**Participant Guide**

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| **Module Name: Building relationships with community providers**  |
| Description: The director will learn who the community partners are for child welfare and the importance of partnership and collaboration. |
| Learning Objectives:* Knowledge: Describe and define key partners and demonstrate understanding of the need for relationship and collaboration
* Skill: Identify key partners and establish relationships that assist in meeting the needs of the agency and the partners
* Attitude: Promote collaborative interactions with key partners both within the county and across counties.
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| Reading and Activities: 2 hoursCoaching: 2 hours |

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| Segment #1: 2 hoursTime: 2 hours |
| Learning Objective | Director can identify the key community partners and assess the current level of collaboration and relationship.  |
| Content | * Community partnerships and collaboration are an essential component of a child welfare director’s responsibilities. The work of the child welfare organization depends on the relationships in their community with their public, private non-profit service agencies, the court, tribes or the Native American community and their resource families.
* Although staff at all levels will develop relationships with these various entities at their level it is critical that the child welfare director develops and maintains healthy relationships with the leaders of these entities. For example, the child welfare director should meet regularly with the dependency court judges or the presiding judge of dependency court. In such meetings, the child welfare director can provide status reports on staffing, operational strengths and challenges, hear the same about the court, and invite feedback from the court about the perception of staff work and about shared concerns. A strong relationship with the court is important in child welfare.
* Partnerships with families, communities and tribes helps to identify and address system barriers, and create comprehensive culturally responsive practices, supports and services for the children and families being served. Through the building of strong partnerships, grounded in the principles of the Core Practice Model, the work of keeping young people safe, living with permanent families, supported by connections, and attending to their trauma and well-being becomes a responsibility of the entire community, not just the child welfare system.
* Building and sustaining strong partnerships can only be meaningfully achieved when child welfare services staff partner through a lens of cultural humility, i.e., acknowledging gaps in one’s knowledge of others, being open to new ideas, and accepting that people different from us are the experts in their own experiences and views of the world in which we all live.
* One of the most important elements for successful relationships with partner agencies is for the director to be open and willing to hear from the partners what the child welfare agency isn’t doing well in addition to the things they do well.
* Active listening is a critical skill for the child welfare director. While listening, practice listening at levels 2 and 3. A director should not focus on trying to solve the speaker’s problem but on the content of what they are saying and the emotion with which they are communicating the message. Use of powerful questions will deepen the understanding of their perspective. It’s helpful to then summarize what was heard in an effort to ensure clarity about the message but also to assure that you were truly listening to their communication.
* While listening in this way gives you clarity about the message they are communicating, it also allows for the development of concrete next steps that can be communicated back.
* Follow up and follow through by the director are essential to maintaining successful and thriving partnerships. This is a visible indicator to others of the director’s commitment. The director’s ability to communicate back and follow through develops trust among the partners and strengthens collaboration.
* A critical element to the success of partnership building is exploring obstacles impeding the initial engagement, ongoing sharing of responsibilities or long term collaboration of partnerships. Such obstacles can range from language barriers to power differences to overworked staff. Addressing power differentials is especially important to setting expectations and boundaries of influence that align with realities.
* A child welfare director is the public face of child welfare for the agency. It cannot be overstated how important it is for the director to prioritize community partner relationships and focus on developing and nurturing those relationships. There will be instances where a director will need to miss important meetings with partners and it is always appropriate and important to send a delegate in one’s place (if the meeting allows). However, delegating authority should be used judiciously as partners need to know that they are important to the work of child welfare and prioritizing meeting with them will assist in accomplishing that.
* The child welfare director can be a leader in having conversations with community partners about the need for all agencies to share resources and funding, and to partner together in delivery of services and programming. The director must approach these conversations with the end goal being a win/win situation for all involved.
* Invite community, Tribal and cross-agency partners (e.g., the courts, children's and parents’ attorneys, CASA) to pinpoint how institutional actions are, or are not, organized to support intended system and community goals. Determine which stakeholders have a perspective to share about the local child welfare services system and identify meaningful roles for each in the system review process. Establishing clear feedback loops to encourage the exchange of perspectives during and following the review will ensure ongoing engagement and improvement over time.
* Ongoing post-system analysis between child welfare and its partners can offer Tribes, communities, system leaders and staff shared opportunities to improve outcomes through barrier identification and action planning at practice system levels.

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| Activities | 1. Review NCCWI elearning on Creating a Supportive Community context
2. Read “Building and Sustaining Child Welfare Partnerships”
3. Read “Detente and Decorum for Child Welfare Leaders for partnering with Tribes and Native American communities”
4. Adding to your meeting landscape document:
* Identify the key contacts in the public partner agencies and reach out to each for an initial meeting.
* Identify non-public agency partners important to the agency and initiate contact with these non-public partners.
1. Complete the “How Well Are We Partnering” tool on those partnerships rated a 2 on your meeting landscape document.
2. Review the list of agency and community partners for the child welfare agency and identify who are the key community partners in your county that you will want to reach out to and develop relationships with.
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| Materials | 1. National Child Welfare Workforce Institute elearning: Creating a Supportive Community Context

<http://courses.ncwwi.org/ncwwi2/public/las/storymods/quicks/community/story.html>1. Building and Sustaining Child Welfare Partnerships. National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care. (2010). Washington, DC: Children’s Bureau. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1F7ouOpg69XJwFBuF71JStVksrF0nYRB1/view?usp=sharing>
2. Detente and Decorum for Child Welfare Leaders <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nAM0cwPQ_anqWWY2NBGDyxsF97Gx71A2/view?usp=sharing>
3. How Well Are We Partnering? An assessment tool <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1UOEvinfoz2pMg8rwbIw8w49qPGY14Mm2>
4. Lists of key public, private, community partners important to child welfare.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rgfRLpPWyOP8suvWS8QCms7rUPSsHnbL-j4bJhTLejk/edit?usp=sharing> |
| Preparation for next module | Review module 6 content and identify the areas that you are already familiar with and those you may need to spend some time preparing for prior to the next coaching session. |

**Resources**

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute elearning: Creating a Supportive Community Context

<http://courses.ncwwi.org/ncwwi2/public/las/storymods/quicks/community/story.html>

Building and Sustaining Child Welfare Partnerships. National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care. (2010). Washington, DC: Children’s Bureau. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1F7ouOpg69XJwFBuF71JStVksrF0nYRB1/view?usp=sharing>

Lists of key public, private, community partners important to child welfare.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rgfRLpPWyOP8suvWS8QCms7rUPSsHnbL-j4bJhTLejk/edit?usp=sharing>

California Core Practice Model Engagement, Relationships & Partnership Toolkit

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13EKVU7Z6geYNNoryfH1bok9s8U_pq3wv/view?usp=sharing>

How Well Are We Partnering? An assessment tool <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1UOEvinfoz2pMg8rwbIw8w49qPGY14Mm2>

Understanding Culture and Diversity in Building Communities. (Community toolbox, a service of the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas).

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/culture-and-diversity/main>

Detente and Decorum for Child Welfare Leaders <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nAM0cwPQ_anqWWY2NBGDyxsF97Gx71A2/view?usp=sharing>