP Attorney (n=15)</b>	<b>NMFAP Social Worker (n=15)</b>	<b>NMFAP Parent Mentor (n=2) *</b>
<b>None</b>	0%	0%	0%
<b>Less than Monthly</b>	60% (9)	6.67% (1)	0%
<b>Monthly</b>	6.67% (1)	26.67% (4)	100% (2)
<b>Twice per Month</b>	6.67% (1)	26.67% (4)	0%
<b>Weekly</b>	20% (3)	26.67% (4)	0%
<b>More than Weekly</b>	6.67% (1)	13.33% (2)	0%

\*Two of the 15 cases reviewed were assigned a parent mentor. Based upon the review plan, a minimum of 20% (3) cases assigned a parent mentor were targeted for review. The final review did not meet this threshold due to case eliminations. Case eliminations overwhelmingly were the result of an inability to locate and contact parents for participation in the review.

**Of the 15 parents interviewed, 12 parents or 80% reported that the frequency of their contact with the NMFAP team was sufficient.**

Table 9: Typical Types of Contact Between the Parent and NMFAP

<b>Typical Types of Contact Between the Parent and NMFAP*</b>			
	<b>NMFAP Attorney (n=15)</b>	<b>NMFAP Social Worker (n=15)</b>	<b>NMFAP Parent Mentor (n=2)</b>
<b>In Person</b>	53.33% (8)	66.67% (10)	6.67* (1)
<b>Video Conference/Zoom</b>	60% (9)	26.67% (4)	0%
<b>Phone</b>	66.67% (10)	86.67% (13)	13.33% (2)
<b>Text</b>	6.67% (1)	66.67% (10)	0%
<b>Email</b>	26.67% (4)	20% (3)	0%
<b>No Contact</b>	0%	0%	0%

\*Interview respondents were able to identify more than one type of contact and so the response rate is greater than the number of parent participants (15).

Table 10: Activities Supported by the NMFAP Team

<b>Activities Supported by the NMFAP Team*</b>	
<b>Helping me communicate with my CYFD worker.</b>	100% (15)
<b>Explaining and helping me understand court proceedings</b>	100% (15)
<b>Helping me access the services I need</b>	100% (15)
<b>Other</b>	100% (15)
<b>Attending meetings with CYFD</b>	93.33% (14)
<b>Helping me to have input into my case plan</b>	73.33% (11)
<b>Ensuring I have visitation with my child</b>	53.33% (8)
<b>Helping me access visitation with my child</b>	53.33% (8)
<b>Helping me advocate for relative placement</b>	53.33% (8)
<b>Helping me identify relatives who are potential supports</b>	33.33% (5)
<b>Transporting me to assessments and services</b>	20% (3)
<b>None</b>	0%

\*Interview respondents were able to identify more than one type of contact and so the response rate is greater than the number of parent participants (15).

Other responses included assisting parents with arranging meetings and providing emotional support.

### Parent Feedback

The parents interviewed reported satisfaction with NMFAP. Parents described what worked well with the program including support, advocacy, and education. A sample of statements from participants include:

- NMFAP kept me well informed and provided the best advice. NMFAP talked with me about next steps. The social worker was a good person to lean on.
- NMFAP was helpful with interactions with CYFD and helped to navigate the system.
- NMFAP makes home visits. The social worker visits every month and is helping me get my home ready.
- Communication was good. It was nice to have someone advocate for the family.
- NMFAP is there for me when it feels like everyone is against parents.
- NMFAP helps get resources.
- I can always reach out to NMFAP.
- NMFAP helped facilitate a parent to reconnect with her estranged mother and brother.
- The NMFAP social worker was a mediator with the first CYFD caseworker.

When asked about what could be improved with the NMFAP, parents recommended more communication. A sample of statements from participants include:

- I would like more communication and more often. More face to face contact with the social worker would have helped.
- FAP social worker should have more power over placements. CYFD thinks of NMFAP as an annoying fly.
- I hope the program keeps going to help more families.
- After incarceration, contact with both CYFD and NMFAP decreased.
- It would have been helpful if the NMFAP attorney could have gotten CYFD and the courts to be more open to working with parents rather than just seeing parents as the bad guys. The courts and CYFD trample on parents' rights.

### Stakeholder Survey and Interviews (Round 2)

During Round 1, stakeholder group interviews were conducted with key stakeholder groups. For Round 2, stakeholder feedback was solicited through a survey sent through SurveyMonkey by email. Survey respondents had the opportunity to self-select for individual interview and the interviews were conducted by phone or video conference. Interview responses were de-identified and documented in SurveyMonkey. The survey was sent to NMFAP Attorneys, Social Workers, Parent Mentors, and Administrators, CYFD Personnel, Guardians ad Litem and Youth Attorneys, and Judges and Hearing Officers. Seventy-six responses were received. The survey questions are included in Round 2 Review Plan and are available upon request.

Table 11: Stakeholder Role in the Child Welfare System

Stakeholder Role in the Child Welfare System (n=76)	
Judge or Hearing Officer	5.26% (4)
Guardian ad Litem or Youth Attorney	11.84% (9)
CYFD Permanency Worker	18.42% (14)
CYFD Supervisor	13.16% (10)
CYFD Manager or Director	7.89% (6)
CYFD Children's Court Attorney or CYFD Managing Attorney	9.21% (7)
NMFAP Respondent Attorney	15.79% (12)
NMFAP Social Worker	7.89% (6)
NMFAP Parent Mentor	2.63% (2)
NMFAP Administrator	2.63% (2)
Other (please specify)	13.16% (10)

Other respondents were CYFD investigators, a CYFD placement worker, contract attorneys, and a fostering connections specialist.

Table 12: NMFAP Impact on Child Welfare Domains

NMFAP Impact on Child Welfare Domains						
NMFAP Improves...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Skipped Question
Parent engagement in visitation (n=70)	27.14% (19)	37.14% (26)	31.43% (22)	2.86% (2)	1.43% (1)	6
The outcome of placement of children with relatives (n=70)	17.14% (12)	31.43% (22)	38.57% (27)	11.43% (8)	1.43% (1)	6
Parent engagement in services (n=70)	30% (21)	37.14% (26)	28.57% (20)	4.29% (3)	0%	6
Parent engagement in case planning (n=70)	25.71% (18)	41.43% (29)	30% (21)	2.86% (2)	0%	6
Parent engagement in court hearings (n=70)	27.14% (19)	44.29% (31)	25.71% (18)	2.86% (2)	0%	6
Time to permanency (n=70)	20% (14)	31.43% (22)	35.71% (25)	11.43% (8)	1.43% (1)	6

Survey respondents were asked a series of question about the roles of the NMFAP team and the impact of the team on child welfare cases. Respondents were asked to identify practice improvements they have experienced or observed that they attribute to NMFAP involvement.

- 29.63% (16) respondents identified the most important role of the NMFAP social worker is to help the parent navigate the child welfare system. 77.27% (51) of the survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the NMFAP social worker has a positive impact on child welfare cases.



- 32.56% (14) respondents identified the most important role of the NMFAP parent mentor is to help the parent navigate the child welfare system. 75.75% (50) of the survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the NMFAP parent mentor has a positive impact on child welfare cases.

Table 13: NMFAP Impact on Practice

<b>NMFAP Impact on Practice (n=66) *</b>	
<b>More frequent communication with the parent or other parties</b>	66.67% (44)
<b>Improved quality of communication with the parent or other parties</b>	56.06% (37)
<b>Increased attention to frequent quality parent/child visitation</b>	45.45% (30)
<b>Improved preparedness and engagement in court hearings</b>	36.36% (24)
<b>I have not observed or experienced any impact on practice</b>	24.24% (16)
<b>Improved quality of documentation of case plans, court reports, or other documents</b>	22.73% (15)
<b>Increased attention to relative placement</b>	22.73% (15)
<b>Improved awareness of permanency timeline requirements</b>	10.61% (7)
<b>Other</b>	9.09% (6)

\*66 survey respondents answered this question. 10 respondents skipped the question. Respondents were able to select more than one response.

Other responses included better engagement with the attorney, improved communication with CYFD, and crisis intervention for parents. In addition, it was noted that there is improved case management and services for parents. One respondent noted that the NMFAP team did not engage effectively and did not support the parent in maintaining contact.

13 Stakeholders opted in for individual interview.

Table 14: Stakeholder Interviewee Role

<b>Stakeholder Interviewee Role (n=13)</b>	
<b>Judge or Hearing Officer</b>	7.69% (1)
<b>Guardian ad Litem or Youth Attorney</b>	7.69% (1)
<b>CYFD Permanency Worker</b>	7.69% (1)
<b>CYFD Supervisor</b>	0%
<b>CYFD Manager or Director</b>	15.38% (2)
<b>CYFD Children's Court Attorney or CYFD Managing Attorney</b>	23.08% (3)
<b>NMFAP Respondent Attorney</b>	15.38% (2)
<b>NMFAP Social Worker</b>	15.38% (2)
<b>NMFAP Parent Mentor</b>	0%
<b>NMFAP Administrator</b>	7.69% (1)
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	0%

At the onset of the interview the stakeholders were asked for their feedback after completing the survey. Some of the stakeholders noted that parents who were assigned to NMFAP and engaged really benefited from the program. Several participants noted that the random assignment of parents to the program had a negative impact and that some parents were assigned who were not at all engaged or available. Another stakeholder noted that the program did not seem as effective as it once was and the roles

between NMFAP and CYFD are rigid and create barriers to moving the case forward. Implementation of the program during the pandemic was identified as creating a barrier in fully implementing the model. It was also noted that the parent mentor role was limited due to staffing issues and that the rural communities did not seem to benefit from that component of the program.

Stakeholders also identified and expanded on the strengths of the program. Of note was the emphasis of the program on advocacy and support. The stakeholders noted the competency and experience of the NMFAP social workers. It was noted that there is a deeper understanding of the needs of families and the court hearings are more focused.

Stakeholders were generally positive about trainings provided by NMFAP. Specifically, the ECHO trainings were identified as relevant, accessible, and convenient. One participant described the ECHO training as amazing and hoped similar bite size remote trainings would continue to be available with the new agency OFRA. Several stakeholders mentioned appreciations that CLEs and CEUs were available for some of the ECHO trainings. It was also noted that the orientations about the program provided to the CYFD staff in the local county offices were helpful and informative. One respondent stated that ongoing orientations for CYFD offices would be beneficial since the offices experience frequent worker turnover.

Stakeholders were also asked about challenges related to the program and lessons learned as the services are implemented through OFRA, the new state-administered office that will take over multi-disciplinary parent representation. The themes identified included barriers presented by the case assignment process, challenges working with CYFD, and a lack of resources to support parents.

Stakeholders identified specific recommendations to consider for OFRA:

- Institutionalize a path for dispute resolution. Specifically, this feedback related to developing a formal process for staffing when the interdisciplinary team did not agree on an approach to working with the family or other issues within the team dynamic.
- Consider implementing different tiers of family support. Several stakeholders mentioned that because the parents served are in crisis and engage at varying levels throughout the case, it was recommended that instead of dropping non-compliant parents from the program, to implement a tier system that recognizes these different levels of engagement and represents the caseload impact of these different levels for the interdisciplinary team.
- Provide clinical supervision for social workers and parent mentors working with parents.
- Engagement early in the case and even pre-legal intervention is beneficial for parents.
- Involve OFRA in parent orientations that CYFD provides.
- Have a role for clinical social workers in OFRA.
- Have a clear referral process for OFRA.
- Continue the ECHO Trainings.

### Longitudinal Case Review

A record review of the 30 cases reviewed in Round 1 was conducted to assess specific outcomes including repeat maltreatment, re-entry into foster care, and ongoing engagement in services. In addition to the record review, parent interviews were completed with Round 1 parents, who could be located and opted in for interview. Following are the results of the longitudinal case review.

***Comparison data related to repeat maltreatment and re-entry into foster care is included for informational purposes.*** The comparison data related to repeat maltreatment and re-entry into foster care is aggregate data, of all cases served by CYFD over a one year period. This data is being compared to the 30 cases reviewed in the Round 1 Review. This comparative data is presented for informational purposes and to demonstrate the experience of the 30 children reviewed during the Round 1 review. It can not be concluded that the NMFAP positively or negatively impacted these outcomes.

#### Background

The 30 target children selected for the Round 1 review represented NMFAP cases served in Bernalillo County (22), Sandoval County (3), Valencia County (3), Cibola County (1), and San Juan County (1). The demographic information and the Round 1 Performance Item Ratings are presented below as context for the longitudinal case review. The complete Round 1 Review report is available upon request.

Table 15: Demographic Information of Target Children Reviewed (Round 1)

Demographic Information of Target Children Reviewed (n=30)				
Race*	Ethnicity	Gender	Age at End of PUR	Reason for Agency Involvement**
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native:</b> 15.66% (5)	<b>Hispanic:</b> 53.33% (16)	<b>Female:</b> 40% (12)	<b>Younger than 6:</b> 60% (18)	<b>Neglect (not including medical):</b> 93.33% (28)
<b>White:</b> 70% (21)	<b>Non-Hispanic:</b> 33.33% (10)	<b>Male:</b> 60% (18)	<b>6-12 years:</b> 26.66% (8)	<b>Emotional maltreatment:</b> 16.66% (5)
<b>Black or African American:</b> 10% (3)	<b>Unknown:</b> 13.33% (4)		<b>13 years and older:</b> 13.33% (4)	<b>Physical Abuse:</b> 33.33% (10)
<b>Unknown:</b> 3.33% (1)				<b>Mental/Physical health of parent:</b> 26.66% (8)
				<b>Substance abuse by parent(s):</b> 63.33% (19)
				<b>Medical neglect:</b> 3.33% (1)
				<b>Mental/Physical health of child:</b> 3.33% (1)
				<b>Domestic Violence:</b> 20% (6)
				<b>Child behavior:</b> 3.33% (1)
				<b>Other:</b> 3.33% (1)
				<b>Substance abuse by child:</b> 3.33% (1)
				<b>Sexual abuse:</b> 6.66% (2)

\*The percentages of race do not equal 100% since some of the children identified as multiracial.

\*\*More than one reason for agency involvement can be designated and thus the total does not equal 30.

Table 16: NMFAP Rating Summary (Round 1)

<b>NMFAP Rating Summary (Round 1)</b>			
	<b>N=30</b>		
	<b>Performance Item Ratings</b>		
<b>Performance Item</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area Needing Improvement</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Item 4:</b> Stability of Foster Care Placement	60% (n=18)	40% (n=12)	n=0
<b>Item 5:</b> Permanency Goal for the Child	70% (n=21)	30% (n=9)	n=0
<b>Item 6:</b> Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, Or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	60% (n=18)	40% (n=12)	n=0
<b>Item 7:</b> Placement with Siblings	81.25% (n=13)	18.75% (n=3)	n=14
<b>Item 8:</b> Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	63.33% (n=19)	36.67% (n=11)	n=0
<b>Item 10:</b> Relative Placement	73.33% (n=11)	26.67% (n=4)	n=0
<b>Item 12B:</b> Needs and Services to Parents	46.67% (n=14)	53.33% (n=16)	n=0
<b>Item 13:</b> Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	56.67% (n=17)	43.33% (n=13)	n=0
<b>Item 15:</b> Caseworker (CYFD) visits with parents	36.67% (n=11)	63.33% (n=19)	n=0

Table 17: Legal Status of the Target Child

<b>Legal Status of the Target Child (n=30)</b>		
<b>Legal Status</b>	<b>Round 1 Review (2022)</b>	<b>Round 2 Review (2023)</b>
<b>Legal/Physical Custody CYFD</b>	76.66% (23)	43.33% (13)
<b>Trial Home Visit (CYFD Custody)</b>	0	3.33% (1)
<b>Dismissed Home</b>	23.33 % (7)	43.33 % (13)
<b>Dismissed Permanent Guardianship</b>	0	3.33% (1)
<b>Dismissed Tribal Jurisdiction</b>	0	3.33% (1)
<b>Emancipation</b>	0	3.33% (1)

NMFAP services continue with 8 of the 14 cases in which the children remain in legal custody. Five of the cases were discharged from NMFAP due to non-compliance with the program. One case was discharged due to NMFAP staffing issues.

#### Repeat Maltreatment

Repeat maltreatment or recurrence of maltreatment is defined as the subsequent occurrence of maltreatment of a child after identification to public authorities. The federal definition of recurrence of maltreatment specifies: Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated report of maltreatment during a 12-month target period, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation within 12 months of their initial report?

The national standard for this performance measure is less than 9.1% of children will experience a recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months. In 2022 the recurrence of maltreatment for all cases

served by CYFD statewide averaged 14% (on average 796 children experienced a recurrence of maltreatment in any given month during 2022). This data represents all investigations, and not only children who were subject to foster care placement. This information is provided for context only.

- Seven of the families reviewed in Round 1 received at least one subsequent maltreatment report since the first round review,
- Twelve maltreatment reports were investigated.
- Three of the maltreatment reports were substantiated for abuse or neglect.
- Two of the substantiated reports were within 12 months of a prior substantiated maltreatment report. Both investigations were concerning similar circumstances as the prior substantiated investigation.
- The percentage of recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months for the NMFAP cases reviewed in Round 1 was 16.66%. This exceeds the national standard for this performance measure (less than 9.1%).
- None of the substantiated reports were received within six months of a prior substantiated investigation. The percentage of recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months for the NMFAP cases reviewed in Round 1 was 0%. This data is provided for informational purposes, and it cannot be concluded that that NMFAP services resulted in less repeat maltreatment than the overall state performance.

#### Re-Entry into Foster Care

Re-entry to foster care generally refers to circumstances in which children who have been discharged from foster care to be reunified with their family of origin, adopted, or provided kinship guardianship are returned to foster care. The federal definition of re-entry into foster care specifies: Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month target period and are discharged within 12 months to reunification, living with a relative(s), or guardianship; what percent re-entered foster care within 12 months of discharge?

The national standard for this performance measure is less than 8.3% of children will experience a re-entry into foster care in a 12-month target period. In 2022 re-entry into foster care for all cases served by CYFD averaged 7% (on average 21 children experienced a re-entry into foster care in any given month during 2022). CYFD typically meets this national standard. This information is provided for context only.

- Of the 30 children reviewed in Round 1, 16 were dismissed from CYFD custody.
- One of those children was dismissed to the jurisdiction of the Tribe.
- Of the remaining 15 children who were dismissed, two re-entered foster care.
- One child re-entered care in less than one month of dismissal and one child re-entered two months after dismissal.
- In both instances, the re-entry was concerning similar circumstances.
- One of the re-entries was a short term emergency hold and the other was a new legal filing.
- The re-entry percentage for the NMFAP cases was 13%. This exceeds the national standard.

#### Court Involvement

Odyssey is the case management system utilized by the Judiciary to track court filings and legal proceedings. The NMFAP Administration searched the 30 NMFAP parents involved in the Round 1 Review to determine if there had been ongoing legal involvement since the review. This information is provided for informational purposes only. 36% (11) parents were associated with one or more new court

filings. The data reviewed does not reflect convictions or adjudications. Six of the parents were involved in criminal cases, one had a new Children's Court case, and three were domestic relations cases. The remaining seven legal cases were traffic cases and animal control cases, and other civil matters.

### Service Provision

Based upon the record review and parent interviews, 13 of the 30 parents remained actively engaged in services after the Round 1 Review or at the time of CYFD case closure. In four of the cases reviewed it was documented that the parent was not involved and was refusing services. The documentation in the electronic case record (FACTS) was often very limited. In the remaining 13 cases it was undetermined if the parent or family was engaged in ongoing services.

### Parent Interview

In addition to the record review, parents served by NMFAP that were reviewed as part of Round 1 were contacted for their feedback about the program a year after the review. Of the 30 parents, nine participated in the individual interview. Only one parent who was reached declined the interview, and the other parents could not be reached at their most recent known phone number. A standardized interview format was used, and the interviews were conducted by phone. The interviews were de-identified and entered in SurveyMonkey. The interview questions are included in the Round 2 review plan and are available upon request.

The parent feedback was positive about the program and found the support and advocacy helpful.

- The support I received from my worker saved my life. He helped me get services including rehab. He was always available and provided me a lot of emotional support. I was apprehensive about the program, but he believed in me.
- My social worker helped me understand what was going on in my case.
- My social worker had my back and supported me. I did not have a lot of contact with the program because I was using and avoiding everyone. But when I was ready, they were there for me, and they cared about me.
- I loved my social worker and the parent mentor. As an addict I always wanted everything right now and they helped me slow down and understand what I needed.
- I felt like I could confide in my social worker. They checked in on me and I felt like they really cared.
- I have continued to reach out to my social worker even though my case is closed.
- I wish there was a similar program available after the case is dismissed. I miss the support that NMFAP provided me.
- Initially it was a lot of hoops to jump through, but it ended up that the support helped my family and things have turned out great for me and my kids.
- I lost my son, but NMFAP was really there for me and helped me understand guardianship. I just wasn't ready to get clean and they did not judge me.
- My only critique of the program is that I think they should have worked with both parents and the stepparents so we could all be on the same page.
- Three parents expressed that housing was a significant issue and they wished NMFAP had a housing program.

## Conclusion

The goals of the New Mexico Family Advocacy Program (NMFAP) are to improve parent engagement with the child welfare system and outcomes related to child permanency and well-being. The NMFAP was a five year grant funded program that concluded on September 29, 2023. A state funded program through the Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA) will be assuming representation for parents and are in the process of developing that program.

The Round 1 NMFAP review was completed in 2022 and Round 2 was completed in 2023. Based upon these reviews, parents receiving advocacy and support through NMFAP engage more effectively in the child welfare system. This was especially evident in the parent interviews through the stakeholder surveys and interviews.

The case review outcomes for Round 2, showed continued improvement over the Round 1 review for three performance outcomes: Item 7 (Placement with Siblings), Item 10 (Relative Placement), and Item 15 (Caseworker visits with Parents).

There was a decline in performance from the Round 1 review for six performance outcomes: Item 4 (Stability of Foster Care Placements), Item 5 (Permanency Goal for Child), Item 6 (Achieving the Permanency Goal), Item 8 (Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care), Item 12B (Needs and Services to Parents), and Item 13 (Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning). This decline may be attributed to case selection and a reflection of the small sample size, or it may reflect broader systemic issues such as decreased momentum in the program since the program was nearing termination, challenges related to serving families and staffing programs in rural counties, caseworker turnover at the state child welfare agency (CYFD), and factors related to engaging fathers involved in the child welfare system.

Similarly, the longitudinal case review results related to repeat maltreatment and the parent interviews support the efficacy of an interdisciplinary model of representation. Parents articulated that the program and the advocacy they received helped them navigate the system, understand their rights, and feel supported.

As the New Mexico Family Advocacy Program ends, significant lessons have been learned. It is broadly acknowledged that families involved in the child welfare system are faced with navigating complex agencies, service arrays, and court systems all while experiencing multiple traumas and needs. The NMFAP has partnered with parents during this most difficult time and provided advocacy, support, and education. These roles are uniquely suited to an interdisciplinary team. The addition of master's level social worker and parent mentors with lived experience to the team offers parents a bridge to meaningful change that can ultimately improve outcomes for children.