



# **2025-2029 Illinois Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)**

## **Addendum D - Training Plan**

**Illinois Department of Children and Family Services  
Submitted June 30, 2024; Updated June 30, 2025**

## **Training Plan**

*The training plan for the 2025-2029 CFSP must include the information below:*

- *A description of the initial in-service training program for new or reassigned employees that includes a description of the content and scope of the classroom and work experience components of the training, as well as the duration of the initial in-service training period and the specific supports provided during this period.*
- *For all types of training (e.g., training for individuals preparing for employment, initial in-service training, ongoing in-service training, foster/adoptive/guardianship provider training, and the additional categories of short-term training authorized in section 474(a)(3)(B) of the Act) include the following information in the training plan:*
  - *a brief, one-paragraph syllabus of the training activity;*
  - *indication of the specifically allowable title IV-E administrative functions the training activity addresses;*
  - *indication of the setting/venue for the training activity;*
  - *indication of the duration category of the training activity (i.e., short-term, long-term, part-time, full-time);*
  - *indication of the proposed provider of the training activity;*
  - *specification of the approximate number of days/hours of the training activity;*
  - *indication of the audience to receive the training (see discussion above expanding the list of eligible trainees);*
  - *description of estimated total cost; and*
  - *cost allocation methodology.*

### **Office of Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) Program Development 2025-2030**

The learning and professional development priorities stated in this plan will improve the knowledge, skill, and ability of employees, allied helping professionals, foster caregivers, and adoptive parents to perform their job and care for children; competently, ethically, and professionally.

For 2024-2029, learning and professional development programs will support the implementation of the following:

- Five-year and Annual Updates to the Federal Children and Family Services Plan (CFSP);
- Federal Child and Family Services Program Improvement Plan (PIP) as enacted;
- Installation and implementation of the SAFE model and phasing out of the use of the CERAP safety assessment tool.
- Director and executive staff program initiatives and priorities;
- Department compliance with national child welfare accreditation training standards of the Council on Accreditation (COA);
- Furthering the use of experiential learning to improve capacity through skill development,
- State Law and Court Training Mandates; and
- Federal Law, Federal Court Consent Decrees, and Orders.

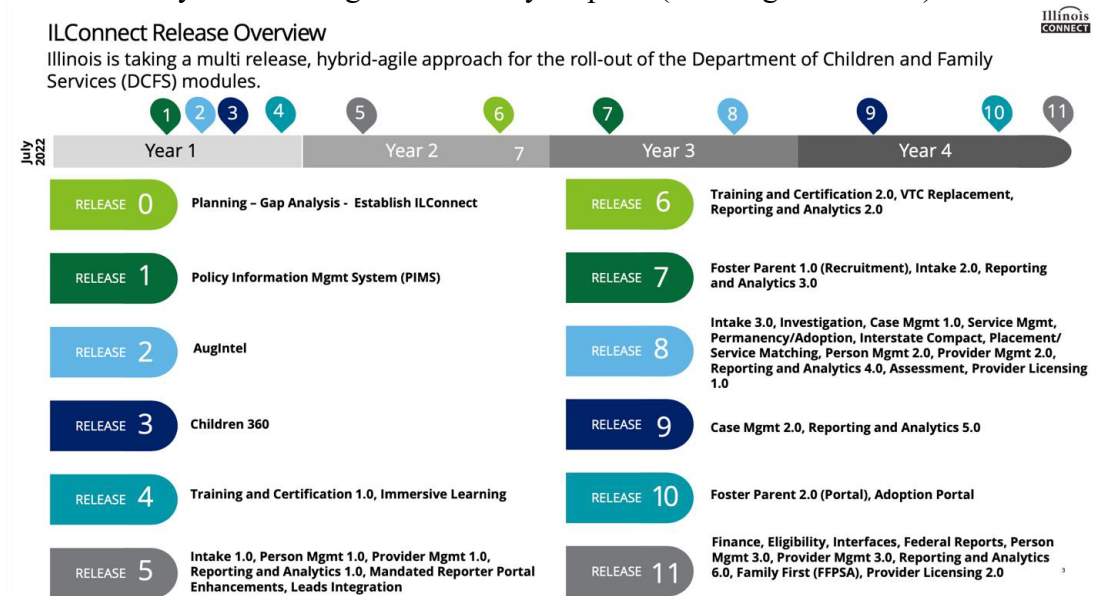
The strategic direction for learning and professional development will focus on aligning of the learning in support of the Departments strategic goals. The Learning and Development areas of focus are as follows:

Continued (Pre and In-service) Foundation training courses for new hires or reassigned employees. [Note: Excerpts in this section have been inserted and/or modified from the IllinoisConnect website and the Action for Child Protections SAFE Model Training Plan submitted to the DCFS in June 2023. The SAFE Model training plans will be implemented using the OLPD learning management system.]

**UPDATE for June 30, 2025):** [Note: Data is an excerpt from the DCFS Workforce Development UIUC Q3 report and that final data for April – June 2025 will not be available until August 2025.]

- IllinoisConnect is a transformational change initiative that is committed to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS, Department) and its partner agencies as they serve families throughout Illinois. The initiative includes changes to processes that will allow workers to be more efficient in their daily jobs, transition from the SACWIS system to a comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS) and will also include the implementation of the Action for Child Protection’s foundational work, the Safety Assessment Family Evaluation (SAFE) model. Per the Action for Child Protection, the SAFE model is largely considered the first comprehensive safety decision making model and intervention framework. Over the five years of this plan, the SAFE model will replace the current Illinois safety framework, the Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP) safety assessment tool. The installation of the SAFE model will be a primary learning focus for this training plan beginning with the State Central Register (SCR) hotline work and management, which is scheduled for release in SFY 2025 quarter 1.
- DCFS began work with Action for Child Protection in July 2022 and it was determined that rather than release the SAFE model as a standalone training initiative, the SAFE model would be incorporated with the IllinoisConnect release plan and phased in over a period of 5-years. Due to technical issues, the first installation of the SAFE model with SCR has been moved for release in July 2024. The targeted audience is current and new hotline call floor staff, supervisors, and managers. Although OLPD is not developing the training plans, curricula, job aids, or delivering the initial or ongoing trainings for SAFE model in these releases, the OLPD learning infrastructure is being utilized for scheduling the classes and awarding credit through the OLPD learning management system, the Learning and Development Center (LDC). Action for Child Protection (Action) will develop and deliver SAFE model overview education session materials for each release. At the project onset, Action will develop model overview and education sessions for key stakeholders to increase awareness about overall implementation. These materials will be developed for in-person instructor led (ILT) and virtual (e-learning) delivery for direct service child welfare specialist (Intact, Permanency, Adoptions, and Foster Care Licensing staff and management and child protection staff (SCR and investigations staff, supervisors, and management). These titles will still be required to have a Child Welfare Employee License (CWEL).
- The SAFE model overview sessions are designed to provide general model information and are customized to meet the needs of the audiences. In-depth sessions provide a “deeper dive” with more practice and application of each of the model’s components. In working with the SAFE model developers, additional in-services and coaching will be developed at the field-level to ensure transfer of learning and application. This 5-year training plan will focus on the first portion of SAFE practice model training that corresponds to IllinoisConnect’s Release 5 which contained a series of instructor-led, e-learning, and coaching sessions led by

Action from July 2022 through June 2024. These trainings were part of in-services for the SCR population. Now that the SAFE model is ready for implementation, subsequent training plans will be developed and released by the SAFE model vendor as the various phases and modules of IllinoisConnect progress for Releases 6-8 and will be included in the APSR iterations for years 2 through 5 of this 5-year plan. (See diagram below.)



- Following this phase of training in the IllinoisConnect project, Action will continue to develop adapted SAFE materials to meet Illinois’s specific training needs.
- Release 8 will include supervisor/manager and specialist/worker training on the remainder of the SAFE practice model phases. The SAFE practice model is a systematic intervention process that includes six core components for facilitating caregiver behavioral change, and includes:
  - o Intake Assessment
  - o Initial Family Assessment
  - o Safety Management/SAFE@Home
  - o Protective Capacity Family Assessment
  - o Change Focused Contact
  - o Progress Assessment
- The future trainings and training plans will be written, developed, and implemented under the assumption that the go live date for release 8 is March 10, 2025.
- Child protective services: (Safety Outcomes #1 and #2):
  - o A Foundations redesign for Child Protection began in April 2023 but has been put on hold as the Department is incorporating the SAFE model which will need to be primary in the redesign. Child Protection’s installation of the SAFE model will begin in Release 8 of the IllinoisConnect implementation and is scheduled to begin in 2025.
- Family preservation (Intact Family) Services (Safety Outcomes #1 and #2):
  - The Foundations redesign for Intact continues as the primary curricula. The redesign streamlined the curricula and folded in the Family First/Motivational Interviewing (FF/MI) in-service and Workplace and Field Safety as a facilitator led course. Phase 2 was launched in FY24 and enhanced the current curricula with more learn-centered

application. Training in support of casework and supervisory staff use and application of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS). Intact's installation of the SAFE model will begin in Release 8 of the IllinoisConnect implementation and is scheduled to begin in 2025.

**Update for June 30, 2025: SAFE Model Implementation**

Over the past two years, the IllinoisConnect project team has made significant progress in transitioning DCFS from the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) to a modernized Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), now known as IllinoisConnect. In the pursuit of continuous improvement, DCFS executive leadership decided to shift these efforts from a project-centric to a product-centric development model to allow for a greater focus on developing a product with the end-users' needs in mind.

Completed releases in 2024 that OLPD provided registration and logistics support:

- Intake (SCR hotline)
- Electronic Child Abuse & Neglect Report System (Online Reporting System)
- Foster Parent Recruitment
- CWEL Licensing and Complaints
- ASK Mobile 3.1 (Child Abuse Pediatrician updates)
- SCR/DCP Policy Bot

OLPD will support the following SAFE Model developments through 2025:

- Investigation
- Intake (PCD, PCU, Cook PCU, SCR Admin)
- Case Management (Permanency, Intact, CWS, ICPC, Adoptions, Adult Guardianship)
- Assessments
- Placement and Referrals
- Service Management
- Provider Management
- Person Management
- Foster Care (Permanency) services: (Permanency Outcomes #1 and #2)
- This includes improvement in staff skill and ability to achieve the DCFS goal of improved timeliness of family reunification. Training in support of caseworker and supervisory staff use and application of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is included.

**Update for June 30, 2025: CANS**

In May 2025 OLPD met with Dr. John Lyons and the Northwestern team along with leaders from the Office of Well-Being, Child Protection, Intact, Clinical, and Permanency. Dr. Verletta Saxon, Deputy of the Office of Wellbeing presented a proposal to Dr. Lyons on how DCFS will adapt Illinois child welfare's use of the CANS considering the adoption of the SAFE model. The SAFE model covers the safety and permanency domains of the CANS but does not current contain a full range of well-being indicators. DCFS will continue to use the CANS to capture wellbeing indicators.

Meeting Highlights:

- Acceptance of the DCFS Proposal:  
The Praed Foundation (originators of the CANS) accepted the attached proposal.
- Well-Being Indicators:  
The development and refinement of the well-being indicators are progressing. These indicators are designed to ensure a more holistic and strengths-based view of child and

family well-being. Dr. Epstein shared preliminary findings and ongoing efforts to test and validate these measures.

- **Local Control:**  
The Initial CANS training and certification processes in DCFS Foundations will continue to be implemented with adjustments as needed for updates. In addition, Praed supports the development of ongoing training and support opportunities to reinforce consistent practice and build long-term capacity at the local level.
- **Rethinking Supportive Learning:**  
A collaborative effort between the DCFS Office of Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) and the Praed Foundation will begin to explore how to align training systems in support of a shift from a certification-based approach to an ongoing, supportive learning model for staff. This partnership aims to create a more sustainable and developmentally focused training experience that fosters continuous growth and practice improvement.  
Next Steps for 2025 and 2026:
- **Training System Alignment:**  
Dr. Saxon will facilitate a connection between OLPD and the Praed Foundation's Training Department to initiate a conversation about shared learning infrastructure and training alignment.
- **Well-Being Indicator Testing:**  
Dr. Saxon and Dr. Epstein will continue their collaborative work to test and refine the well-being indicators. This will help ensure that the measures are both meaningful and practical for use in the field.
- Permanency's installation of the SAFE model will begin in release 8 of the IllinoisConnect implementation and is scheduled to begin in 2025.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Permanency SAFE Model**

Permanency has had exposure to the SAFE Model Overview Training. The release date for Permanency has been moved to 2026, following full DCP and Intact implementation in 2025.

- Adoption, Post-adoption and Guardianship Services: (Permanency Outcome #1)
- Training to improve the skill and ability of staff to achieve timeliness of adoption, such as termination of parental rights, adoption placement, subsidized guardianship, and adoption services. Trainings in this area are also intended to achieve timely permanency with a focus on guardianship and subsidized guardianship for youth when adoption is not viable to reduce long-term foster care and aging out of the DCFS system without permanency achievement. Adoption's installation of the SAFE model will begin in release 8 of the IllinoisConnect implementation and is scheduled to begin in 2025.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Adoptions SAFE Model**

Adoptions has had exposure to the SAFE Model Overview Training. The release date for Adoptions has been moved to the later part of 2026, following full DCP, Intact in 2025 and Permanency implementation in 2026. The Adoption Legal and Subsidy Training, and the Adoption Core Foundation are offered as pre-service. Adoption Legal and Subsidy is an in-service 2-day course. Data for this course will be shown in the in-service data set. The Adoption Core Foundation series (adoption's foundation pre-service training) is a 3-week course that may extend or overlap between multiple quarters and/or fiscal years. This adoption pre-service series is offered approximately on a quarterly cadence.

- Licensing of agencies, institutions, day care, and foster care homes: (Systemic Factor)

- Licensing’s installation of the SAFE model will begin in Release 7 and Release 8 of the IllinoisConnect implementation in 2025.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Licensing SAFE Model**

Licensing has had exposure to the SAFE Model Overview Training. The release date for Licensing has been moved to the later part of 2026, following full DCP, Intact in 2025 and Permanency implementation in 2026.

- Foster Caregiver Capacity: (Systemic Factor)
- Training to improve the skill and ability of staff to achieve the Department’s commitment of increasing the capacity of foster caregivers to improve the overall well-being of children served by the Department and to build parental capacity.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Foster Caregiver Capacity**

Pre-service training (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) and supplemental training and in-service trainings for traditional and relative/fictive kin caregivers is ongoing. In 2024 and 2025 the revised PRIDE trainings was translated into Spanish and additional supplemental modules will also be translated in 2025 through 2026. In July 2024 – June 2025 there was a slight uptick in requests for in-person PRIDE but most courses that were provided were completed as virtual instructor-led trainings (VILT) or e-Learning.

**PRIDE:**

Summation of All PRIDE Program Deliverables		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Figure 6.1A	Facilitator Led Training Participants Enrolled (In-person and Virtual)	7,491	10,133	8,466		26,090
Figure 6.1A	Facilitator Led Training Participants Completed (In-person and Virtual)	5,721	7,771	6,733		20,225
Figure 6.1B	eLearning Pre-Service Participants Completed	3,252	4,717	2,809		10,778
Figures 6.1 A&B	Combined Total Completions for PRIDE Trainings	8,973	12,488	9,542		31,003

- Child welfare supervision and management: (Systemic Factor)
- Target population is public and private supervisor and managers in any role, in a series of four Virtual Instructor-Led sessions (VILT);
- Training to build supervisory and managerial skills through Foundations for Supervisors and the Department Model of Supervisory Practice.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Child welfare supervision and management**

The chart below shows the course offering for supervisors and manager July 2024 – March 2025.

**Field Implementation Support:**

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Figure 5.1	CFTM 2-Day Pilot Training Participant Completion	9	0	7		16
Figure 5.2	MoSP Administrative Module Participant Completion	31	0*	17		48
Figure 5.2	MoSP Developmental Module Participant Completion	0*	21	22		43
Figure 5.2	MoSP Supportive Module Participant Completion	16	20	19		55
Figure 5.2	MoSP Clinical Module Participant Completion	18	20	0*		38
Figure 5.3	MoSP Coaching Hours Facilitated	47	51	57		155
Figure 5.5	Foundations Supervisors Day1 Module Participant Completion	25	25	9		59
Figure 5.5	Foundations Supervisors Day2 Module Participant Completion	24	26	8		58
Figure 5.5	Foundations Supervisors Day3 Module Participant Completion	22	23	7		52
Figure 5.5	Foundations Supervisors Day4 Module Participant Completion	20	24	8		52
Figure 5.6	Trauma 201 Participant Completion	85	78	69		232
Figure 5.7	Total Motivational Interviewing Skill Labs Participant Completions	24	0	9		33

\*Module was not scheduled to be facilitated this quarter.

Participants completing each module within a given series may or may not be the same participant taking multiple modules.

The Model of Supervisory Practice (MoSP) continues to be well received. The chart below breaks out specific data related to the MoSP and the associated coaching:

*Figure 5.2: MoSP Cumulative Completion Data by Module*

MoSP Module	Q1	Q2	Q3	YTD
Administrative	31	0*	17	48
Developmental	0*	21	22	43
Supportive	16	20	19	55
Clinical	18	20	0*	38

\*Module was not scheduled to be facilitated this quarter.

Participants completing each module within a given cohort may or may not be the same participant taking multiple modules.

MoSP participants are awarded DCFS Training Clock Hours for completing one-on-one coaching after each module. One clock hour is awarded for each coaching session completed per module. FISP employs various methods towards coaching completion inclusive of advanced scheduling of coaching sessions during training, diligent follow up to reschedule any sessions cancelled by the coachee and multiple outreach efforts via email and phone to get sessions scheduled. As a result of those persistent efforts, additional coaching sessions are consistently being completed for participants from prior cohorts. The chart below highlights the number of coaching hours FISP provided per module.

*Figure 5.3: MoSP Coaching Hours*

MoSP Module	Q1	Q2	Q3	YTD
Administrative	9	16	20	45
Developmental	13	18	18	49
Supportive	14	13	5	32
Clinical	11	4	14	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>155</b>

OLPD will continue to increase the number of Foundations offerings for investigations, intact, and permanency specialties to support the DCFS and CWCA hiring. Operations will continue providing their own field-led foundational training and exam preparation for SCR, and Adoptions and Licensing will continue to provide field-based foundational learning for Day Care, Agency and Institutions and Foster Care licensing. Turn-over in direct service positions continues to be high since the last 5-year plan and is expected to continue. This has led to hiring of staff that may not have a human service degree background or any child welfare work experience. In response, a Foundations will continue to be revised over the duration of this 5-year plan for all specialties and to support the installation of the SAFE model and will be offered through a combination of asynchronous (e-Learning) and synchronous, in-person ILT and VILT.

- **Update for June 30, 2025: Foundations**

OLPD provided additional trainings in 2024 and 2025 to increase the offerings in Northern and Southern region. The Foundations series taught by OLPD is offered on a rotating basis around the state for Investigation, Intact, and Permanency staff and supervisors. OLPD schedules the frequency and location of each new cohort based upon known or upcoming expected hiring trends. To achieve greater flexibility to meet the growing needs of the workforce, in 2024 OLPD added additional headcount of 14 DCFS trainers to the existing university-based and DCFS Investigations trainers. Foundations pre-service training series for Intact and Placement Specialty Staff is delivered in two parts. The first part is a Foundation 20-day Hybrid course for both Placement and Intact (10 days virtual and 10 days in-person). The first week of which contains the

self-directed Fundamental Modules that include content about the Nine Illinois Core Competencies along with other required modules. The second part is a series of post-foundation modules that must be completed within 90-days post-Foundations.

Pre-Service Completions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD Cohorts
Foundation for Child Welfare Specialist: Intact Family Casework	74	81	43		198
Foundation for Child Welfare Specialist: Placement/Permanency Casework Specialty	175	165	102		-442
Adoption Core	0	16	14		30
<b>Total Unique Participant Completions</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>159</b>		<b>670</b>

Continued In-Service training workshops and courses in support of safety, well-being, permanency, and prevention. Please refer to **the Training Cost Allocation Plan for a detailed listings of training courses including but not limited to:**

- OLPD will continue to offer all required pre-service and in-service training and required and needed over the next year of this plan. Once revised the Mandated Reporter internal training for staff and caregivers will be replaced with the new version for pre-service and in-service training.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Mandated Reporter Training**

The Mandated Reporter Training has been redesigned and will be released July 2025. This new Mandated Report Training better aligns with the Department’s current mission, vision, and values (MVV), will be accessed on average by 200,000 non-DCFS mandated reporters, and will replace the current public, staff, and caregiver facing trainings.

Enhanced Safety and Decision Making through Family First/Motivational Interviewing.

The Department has established mandatory ongoing professional development for all direct service staff and supervisors. A cornerstone in this effort is in-service training in support of the DCFS ongoing focus on worker safety. Although no longer administered through OLPD, DCFS has developed a Safety Facilitation Team that reports under the office of the Chief Security Officer. This team will facilitate field-based training for investigators on the use of OC pepper spray, basic and advanced tactical self-defense and will provide voluntary training to DCFS employees on CPR and emergency wound care. Procedural revisions and learning strategies will support improving the skill and ability of staff to demonstrate improved decision-making to reduce the reoccurrence of maltreatment for children that come into contact with DCFS through investigations, intact family services, or out-of-home care. The “Safety Reboot” was rolled out statewide in year 1 of the prior five-year plan.

- **Family First/Motivational Interviewing training (FF/MI).** “Motivational Interviewing Skills” is ongoing as required by the DCFS Family First Implementation Plan. The Motivational Interviewing for Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) is still being offered as an in-service monthly for veteran staff as a refresher and for Adoptions and Foster Care Licensing staff to support spread throughout all specialties that work in direct services with youth and families. It will continue to be offered for Investigative staff, but training to the Division of Child Protection (DCP) is not covered under Title IV-E. The course for investigators and child protection supervisors focuses on a Family First overview and Motivational Interviewing without the pieces related to casework SACWIS updates that only apply to CWS Intact and Permanency staff. Motivational Interviewing is also being provided by Intact Family Services to agencies that have community-based Family Intake contracts for families that do not have hotline or active investigations but have been referred for community-based resources for

family preservation. These trainings are not offered through OLPD and the para-professional staff that work with the Intake families are not required to complete DCFS pre-service or in-service trainings.

- The OLPD Field Implementation Support Program (FISP) operated through the Department's Workforce Development contract with UIUC has developed a Motivational Interviewing Skill Lab (MISL) series consisting of 4-6 voluntary in-services that are application focused and offer a deeper dive on aspects of MI to supplement the classroom learning. One session is dedicated to supporting supervisors and managers to coach staff on their use of MI and to use MI in supervision with staff.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Motivational Interviewing**

Between July 2024 and March 2025, 33 Motivational Interviewing Skill Lab (MISL) were completed. [See the data in the chart above for Child welfare supervision and management Figure 5.7. ]

*Continued use and expansion of simulations.*

- Simulation training has been offered consistently to investigators since the launch of the Department Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA) in 2016. During this 5-year plan, DCFS will continue its usage of this form of experiential learning adding the DCFS CPTA in Carbondale with Southern Illinois University (SIUC) and Illinois State University (ISU) to the current labs at Northern Illinois University (NIU) in Dekalb and in Chicago staffed by University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign by the end of year 1 of this 5-year plan. This will support expansion to new and veteran permanency DCFS and CWCA staff and supervisors. The goal is to have a simulation center in each region by the end of FY25. DCFS has created simulation facilitator positions under OLPD. In Q2 of FY25 the DCFS simulation team will launch in-service experiential learning using simulations to further enhance practice opportunities for Intact and Permanency staff that will focus on the use of Motivational Interviewing in the context of Child and Family Team Meetings. In year 2 of this 5-year plan, OLPD will also add two simulation shipping containers that will be outfitted like a trailer home that will be able to be moved to different field offices within a region to increase accessible to a simulated home environment that is not stationary to a specific university campus or field office.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Expansion of Simulations**

In April 2023 the DCFS Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA) at Illinois State University had its official ribbon cutting. While the DCFS CPTA-ISU has been conducting interviews to staff the program for investigations simulations, they have partnered with the DCFS Simulation team to deliver the 2-day simulation workshops for Intact and Permanency. in December 2024. DCFS CPTA at SIUC has not launched due to the university searches not yielding viable candidates or candidates declining the position. In April 2025 DCFS worked with the university to develop a co-director model and selections were made in May 2025 with anticipated start dates in August 2025. SIUC has established the required simulation environments and is participating scenario development and training. SIUC will continue staffing the program for anticipated launch in January 2026. As of June 2025 DCFS will have a simulation lab established in each region.

- The OLPD DCFS Simulation Team is developing 4 simulation workshops for Intact and Permanency staff and supervisors that will support the demonstration of MI skill application in the context of the Child and Family Team meeting. The combination of the Division of

Strategy and Performance’s creation of MI fidelity specialist and coaching positions will support the installation of MI and the use of the MICA scoring tool will provide evidence of practice adoption.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Simulation for Intact and Permanency**

In December 2024 OLPD introduced stand-alone in-person trainings at either the DCFS Simulations Lab in Chicago or DCFS Simulations Lab at ISU in Bloomington/Normal. The purpose of the workshops is to provide Intact and Permanency learners the information and tools necessary to seamlessly integrate motivational interviewing skills into Child and Family Team meetings. Each workshop lasts two consecutive days and is followed by a 1-hour debriefing and coaching session. The trainings are open to all DCFS and Child Welfare Contributing Agency (CWAC) direct service staff and supervisors who have completed both the Motivational Interviewing and Child and Family Team Meeting trainings in Foundations or as an in-service training. To date 15 staff/supervisors have completed the course. The pilot will run through December 2025 and is facilitated by the DCFS Simulation team.

- The Department has contracted with Deloitte to develop the new technology needed for the CCWIS implementation, now known as IllinoisConnect. As requested in FY23, the Department invested in immersive learning modules that provide virtual simulations to further expand OLPD’s experiential learning opportunities. Immersive learning was developed with and piloted in the last year of the previous 5-year plan. The needed enhancements will be scoped out by Deloitte for development and piloting in DCFS FY25 which will include introducing the virtual simulations through pre-service and in-service training with Intact and Permanency staff and supervisors. These immersive learnings will be for direct service staff and supervisors through the Learning Development Center (LDC) and supported through debriefing cohort lead by OLPD staff and/or subject matter experts. This innovation has zero direct budgetary impact on the Department as it is part of the IllinoisConnect rollout.

**UPDATE 2026 APSR (06/30/25): Immersive Learning**

Immersive Learning was launched as part of IllinoisConnect Release 4 in 2024. Immersive Learning training gives child welfare workers the opportunity to experience lifelike scenarios in a virtual reality environment where they can visit and interact in various “homes” and situations. This advanced training program uses 3D images of homes, people, furniture and objects that simulate situations they may encounter and decisions they will need to make to help ensure child safety. Employees can enroll in Immersive Learning trainings in the Learning and Development Center (LDC)

**Continued (in-service) training in support of the Illinois Core Practice Model.**

- The Illinois Core Practice Model was adopted as a cornerstone strategy for the Program Improvement Plan and will continue to be implemented across the state. The Illinois Core Practice Model includes three training components related to Family-centered, Trauma-informed, and Strength-based practice, sustained use of this practice model to strengthen supervisory practice, and enhanced use of Child and Family Team Meetings. The Department has fully embedded the core practice model and will continue to build in systems to implement and sustain the components of the Illinois Core Practice Model through in-service training courses and workshops that reinforce and support casework and supervisory practice. The Core Practice model is consistent with the SAFE model and be updated as needed during the SAFE implementation.

- The OLPD Field Implementation Support Program (FISP) operated through the Department’s Workforce Development contract with UIUC has continued training for CFTM pilots and the Meta Model Pilot. The training consists of a 3-hour facilitator-led training refresher for the targeted intact and permanency staff and supervisors followed by a 2-day facilitator-led deep dive into application of CFTM with a family-centered, trauma-informed and strength-based lens. After completing the two training sessions, additional systems and practice coaching, supervisory forums for support and implementation support will be provided by various staff under the Division of Strategy and Performance.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Training in support of the IL Core Practice Model**

Between July 2024 and March 2025, 16 2-Day Meta Model CFTM pilots were completed. This number will continue to decrease as the majority of staff in the positions on pilot teams have already been trained. [See the data in the chart above for Child welfare supervision and management Figure 5.1. ]

*Continued Long-Term Title IV-E Training to support recruitment of new staff into child welfare.*

OLPD continues to provide opportunities for college students to be introduced to child welfare in Illinois through colleges and university social work and human sciences schools in support of the Department to recruit/retain a qualified workforce.

- The Department has added a goal *to enhance partnerships with universities, create opportunities for professional development, and reduce barriers for upward mobility for DCFS and CWCA (formerly Community Based Provider or Purchase of Service) staff to its Strategic Plan.* In support of this, OLPD continues efforts to recruit college students for casework and supervisory careers with the DCFS and CWCAs, including Latino students with language skills in both Spanish and English. This is accomplished in four ways: Academic Internships, Job Shadowing, the University Partnership, and the provision of an Educational Stipend program. These programs will continue to be funded and expanded over the 5-years of this training plan.
- Academic Internships: DCFS currently has over 100 affiliation agreements nationwide to host students in Illinois unpaid internships in DCFS field-offices statewide.
- Job Shadowing: Job Shadowing Program is a unique experience offered through the DCFS Office of Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) that pairs eligible applicants who would like to learn more about a day in the life of DCFS staff. The DCFS Job Shadowing program provides up to 2 days of field-based observation within the applicant’s specialty area of interest. Shadowing opportunities are available year-round in DCFS offices throughout the state.
- University Partnership: The Department will expand the Title IV-E Long Term Education Program in partnership with colleges and universities to graduate students directly to casework and supervisory jobs. The DCFS Permanency Foundations is the curriculum for the partnership inclusive of the administration of required DCFS exams. This program not only provides a well-trained workforce, but also meets the recruitment needs for the next five years and beyond by expediting program students that complete their undergraduate or master program degree and seek hire at DCFS or a CWCA contracted agency as a Permanency worker. Participants have three years to be hired before they would be required to complete the Foundations Permanency course again. At the submission of this training plan for 2025-2029, a total of 13 universities are active and an additional 12 are in the progress of adopting the university partnership program or in development to begin their partnership in the program. An annual meeting is held with the current, new, and interested colleges and universities to ensure

alignment with the program goals. (See the list below of active partnership colleges and universities).

**FY25 University Partnership Progress**

<b>Educational Institution</b>	<b>Status</b>
Aurora University	Active Partner
Chicago State University	Active Partner
Dominican University	Active Partner
Governors State University	Active Partner
Illinois State University	Active Partner
Lewis University	Active Partner
Northeastern State University	Active Partner
Northern Illinois University	Active Partner
Saint Augustine College	Active Partner
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	Active Partner
University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign	Active Partner
University of Saint Francis	Active Partner
Western Illinois University	Active Partner
12 additional public or private colleges and university partnerships are being cultivated.	Estimated implementation in year 1 through 3 of this 5-year training plan.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Academic Internships and University Partnerships**

Of the partner universities, 11 are public institutions and 20 are private. There are 19 Schools of Social Work and 12 related degree programs with COA-approved majors that are currently accepted by DCFS for the Placement/Permanency Child Welfare Specialist position (Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Criminal Justice, Criminology, Education, Family & Consumer Sciences, Human Services, Master of Divinity, Psychology, Public Administration, Social Justice Studies, and Sociology).

**Academic Partnerships:**

<b>Project Updates</b>		<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Figure 7.1	Educational Institutions Collaborating with the University Partnership Program (Prospective and Fully Active last day of Qtr.)	30	32	31	33
Figure 7.2	Educational Institutions Fully Active with University Partnerships	14	14	15	15
Figure 7.2	Enrolled University Partnership Students	100	157	210	337
Figure 7.8	Active Academic Internships	88	66	75*	123*
Figure 7.11	Job Shadowing Placements Completed	15	6	7	28

*\*41 active internships carried over into Q3, and 34 new internships began in Q3, for a total of 75 Q3 internships = YTD 123*

- **Education Fellowship Pilot Program:** The pilot continues as DCFS is initiating contracts with public university schools of social work to implement the Pat McGuire Child Welfare Education Fellowship Pilot Program (Educational Stipend) to provide educational stipends to eligible undergraduate students in their junior or senior year enrolled in a Bachelor of Social Work Program (“BSW”) or eligible graduate students enrolled in a Master’s of Social Work Program (“MSW”) at a participating public university in Illinois.
  - The amount of a stipend is up to a maximum of \$10,000 each academic year for a maximum of two academic years, up to a maximum total of \$20,000 for the two academic years combined for each eligible student. The stipends must be used to pay the costs of tuition, university fees, and books.

- As a condition of receiving a stipend, eligible students must enter into agreements with DCFS in which they agree to, inter alia,: (i) complete the BSW or MSW course of study in which the eligible student is enrolled at the participating university, (ii) become a licensed Child Welfare Employee in Illinois prior to graduation, (iii) accept full-time employment in a direct services position at a CWCA located anywhere in Illinois within six months of graduation and, (iv) maintain full-time employment in a direct services position at a CWCA for at least 9-months for each academic semester the student received a stipend from DCFS. Stipend recipients who fail to complete the program education and employment requirements must repay the stipends received from DCFS. The Pilot Program will last six academic years and we are in year three out of the six academic years. This pilot will conclude before the end of this 5-year training plan and DCFS will evaluate the feasibility of continuing this educational fellowship. OLPD is developing an internal tracking system for data on the completion of the work payback commitments for staff that sign the student agreement and receive the funds.
- DCFS currently has expanded participation to all state universities with a social work program with no restriction on the number of students from each participating university. This aligns with but is not restricted to state universities that teach the DCFS Foundations for Permanency.

**Update for June 30, 2025: Educational Fellowship**

The Educational Fellowship has been expanded in 2025 to include private college and university Schools of Social Work. In 2024 DCFS awarded 12 stipends between July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024. Two (2) stipends were awarded at Governor’s State University, one (1) stipend at Chicago State University, and nine (9) stipends at Northeastern Illinois University. Only one (1) of the 12 Eligible Students awarded a stipend in FY2024 chose to execute an IDCFS-Student Agreement.

OLPD will also continue to support these DCFS Workforce Development strategies:

- Develop relationships with University Social Work and other related programs in Illinois to allow graduate students to conduct an internship with DCFS while earning their degree and develop a path to hire new graduates committed to working in the field of child welfare.

**Update for June 30, 2025: See above - Educational Fellowship**

- Provide pathways for easy access for individualized training for their current program or to a refresher class through the reinstatement of the DCFS 705-A program to offset costs for DCFS staff to attend ongoing professional development workshops, conferences, and additional college level courses.

**Update for June 30, 2025: 705A**

From July 2024 – June 2025 the 705A fund has seen a 50% increase in applications and stipends awarded. OLPD is working with the Office of Child and Family Policy (OCFP) to revise the 705A application form to make it more user friendly and with Budget and Finance to offer upfront payment via purchase order (PO) for events or institutions that accept a PO with at least 8-weeks advance notice. The majority of request fr 705A in 2024 and 2025 have been for professional certification and college courses.

- Support the existing workforce through the full implementation of the DCFS Model of Supervisory Practice.

**See - UPDATE for June 30, 2025): Child welfare supervision and management**

- Improve implementation support of our Core Practice Model across the system, with the intention of shifting system culture toward recognizing families as the experts on their strengths and needs, with intentional alignment with the SAFE model.

**See - UPDATE for June 30, 2025): SAFE Model Implementation**

- Develop multi-disciplinary training (judges and attorneys as trainers) for caseworkers on testifying and court procedures to improve their knowledge of court process, expectations and building relationships with court stakeholders to improve communication and caseworker retention.

**See - UPDATE for June 30, 2025): Multi-disciplinary training**

The strategies continue and are supported by ongoing deliveries and new and revised curricula. In 2025 a key focus will be on updating all virtual and eLearning course materials to comply with new federal guidelines.

**Goal Summary: Updates provided above**

Foster Care (Permanency) services: (Permanency Outcomes #1 and #2)

- Improved staff skill and ability to achieve timeliness of family reunification.
- Caseworker and supervisory staff use and application of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS).
- Installation of the SAFE model for Permanency.

Continued Long-Term Title IV-E Training to support recruitment of new staff into child welfare.

- Enhanced partnerships with universities teaching Foundations for Permanency.
- Enhanced partnerships with universities for academic internships.
- Creation of opportunities for professional development.
- Reduce barriers for upward mobility for DCFS.
- Offer opportunities for students seeking employment in CWCA (formerly Community Based Provider or Purchase of Service) as direct service staff or supervisors of direct service staff.