



Introduction

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 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

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

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
Item 8: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	75.86%	63.33%	60%	60%	0%
Item 12B: Needs and Services to Parents	56.66%	46.67%	21.42%	14.29%	7.13%
Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	73.33%	56.67%	53.33%	53.33%	0%
Item 15: Caseworker (CYFD) visits with parents	50%	36.67%	57.14%	42.86%	14.28%

Supplemental Parent Interview

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

Stakeholder Survey

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

Longitudinal Study

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

Conclusion

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.