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Judicial, Court, and Attorney Measures of Performance (JCAMP)

Volume II: Implementation Guide

Judicial, Court, and Attorney Measures of Performance (JCAMP), Volume II: Implementation Guide

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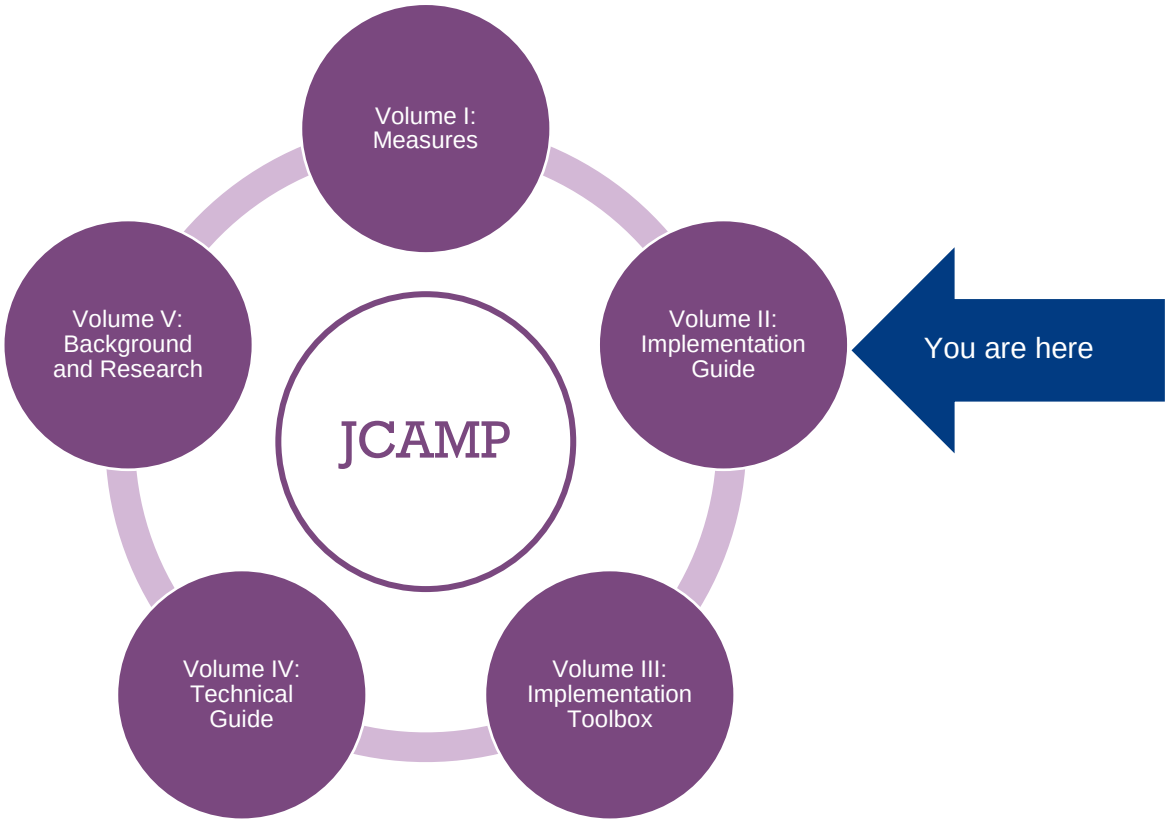

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Introduction

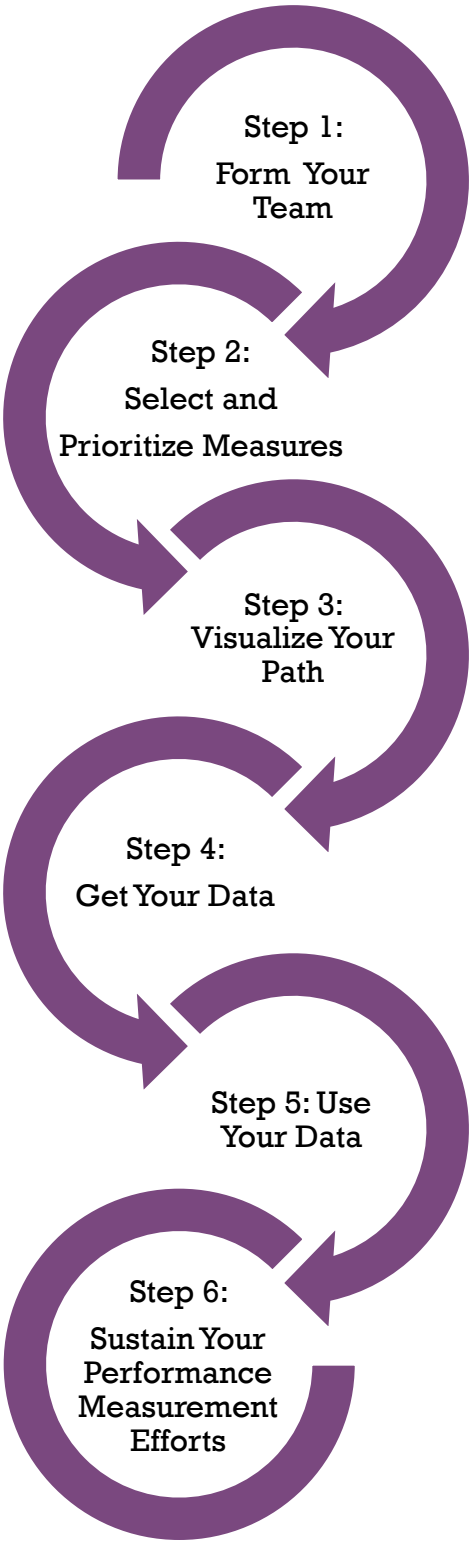
This volume offers a step-by-step process to help you implement the Judicial, Court, Attorney Measures of Performance (JCAMP) in your court system. It provides practical advice and assistance, including insights and lessons learned from JCAMP sites who field-tested the measures. The guide outlines a process that performance measurement teams, and those tasked with collecting data on the JCAMP measures, can use to plan for and implement performance measurement, as well as use results from these efforts to drive court improvement. When available, lessons learned from field testing of the measures are integrated into implementation guidance. The guide should be used in conjunction with ***JCAMP Volume III: Implementation Toolbox*** (Toolbox), which contains template tools for each step of the performance measurement process outlined in the Implementation Guide.

Whom is this Implementation Guide for?

This guide supports court improvement communities to collect, analyze, and use JCAMP data in their continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts. It is meant to offer guidance, regardless of differing measurement capacity, available resources, or jurisdictional size. It provides practical information about how to plan, conduct, report, and use performance measurement information. It is designed to be used as a reference tool. The six basic steps for a performance measurement process are listed below.

- **Step 1: Form Your Team.** Set up performance measurement teams to guide your efforts.
- **Step 2: Select and Prioritize Measures.** Use a needs assessment process for prioritizing among measures and determining data capacities for measurement.
- **Step 3: Visualize Your Path.** Develop an action plan to implement the measures, including planning for data collection, analysis, and report writing.
- **Step 4: Get Your Data.** Use data collection strategies, including tips for sampling and using different measurement approaches and tools.
- **Step 5: Use Your Data.** Use tips for analyzing and interpreting your data and using results in a CQI process.
- **Step 6: Sustain Your Performance Measurement Efforts.** Plan for sustaining performance measurement beyond a single implementation.

JCAMP Implementation Process



Form Your Team

See Volume III: Implementation Toolbox for—

- Teaming Structure Template
- Tip Sheet for Engaging Individuals With Lived Experience in Teams

Before deciding which performance measures to collect, you should put together a multidisciplinary performance measurement committee: an advisory or working team to support your data collection efforts. This team will chart the course of the performance measurement process, play a leadership role in decision-making about the measures, and be responsible for making the process purposeful and responsive to the court community—it will help ensure performance measurement is successful.

Your performance measurement efforts will benefit from a team approach that includes a diversity of experiences, skills, viewpoints, racial and ethnicity groups, and gender identities. To be successful, your team should reflect all the key stakeholders in the court system and include members from judges, attorneys, court administrators, and system partners (e.g., child welfare agency, parent and youth peer support advocates, tribal representatives). Your team should include members with lived experiences, parents, children, youth, relative caregivers, and foster parents who can provide a necessary and critical perspective. Community members who have experienced the child welfare court system first-hand also have a wealth of knowledge about what works and what doesn't.

Equity Insight: Diversity is a critical component for a well-rounded team. Diversity of people, perspectives, and experiences can lead to a better understanding of priority needs.

Your team should include both the people who will use the findings from the measures and those who will conduct data collection. Also include people you need to support performance measurement efforts so needed resources (e.g., funding, workforce, time) are available. Additionally, the individuals on your team should support data collection; represent important perspectives; contribute in important ways to court performance; and include those who understand currently available administrative data from a court case management system.

Convening your team with a diversity of roles and perspectives helps build buy-in and ensures data provided will be meaningful to your court community. Your Court Improvement Program (CIP) Committee is a great place to start this conversation about team membership.

Exhibit 1 lists recommended members of JCAMP teams.

Exhibit 1. Recommended JCAMP Team Members

Recommended JCAMP team members
Judges and judicial officers
Attorneys (parent, child, state/agency, guardians ad litem (GALs), other child advocates)
People with lived experience (parents, youth, relative caregivers, foster parents)
Child Welfare agency representatives
Tribal partners
Court Improvement Program (CIP), court administrative staff
Court information technology staff
Analysts or researchers

Questions to Ask as You Set Up Your JCAMP Team

- **Who is participating? Who is missing and still needs to be invited?**
  - Do you have representation from all key court stakeholders, individuals with lived experience, tribal partners, and other system partners?
  - Is your team diverse in terms of racial/ethnic backgrounds and gender identities?
  - With each functional part of the system (the courts, the child welfare agencies, legal representatives, etc.), who are the people with formal decision-making power and authority? Have they or their designees been invited?
  - Who could block or delay implementation of any decisions that emerge from the team? Have these people been invited?
  - Are individuals with access to the information needed for performance measurement included?

Field Test Insight: At one site, the JCAMP core team included a range of perspectives including child advocates, CASAs, and former judges. They also brought in a larger group of legal specialists, including parent attorneys and child welfare agency attorneys to review data collection forms and participate in data collection.

Lived Experience Insight: Integrate lived experience as early as possible into the process for the most meaningful results. Performance measurement works best when planned by a multidisciplinary team that can discuss needs, select and prioritize measures, and build a meaningful plan for collecting and using the data. Persons with lived experience can contribute to all parts of that conversation. See ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox*** for a tip sheet developed by youth with lived experience for ways to engage people with lived experience in your JCAMP team and implementation process.

- **How will you structure your team to be the most effective?**
    - What team structure will work best in your jurisdiction to get the work done?
        - Will you establish a core advisory committee or leadership group? (This group would provide direction, approve resources, and support the collaborative efforts of the team.)
        - Will you have a larger working committee and different subcommittees or working groups focused on specific tasks (such as a smaller data collection working group)?
        - Will your committee include multiple jurisdictions or site representation? And if yes, how will that be structured (e.g., a multijurisdictional or state level advisory group who coordinates with multiple local/regional committees or working groups)?

Field Test Insight: One JCAMP site team included a larger multidisciplinary stakeholder group tasked with reviewing and selecting JCAMP measures and a smaller group (a core data team) tasked with implementing data collection, analysis, and reporting. The data team reported back progress and results to the larger group for discussion. Any challenges faced in data collection were also brought back to the larger group for solutions.

- **How will the work of the team get done?**
    - How frequently should the team meet?
    - Where should the team meet?
    - Who will chair the team, and what are their responsibilities?
    - Will leadership of the team be shared?
    - How will information be shared within the team and between it and the court community?

Teams should meet at least monthly to evaluate implementation progress. Meetings can vary in length (depending on the stage of implementation). Be sure to give time and space to fully discuss issues and allow for everyone's input. Always identify the goal for each item on your agenda. Focus less on reporting and more on continually taking action.

Field Test Insight: At one site, the larger JCAMP team had an initial orientation meeting, followed by weekly meetings for an hour to select and prioritize measures, consider data capacity, and decide on data collection methods. During the data collection phase, the larger team took a break and only a smaller core data team continued to meet weekly. This team kept the larger one informed of progress with email updates. At the end of data collection (which had not yet been reached), the larger team was planning to reconvene for another series of weekly meetings to discuss data findings, how those findings inform improvement efforts, and action planning around next steps.

Lived Experience Insight: Ensure meeting space is accessible. Expert panel members with lived experience advise JCAMP teams to think about how to make their meeting space (whether in-person or virtual) accessible and welcoming for all members, including children and youth. See ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox*** for a tip sheet on engaging people with lived experience in your JCAMP efforts.

Step One Lessons Learned From Field Test Sites

Relationships Are Critical

"Relationships among core team members were important, but those with other court professionals in a state or tribe could also support implementation. Positive connections with court administrators helped facilitate access to court hearings and recordings."

Different Team Structures Are Needed for Different Tasks

"It was helpful to have broad input; it was critical to keep the core decision-making team as small as possible to move the work forward."

Experience Matters

Having the right people at the table allows a team to hit the ground running, build vision for common goals, and avoid steep learning curves which can significantly delay the change process.

"[I would advise others to] have knowledgeable people on their team making these decisions because if they don't, it's not going to help… pick wisely, who they're going to have working on these selections, and make sure they understand what the end result is that they're working toward with this information. Having people with lived experience review tools resulted in additional measures being added that spoke directly to their experiences."

"It was nice to have a judge on there to get their feedback and see how they orchestrate their courtroom… It was good to have the parent attorneys see what information that they're missing that we could help include in the court surveys we do, and then making sure everyone is on the same page. It was also helpful to the team to ask an IT [information technology] professional who was familiar with the accessibility and types of statewide data that were available to join the group."

Select and Prioritize Measures

See Volume III: Implementation Toolbox for—

- Needs Assessment
- Excel File to Sort and Prioritize Measures

After you have established your JCAMP team, you need to make some important decisions about the scope of your performance measurement effort. Do you want some information about everything? Or do you want more detailed information about the few, most important areas?

To help you prioritize among the JCAMP measures, we have developed a **Needs Assessment** (see volume III) to help your multidisciplinary team walk through a process of prioritizing the measures. The **Needs Assessment** includes four main activities (exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2. Needs Assessment Activities

Activity	Description
Identify priority topics of interest for your site, state, or organization.	Address the following questions: What measures are needed to support current court and system improvement efforts? Consider current goals or measurement priorities. Are there specific programs or practices and evaluation projects that need data to support? Consider your CIP strategic plan, Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), and other agency partner priorities. Do those indicate any measurement priorities for your team? What do you most need to know to improve practice?
Use information about current goals or projects to help you select and prioritize measures.	Discuss and assign priority scores to the measures. Considering your current goals, have your team determine whether the measure is “not a priority” or a “low,” “medium,” or “high” priority. Select measures with the highest priority scores.
Further prioritize among the measures by determining your data capacity for each one.	Consider the data sources and data collection strategies for each measure. What resources do you or your partners currently have to implement those data collection methods? Prioritize measures where data capacity is high.
Select data collection methods.	Make decisions about which measures you want to assess and the data collection strategy that will be needed.

Your JCAMP team can complete the steps above as a group (e.g., reviewing and discussing each measure and its ranking) until it can agree on a ranking. Alternatively, team members can perform this task individually and then come together for a discussion. Having a discussion will allow stakeholders who have ranked measures differently to talk about why. The goal is to come to a consensus on measurement priorities, data capacities, and preferred data collection methods. The ***Volume IV: Technical Guide*** also offers considerations for sampling and other technical procedures that can help guide further discussion about available data collection resource. Exhibit 3 lists additional strategies to help if you are having trouble prioritizing measures.

Field Test Insights: Sites tailored the measures to fit their interests and needs. For example, one site adapted JCAMP measure 5.4 to add "verbally on the record" (5.4 How often and at what points in the case do courts make a finding of reasonable or active efforts to reunify or finalize permanency finding *verbally on the record*?)

Another site selected a set of measures through discussion as a large group and then worked individually to assign a priority score to each measure. Average priority scores for each measure were entered into the JCAMP excel spreadsheet. To further narrow down the measures, the site selected only those measures having an average priority score of 2 or more. They were collected via court observation and selected as their final project measures.

Exhibit 3. Strategies to Help Prioritize Measures

Strategy	Description
Start small.	You can start small. Don't feel you need to include all the measures or measure everything all at once. If you already have access to data for some of the measures, start with those and build from there. Or consider thinking about what four things would your team most want to know.
Consider priorities of national organizations.	Consider what the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), American Bar Association (ABA), or National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC)) may want to prioritize. Their priorities would be based on the standards and best practice recommendations put forth in the field of child welfare court practices. See ***Volume V: Background and Research*** for a summary of JCAMP measures supported by best practice recommendations
Consider local court context and needs.	Consider any local court rules, bench cards, or other local best practice standards and recommendations you can use to help select priority measures.

Strategy	Description
Consider Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) Findings and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) needs.	Consider whether there are JCAMP measures that would help provide additional and meaningful data from the court perspective? If yes, consider whether those measures should be prioritized. See **Step 5: Using Your Data** in this volume for more on JCAMP measures and the CFSRs.
Establish a priority "cut-off" score.	After reviewing the measures and assigning a priority score, establish a "cut-off" or threshold score to further narrow the measures. For example, prioritize collecting data on only those measures with a medium to high priority score.
Consider data capacity.	Reconsider potential JCAMP measures after completing a data capacity assessment (see ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox***). Some measures may be relatively easily to add to your prioritization list once you establish the type of data capacity you have and select a data collection method. If, for example, it is easy to add a few additional measures to a court observation instrument, then you may consider increasing your measures at that point.

Building Upon JCAMP Measures to Align With Your Measurement Priorities

JCAMP provides measures for the assessment of judicial, court, and attorney practices and family experience. Focusing on the measurement categories of engagement, due process, high quality legal representation, safety, and permanency, JCAMP measures are meant to be foundational—starting points for measurement. They were designed to provide a manageable set of measures that could be prioritized and adapted depending on specific site measurement goals and differing data capacities. You don't have to do everything at once. You can start small now, at your highest priority measures, and work to build your data collection capacity for more of the measures.

The JCAMP measures are also not exhaustive of all possible measures your team may want to include if your measurement goals are more robust or comprehensive (e.g., a more in-depth assessment of the quality of legal representation). Sites are encouraged to consider building upon the JCAMP measures to add measures and data indicators if more comprehensive measurement in a specific area is the goal (see ***Volume IV: Technical Guide*** for lists of possible data indicators for measures from which you can draw).

Lived Experience Insight: Ask persons with lived experience for their feedback on what is important to be measured. They are ideally suited to help identify practices that were meaningful and important to them when they were part of the system. They can provide a unique perspective on your needs. Questions you might ask include which of these measures do you think are most important? What is missing from this list that is important to understanding how parents and/or children and youth perceive and experience the system?

Step Two Lessons Learned From Field Test Sites

Be realistic about the number of measures selected.

Think broadly about whose roles can be included (lawyers could be asked about their involvement in case planning, for instance). Systems change measures that focus solely on court players and operations will miss the most important voices in the process. It is imperative to include measures that bring the family voice to court improvement efforts.

"We tried to hit on the things that we thought would most reflect what we were trying to look at, which is our families—giving the voice we want them to have in our system."

"We wanted to use all of them. We would have taken every single one if we had the time and the manpower. The usefulness of the measures could make narrowing the number of measures the site would implement challenging."

Sites found the measures to be highly relevant and important.

"Involving people besides just the caseworker in coming up with the case plan, like the role of the parent and the parent attorney. That stuck out to me because it's something that should be very simple. You can easily ask about it [involving people]*, I could easily ask about it if the attorneys don't ask about it."*

Build enthusiasm to the benefits data collection and reporting can bring.

Juvenile courts are historically under resourced and good data can be used to advocate for needed funding to implement best practice standards that make a positive difference in outcomes for children and families. These methods can also be used across systems.

"Performance measures, combined with cost analysis, could be used to argue for resources that would concurrently improve practices and conserve state resources. These clear goals may have driven the enthusiasm for the field test and motivated the team to complete activities during the abbreviated timeline of the project."

"This experience created 'a potential roadmap for other areas in the tribal government on how to implement performance measures.'"

Visualize Your Path

See Volume III: Implementation Toolbox for—

- Data Collection Guiding Questions
- Data Collection Plan Summary Table

Once JCAMP measures are selected, you will plan how to collect needed data. Having an action plan to implement your performance measurement effort is critical. Your action plan serves as the blueprint to guide your data collection work. It should be organized to capture all the key information needed and easy to use as a reference. Engaging all team members through a clear, shared plan for data collection on performance measures creates understanding of what you are trying to accomplish, making it easier to implement and monitor the results of your efforts.

A data collection action plan is a structured way of documenting exactly how project data will be collected. It should describe the steps and the sequence to follow to gather data. A solid action plan will help you collect data with accuracy, precision, and transparency. With a data collection action plan, all stakeholders will be informed about the data collection approach. There will be an opportunity to question strategies before the actual data collection begins.

Make sure you include collecting data by race in your plan. It will be a critical determinant in evaluating any potential disproportionality or disparate treatment. See the Universal Data Elements Section of ***Volume IV: Technical Guide***.

A data collection action plan involves (1) specifying the method to be used to collect the data for each performance measure and (2) determining what data will be gathered, how it will be gathered, who will gather it, and when it will be gathered. A detailed action plan can increase productivity in performance measurement and provides direction and focus.

To help you design a JCAMP data collection action plan, we have developed two tools (see ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox***) that are meant to be used in a two-step process. At the end of this process, you will have the information you need for your data collection action plan. The tools are templates and meant to be adapted as needed (e.g., to reflect local measurement priorities and data capacities).

1. **Data Collection Guiding Questions**

   As a first step in developing your data collection implementation action plan, consider each of the data collection methods you identified for the measures in the previous step and have your team answer a series of questions about implementing that data collection method. The guiding questions for court observation, case file review, surveys/focus groups, and administrative data are provided for you in the **Data Collection Guiding Questions Tool** in ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox***. Using

that tool, answer the questions for each different data collection strategy you have selected. The answers may be different depending on the data collection method.

For each data collection method consider the following:

- **What** is being measured (e.g., what specific types of child abuse and neglect hearings will you be observing)?
- **How** will data be captured (e.g., how will you access hearings for coding and ensure they are coded reliably)?
- **Who** is responsible for capturing the data and analyzing and reporting findings (e.g., who will be doing each step of the data collection, analysis and reporting process)?
- **When** and how frequently will the data collection take place (e.g., what is the timeframe for data collection including start and end dates?)

To answer the **"what"** questions (e.g., what types of hearings), you may need to develop a sampling plan to obtain a subset from a population for measurement. This involves defining the population or group about which you want to draw conclusions and a sample, the group from which you will collect data. For things to think about when deciding on a sample, see **Step Four: Collect Your Data**.

To answer **"how"** questions (e.g., how data will be recorded or entered), you should consider the tasks needed to ensure consistent or reliable coding and data entry. This includes using codebooks for instruments and providing training for coders. For determining interrater reliability of measurement efforts, see **Step Four: Collect Your Data**. "**How**" discussions should also consider the barriers you might encounter in collecting data and strategies for overcoming those barriers. To answer **"who"** and **"when"** questions, think about the resources available for your performance measurement effort—funding, workforce, and time.

2. **Data Collection Plan Summary Table**. Use the answers to the questions above to complete a data collection action plan table such as the one provided in ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox***. This table creates your action plan of what, how, who, and when you will collect your data. The table provided in the Toolbox is a template and is meant as an example for what an action plan might look like.

Field Test Insight: Action planning was conducted over several weeks of meetings at one field test site. The site moved through one data collection method at a time, going from planning to data collection training for the method and then moved to the next one. That worked better for the site because data collection in one area could begin as decisions about other data collection methods were still being decided. The JCAMP site team also spent a lot of time refining and tailoring the observation forms, case file review forms, codebooks, and surveys to fit its needs and local terminology. Through these discussions, places where data could be collected from multiple sources were identified to further strengthen understanding. For example, data for JCAMP *5.6 How many termination of parental rights decisions are appealed?* will be collected through case file review and administrative data allowing for triangulation of findings.

Step Three Lessons Learned From Field Test Sites

Create a Sense of Urgency

> *"While several team members expressed concern about the rapid progress of the planning and data collection process, one respondent noted, 'At first, I thought this is going to be impossible to get done…but I think some of it did help kind of light that fire.'"*

Shared Goals Build Excitement and Commitment for Change

> *"Clear goals appeared to have driven their enthusiasm for the field test and encouraged the team to complete activities during the abbreviated timeline of the project."*

Connecting to Other Priority Projects Builds Stronger Commitment

> *"JCAMP measures aligned with efforts to focus on and lift family voices. Implementing the measures built on prior work on quality legal representation. The work aligned with prior efforts, including areas incorporated into CIP's 5-year strategic plan."*

Get Your Data

See Volume III: Implementation Toolbox for—

- Example Youth, Parent, Caregiver and Stakeholder Surveys
- Question Banks for Youth and Parent Surveys and Focus Groups
- Example Court Observation Form and Codebook
- Example Case File Review Form and Codebook

Getting your performance measurement data requires making decisions about sampling, developing, or adapting a tool or tools for needed data collection, and then collecting the data needed to inform performance measurement efforts. *How many cases do we need to review or observe?* is often one of the first questions sites ask when working on a data collection plan. The answer is always a balance between the goals of the performance measurement effort and the resources the site must use to collect data.

Sampling Guidance

In a perfect world you would want all the data to inform your decisions. You would talk to all stakeholders, review all the files, and talk with all the parents (the entire population of interest). In the real world, this is not practical or feasible. Instead, we sample. A sample is a part or subset of the population and assumes the sample is representative (accurately reflects) of the entire population of interest.

Choosing an Appropriate Sample

The goal of sampling is to identify a representative sample, so it is similar to the population of interest and findings are relevant to this population and not just the small subset. Selecting a representative sample includes two considerations.

- The sampling method/process (How to identify your sample?)
- The number of cases, hearings, or persons sampled

Field Test Insight: One site identified several measures that were best suited to capture data, in administrative data or through structured case file review. However, it did not have the capacity to do either. Alternative methods (court observation and surveys) were identified to collect the data, with the understanding that the findings wouldn't be as precise but could still contribute to an understanding of current practices.

Exhibit 4 identifies some strategies and definitions to help inform sample decision-making. While some methods are ideal and more likely to result in a representative sample, not all are feasible. Sampling decisions should be based on what is feasible.

Exhibit 4. Sampling Definitions and Examples

Sample definitions	When should it be used	Example of how to use this strategy
Random sample Everyone in the population has an equal opportunity to be selected as part of the sample.	Whenever feasible, this is the ideal as random samples are most likely to be representative of the population.	List out all cases of the population (all the cases of interest) in order, in a numbered list 1 to X. Use random number generator-select cases. Excel has this feature, or applications are available.
Systematic sample Similar to random sampling, this method requires selecting cases at regular intervals.	When you want ease of selection of cases for inclusion in the study, it may be easier than a simple random sample but still results in random sampling.	List out all the cases in the population (all the cases of interest) in order, in a numbered list 1 to X. Select every *n* case (e.g., every 10th case). The sample needs to include 50 cases. You have 450 cases, divide 450 by 50 (9), and take every 9th case on the list.
Stratified sample This method divides the population into smaller groups based on shared characteristics (role, age, race/ethnicity) and then includes a systemic or simple random sample.	When you want to ensure specific subpopulations are represented in the sample, for example, if you want to make sure you get enough cases in your sample of specific racial/ethnic groups for comparison.	Split your cases into lists by the category of interest (e.g., age, race). Then use a systematic or random sampling approach *within* each group.
Convenience sample A sample includes cases or persons most easily accessible.	When it is not feasible to do random or systematic sample, for example, collecting data from members of a list serve to which you already have access.	Outreach to the persons on your contact list (or on a list of known email address) for participation in the study.
Purposive sample A sample is selected based on its usefulness to the data collection.	When specific groups are better suited for your performance measurement needs, for example, selecting jurisdictions that have implemented a practice model you want more information about.	Identify the criteria for the sample of interest. Select cases or sites that match the criteria. For example, select only cases with American Indian children to further explore outcomes for these youth.

Sample definitions	When should it be used	Example of how to use this strategy
Snowball sampling A snowball sampling is a procedure identifying key persons to whom the survey is disseminated and then shared with others.	When you do not have contact information for the persons you want to survey or want to reach a broader audience.	Send the request for survey participation to the persons on the list and ask them to share with others. This could be within their office (e.g., send to leadership at office of the public defender office and ask to send to all attorneys) or throughout their court (e.g., send to judges and ask them to share with multidisciplinary team) or could be shared with clients (e.g., send link to parent allies and ask to share with parents with whom they work).
Entry cohort An entry cohort is all the cases coming into the system in a specific timeframe, for example, all cases that entered into the foster care system in 2021.	When you are interested in the experience of a cohort of cases; also, useful when examining a specific timeframe for practice.	Set the timeframe of interest. This could be related to implementation of a new program, policy, or law into practice (e.g., pre sample, post sample). Select the cases entering care in the timeframe.
Exit cohort This is all the cases exiting the system in a specific timeframe, for example, all the cases that exited foster care in 2020.	When you need closed cases to calculate a measure; for example, if you are looking at the type of permanency achieved at case closure, the case needs to be closed to be identified.	Set the timeframe of interest. If looking at current practice, recent is better (cases closed in the last year). Select the cases that exited from care in the timeframe.
Point in time sample This includes all the cases in the system at a specific point in time, for example, all the cases still open on the first day of fiscal year 2019.	When either you want to describe something about the current cases, or you want to say what is likely to happen in the future with current cases.	Set the timeframe of interest. For example, select cases from those that are currently in care.

After determining the best method for sampling, it will be important to identify the sample size needed. The sample size is important because an appropriate sample size increases the precision of estimates and the ability of the performance measurement efforts to draw conclusions from the data. Sample size should be a balance between resources available and the goals of the performance measurement efforts. The goals are to include a representative sample. However, the ideal numbers may be too large to achieve for the resource needs. That is okay. Start with what you can do.

Calculating Sample Size

The most robust way to calculate a needed sample size is to use a sample size calculator. This is a mathematical calculation that considers several factors and provides an estimate of how many cases should be in the sample. Keep in mind, you are not conducting research. You are conducting performance measurement. Your criteria may not be as rigorous as those of research needs. It is okay to use some sampling guidelines (see sections below).

In research, sample size calculation is based on three things.

- **The population of interest** is the total number of cases (in a jurisdiction, in the state), the total number of hearings, or the total number of persons (e.g., all stakeholders).
- **Confidence level** is a range of values (also, an estimate) that describes the uncertainty surrounding the findings from data collection. It also indicates how confident you are that a value (findings from data collection) would fall within that range of values. In research this is set high (95 to 99 percent).
- **Margin of error** is a range of values that falls above and below the actual findings from data collection (a measurement of error). This tells you how much your results might reflect the overall population or how effective your data collection is. In research this is set low (5 percent). Lower margin of error describes higher confidence in the accuracy of the findings.

Sample Size Example

If you know your population of interest, you can use a sample size calculator (e.g., https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/). If you have a population of 2000 cases in foster care, you set a confidence level of 95 percent with a margin of error at 5 percent. Sample calculators indicate you need 323 cases to have a sufficient sample. If you are randomly selecting these cases and collecting data on 323 cases, you can be confident this is a representative sample.

What if you don't have the resources to collect 323 cases? What does that mean for the quality of your data? Exhibit 5 illustrates how sampling might look different. Each one includes a random selection of cases.

Exhibit 5. Example Sample Size Estimates

Resources to collect all data	Adjustments to sample size needed
You randomly sample 323 cases (population 2000, confidence level is 95 percent, and margin of error is 5 percent).	You have resources to sample 100 cases. If you adjust your margin of error to 10 percent), you only need 92 cases. You randomly sample 100 cases.
You are confident this sample should be representative of the population.	You are still fairly confident this sample will be representative of your population.
Your data indicates parents attended 67 percent of their hearings. Based on how you have setup your sampling, you are 95 percent confident the true percentage of attendance at hearings is between 62 and 72 percent (margin of error).	Your data indicates parents attended 67 percent of their hearings. Based on your sampling strategy, you are 95 percent confident the true percentage of parent attendance would be between 57 and 77 percent (margin of error).

The adjustment to meet your resource availability means there is a wider margin of error; now there is a range of 20 percent (10 percent on either side of the true value). What you have given up with the smaller sample size is a tradeoff with precision in your estimate of practice. Precision is critical when you are conducting research and trying to demonstrate a statistically significant difference in two groups. It is less critical in performance measurement when you are looking to explore trends in practice over time. Balance the need for precision with resources available.

If you know your resource limits (e.g., how many cases you can review, hearings you can observe), you can enter this into a sample calculator to determine what your margin of error would be. For example, see https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/margin-of-error-calculator/

The **Needs Assessment Tool** included in the Toolbox for step two helps sites identify their data capacity, which should create a better understanding of the resources it will take to collect the data needed and help determine whether identified sample sizes are feasible. If they are not feasible, decide what is feasible for data collection. The data collection methods section also includes some guidance for sample sizes based on the method of interest.

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*A good guideline for sampling is at least **30 observations** or reviews. This should be per site (or judge) if you expect site variations in practice (and we do). For court observation, set a minimum of **10 observations** per hearing type per judge or site to best understand current practice.*

Additional Considerations for Sampling

- Use sampling when you cannot gather data from an entire population. If you can access the population (e.g., resources to survey all the judges in your state), then sampling is not necessary.
- Random sampling should be used if it aligns with your priorities for performance measurement.

If you are working at the jurisdiction level (or multijurisdiction/multisite level), consider whether you want a representative sample that is of your entire jurisdiction (all sites) or whether you want to purposefully sample specific jurisdictions. Purposeful considerations might include—

  - Geographic diversity
  - Jurisdiction size (urban, suburban, rural, volume of cases [high, low])
  - Jurisdictions implementing different models of practice of interest
  - Population diversity (characteristics of families in foster care)
  - Jurisdiction performance on key metrics (e.g., time to permanency)

Equity Insight: Some populations may be harder to reach than others. It is important to ensure your sample is representative of all the families involved in the child welfare system.

- Snowball sampling is a useful tool for survey dissemination if you do not have all the information needed to reach all the participants of interest.

Collecting Data

After identifying the appropriate sample, it is time to collect the data. There are two types of data collection—data collection with people (e.g., surveys, focus groups) and data collection without people (e.g., court observation, case file review). Considerations for collecting the data differ depending on whether it includes people or not. If it includes people, extra precautions need to be put into place to ensure confidentiality.

JCAMP includes measures that may require multiple methods of data collection. The **Needs Assessment Tool** in the Toolbox identifies the best method for data collection depending on the measures selected. Decisions on data collection methods should include a consideration of what data capacity you have in relation to the measures of interest. If necessary, all measures could be collected using a survey or focus group procedure, although this is not ideal. Ideally, data collection tools would include all the methods necessary to best collect the needed data.

Example tools for each data collection method are available in ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox***. These example tools are described in their requisite section below. The tools should be modified to meet the specific needs of the site, including adding site specific language that makes the most sense to participants or data collectors, refining measures to meet needs, and adding or deleting measures as needed.

Data Collection with People

Two types of data collection instruments—surveys and focus groups—are provided in the Toolbox for data collection with human subjects. When working directly with people, there are several important things to consider about data collection efforts. You likely have your own state or tribal laws related to data collection with human subjects. Before starting a data collection effort, you should review the guidance provided for data collection with humans.

Do I need an IRB?

Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are groups formally designated to review research that involves human subject. Typically, quality improvement efforts do not require review by an IRB. Consider these questions—

1. Does the activity involve research?
2. Does the research activity involve human subjects?
3. Does the human subjects research qualify for an exemption?

Research is defined as "...a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge..."

Case file review and court observation do not involve human subjects. Survey research is typically exempt if it doesn't collect identifying information about participants.

Some quality improvement efforts may require IRB review. More information including decision charts to understand if an IRB is needed is available at https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/index.html.

Confidentiality Is Key

It is important to protect human subjects, and the best way to do this is to ensure personally identifying information is not collected. Names, addresses, phone numbers, or anything connecting the data to an actual person should not be collected.

Introductory Language

Collecting data directly from people requires providing information to participants about the data collection effort. Important things to include are—

- Who will be conducting the data collection (your organization)
- What will be the purpose or intent of the data collection
- How the data will be used
- Whether it will be confidential
- Length of time the data collection will take
- Any instructions about the instrument or process the participant will need for full participation
- A way individuals will ask questions about the data collection (provide contact information for questions)

Example of Introductory Language for a Survey

<<insert organization name>> is interested in learning more about your experience with the child welfare court system. Your opinion can help us to learn more about current practices and ways we can improve. The survey is voluntary. Your responses are completely anonymous and will not impact your case in any way. This survey should take about <<insert time>> minutes to complete. If you have any questions, you can contact <<provide contact information>>.

Surveys

A survey is a data collection method that includes collecting information from a predefined group of participants to gain insight into topics of interest. Surveys offer a means to gather data on performance measurement using fewer resources (funding, staff). Most JCAMP measures can be assessed, at least to some degree, by survey methodology. It may not be the best way to collect data, but it is a way to gather information if resources are unavailable for more rigorous methods. Surveys are also ideally suited to gather performance measurement data on the parent, child, and youth perspective. Tips for survey data collection are provided on exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6. Tips for Survey Data Collection

Activity	Tips
Compare survey platforms	There are many available platforms for housing a survey, including free options like Google Forms. If you need advanced functionality, Qualtrics offers many surveying options. Survey Monkey is also a common (and less expensive) option.
Survey design	Simplify the survey to the extent possible. The easier it is for participants to read and understand, the more likely you will get a good response. Balance what you need to know with the burden on the participants (this is particularly important for surveying parents and youth). Create a survey that is long enough to answer your questions, but not so long participants will not have time to complete it. Modify the example surveys in the Toolbox to include site specific language. Clear instructions increase the likelihood the tool will yield useful data.
Sampling	If possible, send the survey to the entire population of interest. Surveys are resource light and can be more broadly disseminated
Increasing response rates[1]	Consider opportunities to increase response rates, including providing incentives to parents, children, and youth. Additional guidance on increasing survey response rates is available on the *Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC) Quicksheet: Increasing Response Rates.*
Surveying parents	Consider whether you want parents currently or formerly involved in the child welfare system to respond. If you want current parents, it is important to make sure the survey is voluntary and anonymous and that parents understand it will not impact their case in any way. Bringing in parents with lived experience (such as parent partners, parent allies) to help with the survey can enhance the survey and the data collection process. Parents formerly involved in the system can help to frame the survey, so it is not or does not feel coercive. They can also help ensure you have all the right questions to best understand the parent's experience.
Surveying children and youth	Children and youth require extra considerations, including potential IRB approval. Children under 18 need parental consent to participate. Those under court jurisdiction may need consent of the court or the agency. Questions for younger children may need to be open-ended and read to the child. Caregivers can be another resource to help facilitate the survey delivery to children. Bringing in youth with lived experience to design, refine, and develop a plan for implementing a youth survey can help ensure survey success.

[1] A response rate is how many people (of all those to whom you sent the survey) have completed your survey.

Survey Tools Available in the Toolbox

1. **Youth Court Experience Survey.** This tool offers an example of a youth court experience survey. It includes youth experience questions from all performance measurement categories. It is meant to be modified to best meet site needs.
2. **Youth Post Hearing Survey-Short.** This tool offers an example of a short court experience survey. It includes a limited number of questions primarily related to the Family Engagement measure.
3. **Parent Experience Survey (agreement scale).** This tool offers an example on what a parent survey focuses and what the user experience might look like. It can be modified to meet the individual site needs.
4. **Caregiver Experience Survey.** This tool offers an example of a survey of foster parents and relative caregivers. It focuses on their understanding of and experience with the child welfare court process. It could also be expanded to be given to relatives for additional insights. It should be modified to meet site needs.
5. **Stakeholder Survey.** This tool provides a survey for systems professionals that addresses many of the performance measures, particularly those best answered in a survey form.
6. **Youth Court Experience Question Bank.** This tool offers a sample of youth survey and focus group questions aligned with the performance measures. It is divided into performance measure categories and lists the measure the questions can help answer. It provides a large list of potential questions. The intent is for the user to narrow down the questions by selecting those that make the most sense, given priorities and needs.
7. **Parent Court Experience Question Bank.** This tool offers a sample of parent survey and focus group questions aligned with the performance measures. It is divided into performance measure categories and lists the measure that the questions can help to answer. It provides a large list of potential questions. The intent is for the user to narrow down the questions by selecting those that make the most sense, given priorities and needs.

Lived Experience Insight: Losing custody of a child and navigating the child welfare court process is extremely traumatic for system-involved parents. The residual trauma symptoms are especially pronounced for parents who had negative experiences and/or for those who had parental rights terminated. But even for families that successfully reunify, the loss, pain and trauma endured while navigating the system takes a toll on parents, the children, and the extended family. Because of this and other factors, surveying system-involved parents can pose challenges. Consider parents whose parental rights were terminated.

- They may have persistent negative feelings toward the court system. They may feel the need to talk about their experience and voice their complaints. They may also be experiencing isolation and depression. It might be useful when surveying system-involved parents to have resources on hand such as parent advocacy organizations, parent support groups, Talk Lines, and suicide prevention hotlines.
- They may feel hopeless and defeated. They may be uninterested in providing meaningful feedback. They may say things like, “I don’t care anymore,” or “My case is closed so why does it matter?” It may be useful to explain that child welfare involvement is sometimes a pervasive occurrence in communities. Although a person’s case may have been closed, their children, grandchildren, or other family members may one day have a case. It is difficult to address problems that may exist in the system, without first identifying what those problems are. By participating in this survey, parents are helping their community which may impact them in ways they might not expect or realize.
- They may not yet have closure. They may still be searching for ways to turn back the clock on their cases to bring their children home. It is useful to clarify at the onset of the surveying session your specific role, the purpose and limitations of the survey, and approximately how long the surveying session will take.

Focus Groups

A focus group is a guided discussion about a given topic or topics. Focus groups are ideally suited to gather rich qualitative data from participants. Focus groups use open-ended questions so participants can give their own answers instead of responding to a list. They may not require a lot of resources (e.g., time) to conduct but require some expertise in facilitation to ensure the discussion answers the questions of interest. Focus groups are ideally suited to gather data on what parents, children, and youth experience in the process, particularly to gather more in-depth perspectives. Tips for survey data collection are provided on exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7. Tips for Focus Group Data Collection

Activity	Tips
Introductory language	In addition to standard introductory language, it may be helpful to provide instructions or rules for the focus groups. Rules for focus groups should include stressing confidentiality and asking other participants to keep matters confidential.
Group dynamics	Groups of 6 to 8 are ideal for focus groups, although larger groups can work (especially when cofacilitated). Power dynamics can inhibit group discussion. It is best to hold focus groups by role (e.g., parents and youth).

Tools Available in the Toolbox

1. **Youth Court Experience Question Bank.** This tool offers a sample of youth survey and focus group questions aligned with the performance measures. It is divided into performance measure categories and lists the measure the questions can help to answer. It provides a large list of potential questions. The intent is for the user to narrow down the questions by selecting those that make the most sense, given priorities and needs.
2. **Parent Court Experience Question Bank.** This tool offers a sample of parent survey and focus group questions aligned with the performance measures. It is divided into performance measure categories and lists the measure the questions can help to answer. It provides a large list of potential questions. The intent is for the user to narrow down the questions by selecting those that make the most sense, given priorities and needs.
3. **Stakeholder Focus Group Questions.** This tool offers suggestions for focus group questions that can be asked of professionals who work in child welfare to better understand current practice, specific to the JCAMP measures.

Data Collection That Does Not Include People

Observation of court proceedings and review of court files is considered data collection that does not involve people. The data collector is not interacting with or collecting data from a person, rather they are observing practice or reviewing materials. The considerations are slightly different for these types of data collection efforts.

Confidentiality is important. Instruments should not collect personally identifying information about families—names, addresses, phone numbers, or anything connecting the data to an actual person. Sites should also consider whether they want to collect identifying information about judges or other court professionals. Most of the instruments include a space to identify the judge's name. This is because practices may vary widely by judges, and sites may be interested in disaggregating the data by the individual. Sites should feel comfortable removing this field if they do not wish to explore data in this manner.

Training on Tools

Court observation and case file review require additional resources when compared to surveys, including more time to prepare for successful data collection. Data collection may require a team to gather the data needed for the sample. If this is the case, training on the tools is a critical component to successful data collection. Exhibit 8 describes a training process for these types of data collection tools.

Exhibit 8. Court Observation and Case File Review Training Process

Activity	Description
Develop or refine an instrument to use for data collection.	This includes changing any language on the tool to be site specific for local needs, adding or deleting any items based on the prioritized measures, and changing the format as necessary for ease of use. Example instruments are provided in the Toolbox.
Develop or refine a codebook.	A codebook is a document that contains information about the items in the instrument. This includes defining/describing each item, identifying response options (as necessary) for the item, and providing examples. Example codebooks are provided in the Toolbox.
Train all coders on the tool.	A meeting should be held where all coders attend and discuss the tool, including defining and describing all tool items and giving examples of how they might look in practice. Coders should pose any questions to discuss as a group and come to consensus on how an item will be coded, which is critical for interrater reliability.[2] If a group of coders observe a hearing and their coding is the same on 80 percent of the items or higher, that is considered good interrater reliability. Coding sessions might need to occur over time, with practice coding built in to allow for the best discussion and understanding of how the tool works in practice.
Practice coding.	Practice helps ensure coders understand the tool and are successful at using it to collect data. Practice could include coders in pairs (or more) observing a hearing or reviewing a file together. They should discuss any confusing items that emerge or if there are questions. At the end of the practice, they should compare item scores and come to agreement on how they will code in the future. Multiple practice sessions are ideal to bring the team closer to agreement.
Code some of the cases as pairs.	Code a small sample of cases (5 to 10 percent) in pairs after practice is complete. Use these to calculate reliability of coding before collecting all the data. If coders have low agreement, consider additional training sessions on specific items low in reliability.

[2] Interrater reliability is how much coders agree on coding of items.

Court Observation

Court observation is a data collection method where trained coders use a structured data collection instrument to observe a court hearing and gather information about what occurred. This method is ideal for gathering information on in-court practices by judges and attorneys. Exhibit 9 describes tips for conducting court observation.

Exhibit 9. Tips for Conducting Court Observation

Activity	Tip
Logistics	Use recorded hearings when possible. Live court observation is more challenging and can create an observer bias.[3] Recorded hearings allow you to take your time during coding and pause as necessary. If you are coding recorded hearings, ensure you have a process in place for secure data transfer. Confidentiality is critical. Do not send or receive recorded hearings over regular email. Use an encrypted process or other secure file transfer protocol. Identify the types of hearings you want to observe. Consider which hearing types may provide the most information on the practices of interest. Keep in mind that lengthy trials (like adjudications) are resource intensive.
Coding	It may be easier to code on a printed form than coding directly on to an electronic one, at least at the beginning. If you can code directly on to an electronic form, you can save time on data entry. If possible, keep the tool short for ease of finding items. Coders have noted it gets easier to use forms after practicing (e.g., after approximately 10 hearings, it appears to be easier to use). Familiarity with the form makes coding more reliable.
Sampling	A good guideline for observations is to include at least 10 hearings per hearing type per judge or site. If you know on average how long hearings last at the sites of interest, it can help you determine the resources necessary to achieve your desired sample.
Estimating resources	An average hearing takes 20 minutes. You want to code 10 of each hearing type per site.

[3] Observer bias is when the presence of an observer influences practice.

Tools Available in the Toolbox

1. **Court Observation Instrument.** This tool offers an example of a court observation instrument that includes all the items that are best captured in a structured court observation process. Each item includes several corresponding measures. The tool should be formatted for ease of use by the site that intends to use it and should be modified to include appropriate site-specific language and selected measures.

2. **Court Observation Codebook.** This tool provides an example of a court observation codebook, which defines, describes, and provides examples related to accurately coding a court hearing. This tool should be modified to meet site needs, including adding site-specific language, providing site-specific examples, and removing items that are no longer on the court observation instrument because the site did not select the measure.

Field Test Insights: Two of the sites were able to identify additional resources to support court observation so they could increase their sample size. One site pulled in additional staff that were not part of the core team and another hired contractors to serve as coders who had previously worked with the site in a different capacity. All the team members were trained together and practiced coding together to enhance reliability.

Sampling at one site included a minimum of 10 hearings per hearing type per judge for smaller jurisdictions and 20 to 30 hearings per hearing type for larger jurisdictions. This helped account for a larger number of judges in those jurisdictions.

Case File Review

Case file review is a structured document review process. This includes using a structured form to gather data from a child welfare case file. This data collection method is ideally suited for gathering data that occurs during the life of the case (e.g., change in attorneys, presence of parties at multiple hearings, findings on the record). Exhibit 10 describes tips for conducting a case file review.

Exhibit 10. Tips for Conducting Case File Review

Activity	Tip
Logistics	The criteria for the cases you choose should depend on the measures of interest. Closed cases may allow for easier access as the family is not currently involved in the child welfare system. They have the added benefit of allowing you to examine the entire case (start to finish) and collect data at multiple events. The downside of closed cases is they may have opened years ago, and practice may not be as current as a more recent sample. Using an entry cohort would be ideal if you are looking at practice in a specific timeframe. For example, if you want to examine practice in 2020, you can select your sample from cases opened that year.
Tool design	Simplify the tool to the extent possible to reduce burden on coders. The more items you add, the longer the process will take. Case file review can be very resource intensive. If you cannot find the data you need in the file, it is important to note this on the case file review form. Then there is an explanation for missing data.

Tools Available in the Toolbox

1. **Case File Review Instrument.** This tool provides an example of a structured case file review instrument and includes all the items that are best captured from this method. The tool should be modified by the site to include site-specific language and to remove items not selected or prioritized as a measure.
2. **Case File Review Codebook.** This tool provides an example of a court observation codebook, which defines, describes, and provides examples related to accurately coding a child welfare case file. This tool should be modified to meet site needs, including adding site-specific language, providing site-specific examples, and removing items that are no longer on the court observation instrument because the site did not select the measures.

Step Four: Lessons Learned From Field Test Sites

Various Data Collection Methods Need to Be Identified and Utilized

All sites used some combination of court observation, surveys, and administrative data. One site reported, *"…The court observation skills that I've gained through this project…those are something I can utilize over and over again. And I feel like they're really important."*

Ensure That Data Can Be Reported by Race

Potential equity issues need to be called out specifically, so sites consider collecting and analyzing data by race to determine if families of color are disproportionately represented in the system and whether they experience disparate outcomes.

Use Your Data

See Volume III: Implementation Toolbox for—

- Considerations to Use Your Data Effectively

Now that you have completed data collection, it is time to analyze and report your findings. Your findings should then be used to inform ongoing and future court improvement efforts. This section provides tips for analyzing and sharing your JCAMP data and using findings in a CQI process.

Analyzing JCAMP Data Findings

The analysis stage of the implementation process turns the raw data you have collected into the meaningful information about the practice the measures are intended to provide. While ***Volume IV: Technical Guide*** provides detailed instruction for the analysis of each measure including suggested ways to breakdown data for comparison (e.g., by parent, by race, by age of child, by hearing type), there are a few general practices to keep in mind when approaching analyses.

- **Before you analyze your performance data, have a closer look!** Check for any "odd" values that might be errors or typos, for any missing data such as empty fields in a court observation data entry form, and whether the amount of data generated is what you would expect. If you find anything that stands out as atypical, check it with the people who collected the data. This process is called "cleaning your data" and will help you maintain the integrity of your performance measurement.
- **Be clear about the questions you want the measures and their analysis to answer.** Look for guidance about recommended analytic approaches for each measure in ***Volume IV: Technical Guide***. The measures require only simple summary statistical calculations such as calculating averages, medians, and frequencies. More qualitative data, such as those generated by the survey and focus group instruments require a process of transcribing the information obtained and then analyzing and grouping data by common themes.
- **Report data analysis in context.** Analysis of performance data is more than just computing the values of your performance measures—it is also about providing a context or explanation around your performance measures. Consider providing a breakdown of performance measures by some relevant classifying factor such as county, race and ethnicity of parents, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) status of the case, or some other relevant factor to what you most want to know. These supplementary analyses may require you to collect a little more data. See ***Volume IV: Technical Guide*** for contextual considerations that can be used to compare findings.

Reporting JCAMP Data Findings

Your report of JCAMP findings should be developed with your intended audience in mind, their knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of the performance measurement project and their specific concerns or interests. Identify all the users of your performance measures before designing your performance report—you may need different report formats depending on the type of user. Think carefully about nontraditional audiences. For example, data can be used to inform legislators about resource needs to develop best practice implementation.

An easy way to present findings is to list each priority measure along with the data findings. Reporting measures this way is less time consuming and allows a reader to view each specific performance measure result. See exhibit 11 for an example.

Exhibit 11. Sample JCAMP Measures and Data Findings Report Table

Measure	Findings
1.1 Do parents attend hearings? (*n* = 60)	67 percent of hearings had at least one parent attend. 33 percent of hearings had both parents attend.
3.5b Do parent attorneys advocate for parents in the hearings? (*n* = 60)	60 percent of hearings had parent attorneys cross examine witnesses. 40 percent of hearings had parent attorneys advocate for placement. 40 percent of hearings had parent attorneys raise the issue of being in contact with their clients. 20 percent of hearings had parent attorneys call witnesses. 20 percent of hearings had parent attorneys advocate for family time.

Alternatively, or in addition, you may want to compile all your data, write up a summary report, and add data tables and charts to make it easier for a reader to review and understand the findings. Some of the more useful types of information to include in a performance report include tables or graphs of findings for the measures and brief comments interpreting those findings. Comments may point out anything the data in the graph signals (e.g., parents attended more of a specific hearing type compared to others, judges used more engagement strategies with parents in initial hearings in a case compared to later hearings). This approach requires additional staff time and input to present findings in a way easily understood. Each measure, for example, may need a written explanation and some an illustrative table or chart. Consider if it would be useful to include with each measure its description as documented in ***Volume I: Measures***, to remind users of its meaning.

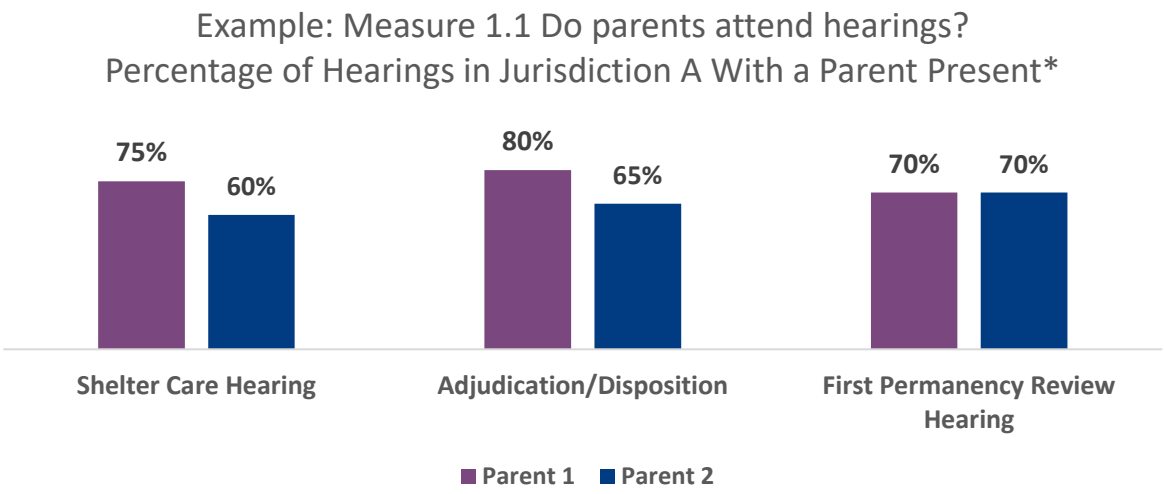
Ultimately, when designing your report, think about what your audience most needs to know to be able to make decisions about next steps or where to target any interventions or improvements. Spend time and effort on those areas. Think about ways you should disaggregate (breakdown) the data to understand practice and how data may differ by case characteristics or context (e.g., by type of hearing, by age of the child, by race or ethnicity of parent, by ICWA status, by county, type of legal representation model). See the ***Volume IV: Technical Guide*** for guidance on ways to breakdown your data for comparison.

Tips for report design are described in exhibit 12.

Equity Insight: Fatherhood engagement, while not specifically included in the JCAMP measures, should be considered when comparing data between types of parents.

Exhibit 12. Tips for Report Design

Activity	Tip
Start with an outline.	Flowchart your reporting process, linking together all the steps needed to present the data and measures to their audiences. If you start writing without having a clear idea of what your data analysis report is going to include, you may stray too far away from the main topic. First, plan the structure and contents of each section to make sure you have covered everything; only then start crafting the report.
Include a summary.	Some people in your audience won't have the time to read the entire report, but they'll want to know about your findings. A summary at the beginning of your data analytics report will help the reader get familiar with its topic and goal. (And a quick note: Although the summary should be placed at the beginning, you usually write it when you are done with the report. When you have the whole picture, it's easier to extract the key points to include in the summary.) Reports do not all have to be paper based. They can be web-based; PowerPoint presentations; newsletters; or styled as "data dashboards" that organize and display the most important information up front, such as key findings on your top priority measures.
Keep graphs and charts simple.	When you add items to a graph (e.g., grid lines, tick marks, patterns), ask yourself what purpose do these items serve? This will help you determine if they are needed or are making your graph unnecessarily complicated or confusing.
Include details to help readers interpret graphs and charts.	Include items in your graphs and tables that help your readers interpret and understand at what they are looking. These include titles or axis labels that clearly explain the measure being charted or a legend if you are reporting more than one variable. Include sample or population sizes when you are charting frequencies (e.g., 60 percent of what?). A footnote or graph caption that clarifies something about your measure can be helpful, such as the source for the data (e.g., court hearings, closed case files) and the time frame the findings cover.
Avoid too much narrative text.	Provide brief comments for tables, charts, or graphs to interpret the findings. But keep your performance reports as visual as possible, avoiding too much narrative text. Use simple, clear language to facilitate understanding.
Be consistent.	Consider designing a standard template for each graph, chart, or table type you will use to display your measures. A standard look focuses the reader on the information and is less distracting. See the example below.



**n* = 100 hearings in Jurisdiction A from January 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022.

Using Your Data in a Continuous Quality Improvement Process

Performance measurement for measurement's sake is a waste of time and effort. Now that you have analyzed your data and reported your findings, it is time to use those findings to improve performance. A CQI process using performance measures has distinct steps, which includes interpreting results, prioritizing to which results to respond, describing the desired results or results you hope to achieve, understanding the current capability of the system producing the results, developing strategies to improve the results, implementing those strategies, and then checking to see if your strategies worked.

This section focuses on using your collected performance measurement data effectively in a CQI process. ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox*** provides a **Using Your Data Effectively Considerations Tool** that can be used to guide discussions about your data findings to facilitate their use in improvement efforts. The tool guides you through a series of questions about your findings and provides a space to reflect on how you will use them moving forward. The questions for your team to consider as they reflect on data findings are the following:

- What contextual considerations are important to best understand and use the data?
- How should the data be broken down (or further broken down) to be most useful (e.g., by county, by judge, by race or ethnicity of the parent)?
- How will you be using these data for CQI (e.g., in a root cause analysis, to set performance benchmarks or targets, to compare practice differences in sites, to identify training needs)?
- How can you use the findings to move current systems change efforts forward (e.g., can data serve as information to target an intervention or as baseline to evaluate an intervention or to identify training needs)?

- How can the findings be useful to your Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) process (e.g., can these data inform the statewide assessment)? See the insight box at the end of this section for more information about using JCAMP to inform the CFSR statewide assessment.
- How can the findings be used to explore and improve equity (e.g., can you examine data by race and ethnicity, how else can you use the data to work toward equity)? What do your data tell you about disparate treatment?

Equity Insight: Prosecuting (or agency or state) attorneys should review data on local disproportionality rates and ensure more objective factors such as structured decision-making tools are used to assess risk and assist parents and children with removing barriers to visits and services to family resources and cultural contexts in a responsive way.

Lived Experience Insight: Parents and youth with lived experience should be part of the team that reviews and interprets findings. As important as selecting the measures and collecting the data, it is critical to have persons from multiple perspectives review the findings of performance measurement. They can explain 'what does this mean' and contribute to a conversation about what to do with the results. Questions to consider asking are the following: What stood out for you from the findings? What is the most important thing you saw in the results? Based on the findings, what do you think is the most critical area to focus improvement efforts?

Additional tips for using data in a CQI process are described in exhibit 13.

Exhibit 13. Tips for Using Your Data in a CQI Process

Activity	Tip
Root cause analysis	If you want to find performance improvements that stick, then you will need to conduct a root cause analysis**.** This means thinking about the symptoms of poor performance (the data findings that were less than optimal) and brainstorm as a team the possible causes of these symptoms (what current practices, policies, or other factors are contributing to poor results).
Process mapping	Process mapping and analysis is a great way to understand the factors limiting the current capability of the system to create optimal performance results. It helps greatly to define the system you intend to improve before you try to improve it.
Benchmarking	Benchmarking is a useful process to help you set targets for your performance measures. What are the best practice standards for the process or result for which you want to set the target? You can set benchmarks or targets (e.g., 90 percent of all initial hearings will include judicial reasonable efforts to prevent removal findings), identify strategies to improve performance on those targets, and then set future measurement efforts to determine if targets were achieved.

Assessing a Baseline, Setting Performance Targets, and Supporting Evaluation Efforts

After the mechanics of the measurement process have been put in place, data can be used to take a snapshot of current performance. This information establishes a baseline that you can use to gauge future progress. Baseline information is usually derived from the most recently completed fiscal year. If historical information is available, use it to verify that the chosen baseline timeframe is not atypical or otherwise unsuitable. Historical data can also put baseline data in context. Next, the information from the baseline data can be used to (1) determine performance benchmarks or targets (e.g., decreasing the number of attorney changes for parents by one-half compared to baseline, achieving this target within 1 year) and (2) support evaluation efforts (e.g., taking the same measurements after implementing an intervention and comparing those results to your baseline assessment findings).

Insights on Using Your JCAMP Data to Inform the CFSR Statewide Assessment
by Christine Kiesel, Esq., ACF

The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) enables the Children's Bureau to (1) determine conformity with federal child welfare requirements; (2) learn about the experiences of children, youth, and families receiving child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. The fourth round of the CFSRs (August 2022) has an intentional focus on the use of data and evidence to support an elevated understanding of the state child welfare system's strengths and areas in need of improvement. This necessitates partnerships among child welfare agencies, legal and judicial partners, tribes, service providers, persons with lived experience, and others to collect and critically analyze data from every available source. JCAMP is an excellent data collection tool to support this endeavor.

During the JCAMP design phase, measures took into consideration the seven outcomes and seven systemic factors assessed in the CFSR. The JCAMP measures speak to foundational court processes, practices of professionals within the court system, and how families experience the court process. This structure aligns with the CFSR, which measures foundational elements by way of systemic factors, practices through an onsite review instrument (OSRI), and ultimately family experiences through case review and stakeholder interviews. Implementation of the JCAMP measures will assist states in more deeply understanding how the operation and practices of the legal and judicial systems fit into the overall outcomes children and families experience.

Additionally, the Children's Bureau expects child welfare system partners to share and exchange data during the development of the Statewide Assessment (SWA). The JCAMP measures provide an opportunity to bring important legal and judicial data to the conversation. Some state legal and judicial systems collect administrative and other sources of data to bring to this self-examination. The JCAMP measures will benefit those states with rich data sets by providing an opportunity to use them to generate analyses that address general and specific questions about legal and judicial system performance and outcomes. The measures will also support states embarking on new ways to collect legal and judicial system data. The JCAMP needs assessment will assist both groups of states in identifying individual priorities.

As part of the SWA, states may identify gaps or challenges in system performance as well as the data needed to better understand them. Engaging in this deep exploration during the SWA provides more time for states to gather data and information to be used in developing a Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The JCAMP measures, needs assessment, and technical guide can assist in this process. Data can be collected between the SWA and PIP development to provide the state with a more complete picture of the functioning of the legal and judicial systems in relationship to the outcomes and systemic factors assessed. These steps will provide a solid foundation to begin development of required legal and judicial strategies to be included in PIPs.

Step Five: Lessons Learned From Field Test Sites

Data drives practice change, and data can provide relevant information about whether and how systems change efforts are being implemented.

Sites shared that some data points are working and identified where course corrections are needed. Using data opens the door to identifying changes that can be made and ensures the outcomes of the improvement effort can be measured. Sites noted that using data to understand parent and youth perceptions of the court process can lead to building stronger public trust and confidence in the judicial branch.

"Enthusiasm emerged about the prospect of using measures to assess whether efforts such as training led to making a difference in practice. Understanding emerged—illuminating that reports of measure data could be used to initiate discussions on how changes in practice could help courts improve outcomes such as meeting permanency timelines. Reviewing practice measures related to case planning helped team members consider changes to their own practice by seeking additional case planning information during hearings."

One site's participation in the field test aligned with its family engagement efforts in *"making sure their voice is heard in our system."*

One site noted they had not expressed a desire to examine parent, children, and youth perspectives of their legal representation, *"…but when we saw them, we knew that's something we were interested in."*

Family experience measures were described as a way to ensure the views of professionals in the system did not outweigh the perspectives of parents, children, and youth.

Family engagement can also be critical to understanding what factors led to positive parent perceptions of the court.

Sustaining Your Performance Measurement Efforts

See Volume III: Implementation Toolbox for—

- Sustainability Capacity Assessment
- Sustainability Plan

Continuous improvement requires ongoing effort and engagement. It's vital to maintain your change momentum by continuing to track performance through data and effective reporting. Performance measures should be used to regularly review progress relative to improvement goals. Ongoing tracking of performance will help the team sustain successes, and data can be a powerful tool in garnering support for your improvement efforts. This section focuses on sustaining your performance measurement efforts beyond a single project or implementation. Exhibit 14 lists the activities needed to sustain your performance measurement efforts.

Exhibit 14. Tips to Sustain Your Performance Measurement Efforts

Activity	Tip
Include	Include individuals who can be allies or champions for continued performance measurement efforts. Reach out to and include court clerks in your performance measurement efforts. They can be helpful if documentation and data entry practices need to be modified to support ongoing performance measurement. Reach out to, recruit, and include members from parent, children, youth, foster parent, or ICWA advisory committees in performance measurement work. Include the voices of people with lived experience in all performance measurement efforts which will help to improve the system's response to their needs.
Expand	Support a system-wide dialogue by capturing and sharing lessons learned from your performance measurement efforts with state/tribal child welfare agencies, CFSR and PIP teams, and local programs.
Communicate	Communicate your results with enthusiasm and do so widely with a communication campaign (plan for frequent dissemination of information on performance measurement activities as well as results).
Integrate	Work to integrate performance measures into administrative case management systems to enhance your capacity for regular reporting on performance measures.
Celebrate	Celebrate your success with your staff and community.

Two tools, Sustainability Capacity Assessment and Plan, to help your team think through sustaining performance measurement efforts are included in ***Volume III: Implementation Toolbox***.

1. **Sustainability Capacity Assessment.** This tool asks your team to consider your system's capacity for ongoing performance measurement efforts related to personnel, interest or buy-in, resources, data, and organizational structure for on-going performance measurement and to rate that capacity as low, medium, or high. Based on this assessment, some ideas for sustainability are offered for group discussion. These are described below.

   Low Capacity

   - Most of the measures can be collected in a survey (resource light). Consider an annual survey of your priority measures.

   Medium Capacity

   - Consider if there are specific measures you identified in your first assessment that are of high interest (either because of low performance or alignment with priorities).
   - Focus intensive data collection efforts on ensuring these measures can be collected regularly (e.g., quarterly, semi-annually).
   - Surveys can also be put into place to supplement other data collection efforts for performance measurement.
   - There may be opportunities to build performance measurement data collection into existing program design, implementation, and evaluation efforts.

   High Capacity

   - Consider an annual or biennial process that allows for rigorous data collection of all performance measures of interest. Annual data review allows for an exploration of trends in performance over time and can be most helpful for continuous quality improvement.
   - Consider if case management information systems can be modified to produce data on priority measures. Build regular report functions in case management systems to produce quarterly, semiannual, or annual reports of findings.

2. **Sustainability Plan.** Teams consider a series of questions to help develop an action plan for sustaining performance efforts.

   - Who will be responsible for leading and monitoring performance measurement efforts?
   - What measures will be collected on an ongoing basis?
   - When and how often will performance measurement data be collected and reviewed?
   - How will data be collected?
   - How will measures be shared and used in ongoing change efforts?

Field Test Insights: Moving forward, one field test site is developing plans to continue with data collection and reporting. Its staff anticipate using the JCAMP measures and data collection process each year to inform their understanding of the quality of the hearings. They think it will be helpful to something that was already an annual requirement for CIP.

Another site noted, *"…There is strength in the fact that using JCAMP as an on-going process … they are measures that can and should be used over and over again."*

Putting It All Together—Tools for Each Step of the JCAMP Implementation Process

Implementation Steps	Tools in Volume III Toolbox
Step 1: Form Your Team	• Teaming Checklist • Teaming Structure Template • Tip Sheet for Engaging Individuals With Lived Experience in Teams
Step 2: Select and Prioritize Measures	• Needs Assessment • Excel File to Sort and Prioritize Measures
Step 3: Visualize Your Path	• Data Collection Guiding Questions • Data Collection Plan Summary Table
Step 4: Get Your Data	• Question Banks for Youth and Parent Surveys and Focus Groups • Youth, Parent, Caregiver, and Stakeholder Surveys • Court Observation Form and Codebook • Case File Review Form and Codebook
Step 5: Use Your Data	• Considerations to Use Your Data Effectively
Step 6: Sustaining Your Performance Measurement Efforts	• Sustainability Capacity Assessment • Sustainability Plan

Resources

Resources for All JCAMP Implementation Steps

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2019, October). *Data governance for two-generation programs: Planning tool kit*. https://www.aecf.org/resources/data-governance-for-two-generation-programs

Capacity Building Center for Tribes (n.d.). *Research and evaluation in native communities*. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services https://tribalinformationexchange.org/files/products/ResearchandEvaluationResourceListJul2022.pdf?utm_source=Center+for+Tribes+Outreach&utm_campaign=51c341e5da-activeeffortsemail_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c52045c6a7-51c341e5da-374640489

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Step 1: Form Your Team

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Step 2: Select and Prioritize Measures

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Step 3: Visualize Your Path

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Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media_pdf/meaningful-stakeholder-engagement-cp-00031.pdf

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Office for Victims of Crime: Training and Technical Assistance Center. (n.d.). *Strategic planning toolkit.* https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/resources/dspStrategicPlan.cfm?nm=tsd

Step 4: Get Your Data

Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative. (n.d.). *Capacity Building Center for Courts: CQI quicksheet series*. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/courts/topics/cqi/cqi-quick-sheets

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Step 5: Use Your Data

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Step 6: Sustain Your Performance Measurement Efforts

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