

What Parents Say About...

Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities

Children's Trust Fund Alliance is a national membership organization that provides support to state children's trust funds (CTFs) and strengthens their efforts to prevent child maltreatment. Since 2006, the Alliance has developed and partnered with networks of parents to elevate their voices to policymakers and to join with them in developing policies and practices that help support families and lead to better outcomes for children and youth.



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Children's Trust Fund Alliance collected more than 70 responses from parents to a Request for Information (RFI) on Methods and Leading Practices for Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through Government. The RFI was issued by the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President.

The Alliance reached out to its parent networks – Alliance National Parent Partnership Council, Birth Parent National Network, the Birth and Foster Parent Partnership and the Birth Parent Advisory Committee. Parents from these networks provided their perspectives in the following five survey areas:

- ✓ Stakeholder and community engagement (page 1)
- ✓ Equity assessments and strategies (page 6)
- ✓ Barrier and burden reduction (page 9)
- ✓ Procurement and contracting (page 11)
- ✓ Financial assistance (page 13)

Parents also commented in the survey's two optional sections – feedback loops (page 15) and additional information (page 16).

Thank you to all of the parents who took time to make their voices heard. This document is a summary of their responses.

✓ *The Federal Government can better engage in the underserved communities by meeting them where they are and getting from them what matters to them. Hearing their voices.*



STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How can the Federal Government better engage in meaningful and impactful ways with underserved communities?

- ✓ Build connections, plan events directly at low-income communities. It's difficult for those to find transportation, have internet access, find childcare, and sometimes those underserved individuals may be scared/nervous or become overwhelmed due to mental health/cognitive deficits.
- ✓ By funding programs that impact the underserved communities
- ✓ Educate and train workers with empathy and less bias, be aware of needs in our poor communities, make services available to everyone with less restrictions.
- ✓ By providing living wages – requiring paid time off and other family friendly work standards.
- ✓ By giving minorities a seat at the table
- ✓ Actually, listen to the community about what they need and implement it...not do a bunch of studies from outside sources and try to follow data and not hear the voices of the communities.

✓ *In all honesty, the Racial Equity Toolkit would be the best practice to take up and use to ensure that racial equity is implemented from the beginning through the end. Meaningful and impactful translates to inclusion and equity. Underserved communities have already been identified through the vast amount of research and data. Now is the time to put the data to good use by really focusing on the things underserved communities need and lack, i.e. affordable housing, influx of businesses within the community, safe policing, reliable and accessible public transportation, and academically competing schools, etc.*

✓ *Fund community resources – allow the community to serve its own community.*

✓ *Listen. See their struggles. Visit their communities. Fix the issues that are blocking them. Fund their schools and communities better.*

- ✓ Better engagement with communities can occur by increasing program funding and making sure that program services are available and attainable for the families in the communities.
- ✓ Hold agency employees accountable when they break Policy and Procedure
- ✓ The federal government can team up with public schools and community programs that cater to underserved communities. Going out into those communities and conducting surveys may be another way to assess their needs.
- ✓ Try to find more ways to be involved with the community
- ✓ By partnering with those individuals in those communities that have been impacted the most.
- ✓ Listen to families and actually do something with the information shared.
- ✓ Listen to what community members share about their community's needs and work with the community members to address them.
- ✓ They can talk to the community's leaders
- ✓ Develop more programs that help families get involved and feel better about themselves
- ✓ Impactful engagement means meeting the underserved where they are at, and to not expect them to come to centralized regional offices. Social work needs to embrace intersectionality, be relational, be decentralized, with an emphasis on building protective factors with vulnerable children, youth, and families. It must take a priority over the safety, security, and liabilities of privileged professionals and institutions. This is done by social workers moving into, becoming embedded, invested in, and part of those underserved communities.
- ✓ Target families who are receiving government benefits or children attending Title I schools
- ✓ By reaching them IN their communities, not through state agencies, but local community groups
- ✓ Universal child care is number one, greater access to low-income housing or affordable housing, universal health care, university education free for households making less than \$150,000, community safety solutions without the overt brutality, covert cruelty for child welfare, juvenile justice and criminal behavior.
- ✓ Include these communities into the discussions and decisions and provide preventative services.
- ✓ Community forums that would allow for an open dialogue among minorities and those in government.
- ✓ Town Halls, more diversity hires and providing more and inclusive methods of accessing services and information.
- ✓ All grants should require a certain percentage (15-30%) of funding to be spent on meaningful community engagement in underserved communities (like community cafes, parent advisory committees, peer support groups). This would allow funding to address barriers for participation (child care, food/meal, lost wages, and transportation) and honors their subject matter expertise with a quality stipend (\$30/hour). This meaningful engagement also creates an employment pipeline for community organizations as families increase their stability and are connected to community resources.
- ✓ Use federal dollars to improve conditions in the housing, judicial, health, and environmental needs in our underserved communities.
- ✓ Provide more funding for these programs
- ✓ Family engagement
- ✓ Listening sessions where people get paid, traveling door to door in communities that have been historically harmed by the federal government, paying them to hear their priorities
- ✓ Do a real community assessment for what support services are needed in those communities and follow through with funds to develop them or contract with existing agencies to provide additional/varied services
- ✓ Resources available after 5pm
- ✓ Prevention seems to be key in keeping families together. Prevention is education. Just as our children have school, we parents need to go back to school. It would be helpful if parents could learn about the vast changes our children are dealing with.
- ✓ Consider peer support/community ambassador programs that emphasize relationships and trust to help families navigate needs and services.
- ✓ Help families stay united and those families who need help be reunited.

- ✓ To begin, the Fed's must understand the differences between engage, shared power and authenticity. This work first begins with the Fed's developing why they want to partner with communities. Define what communities means and become proximate to those most impacted by policies.
 - ✓ By providing paid opportunities to share lived experience on all projects built by the federal government in order to get experience in real time so that we can help come to solutions with the problems we face.
 - ✓ The Federal Government can work closely with local stakeholders in communities to address the needs at a microlevel. This includes support in both financial and structural ways.
 - ✓ Family Resource Center Funding and Events
 - ✓ Resource Centers.
 - ✓ Family resource centers and programs about financial education,
 - ✓ By sending individuals into the communities to build relationships and advocate for their needs. To actually invest in creating opportunities to build up the communities based on their needs and opinions. Real change, though, has to start with AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS.
 - ✓ Support Faith-Based and local Not-For-Profits without a lot of RED TAPE attached to Funding.
 - ✓ Churches
 - ✓ Create teams within communities that will help identify effective and transformative leaders that have been serving youth and families in the communities. Federal government leaders need to clearly define their meaning of engagement and see if it aligns with the needs and interests of the communities. Culturally humble people that will meet people where they are and work to motivate and empower people can use the "system" to motivate and improve the quality of life in their communities.
 - ✓ By providing services based on the testimonials of those in underserved communities
 - ✓ Visit the communities, do a community event, take polls, connect, and create an action plan to meet the needs proposed by the people that live in the communities.
 - ✓ Eliminate the AFSA timelines, allow IV-E \$\$ to be used for concrete services (including housing assistance), as well as non EBPs,
- either define reasonable efforts or require diligent/active efforts in all cases and provide more resources for necessary services.
 - ✓ Create and standardize solid practices to elevate the voices of family.
 - ✓ Breakdown the stigma
 - ✓ Utilize people from those particular communities
 - ✓ Include members of the underserved communities in all conversations and committees.
 - ✓ Provide access to information and provide resources on generational trauma and the effects on a community, in all areas of practice. Create diverse teams of true stakeholders to dictate practices for every social service. Bring services directly to underserved communities, by utilizing community "homes" where services are offered.
 - ✓ By reaching out to the undeserved communities. See what their needs are.
 - ✓ Go into those communities and talk to them about the issues at a town city hall.
 - ✓ Credit bureau reporting should be able to claim renter's credit. Because of low credit rating, they pay higher for the thing they want to buy when it comes to contract, buying. Black Lives Matter should he giving that money to the black lives that matters in those communities.
 - ✓ Talk with community members and learn about the different cultures and what impacts them the most.
 - ✓ Connect with grassroots organizations to help with outreach and engagement
 - ✓ Be in community. Invest in community.
 - ✓ Listening to people with lived experience. Getting out there and seeing and experiencing these troubles with people. Seeing how they can help and following it through. We need help with housing affordable housing. And accountability for social workers and law enforcement. Meeting family's right where they are and treating the problems families face as all of our problems.
 - ✓ They can help by appointing the right people in those areas and make sure that the grant money has an overseer.
 - ✓ More funds, more boots on the ground in those areas, earn trust back
 - ✓ Community healing and community building initiatives

✓ *Don't tokenize them. If you ask for what people want, be prepared to act based on what you hear. Show up with humility, recognizing how you may have been a source of pain and trauma in their lives, perhaps without due cause. Provide resources and let them decide what they need.*

✓ *Educating the underserved about their options. Also, changing the narrative. Traditionally underserved communities do not trust the government. How do you build that trust? Can you even build that trust?*

✓ *Pass laws regarding equal pay and increase the minimum wage. Require equitable distribution of funding for schools. Increase funding for HUD in order to increase the availability of affordable housing. Repeal ASFA which give states funding to increase adoptions and none to maintain children in their families of origin. Remove marijuana (THC) as a controlled and dangerous illegal substance. Pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act or similar legislation.*

✓ *Agencies need to be a part of building welcoming, safe spaces for everyone within physically and socially distant underserved communities. Stop expecting families to come to a mobile service unit or a regionally centralized office. My local community center is a prime example of what works better. Established in 2018, it offers support to the underserved in three rural communities within a 30-minute drive. When the pandemic shut things down, it continued to offer contact-free services to disadvantaged neighborhoods. As they reopened, they invited everyone – privileged and disadvantaged – to come back and be part of building a welcoming space for all, but with the intentional inclusion of, and outreach to, those needing the most support. Federal and state agency field workers should have offices in spaces like this. Social and public services should be offered daily within underserved community centers. Government workers must serve alongside other professionals, community leaders, and family leaders to build community centers as welcoming places for all.*

- ✓ Change policies and laws to make child welfare services less litigious, less influence from the judiciary. Change child abuse reporting policies to family support policies. Change child welfare from being overseen at the state level to community level oversight. Change the child welfare system to be family and community focus (support smaller community formed/grassroots organizations), support programs at community level provide less policing and more support to children. Reshape the educational system to provide more than just educational services but focus more on familiar support and wholistic family services.
- ✓ We need parent mentor programs available nationally and having additional funding streams available. This could include ensuring the Title 4-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse reviews those programs quickly.

What practices should agencies put in place to reach underserved communities in rural areas or underserved communities that otherwise are not able to visit with policymakers?

- ✓ Anti-bias training on all levels.
- ✓ Conduct needs assessments, look at statistics in areas, make sure the people don't feel embarrassed... (you can send packets to them) also add strength-based strategies!! So, make sure to embrace and incorporate their strengths, accomplishments, goals, ideas! Allow them to feel needed rather than them feeling "needy." Mail pamphlets or anything that can help.
- ✓ Agencies should inform and educate the community, through newspaper, media, social media clinics and schools and offering programs and education to and for everyone with less requirements (i.e., legal documents, criminal record, etc.)
- ✓ Give these families a voice by having opportunities for feedback
- ✓ Family resource centers – increase home visiting and free high-quality preschool
- ✓ Virtual access
- ✓ Involve them at their table...make a point to go to them and hear their voice (town hall meetings) and go back to policymakers with input from these communities. Also bring them to the policymakers and let them voice their concerns and needs of the community.

- ✓ Reliable and accessible transportation that does not stop early evenings. Policymakers could make themselves available in the evenings to take into consideration those who work during the day or utilize virtual meetings.
- ✓ Allow for interview to be done online
- ✓ Create a platform (Federal) that parents and or family members can voice their opponents and concerns about how to create resources in the community.
- ✓ Surveys can be used as well as info sessions or community town halls. Local events for the community that include fun activities may increase awareness as well.
- ✓ Find ways to reach those communities and ask them what ways make sense for them to provide feedback.
- ✓ Grassroots, boots on the ground, relationships
- ✓ Send out an online survey to get their perspectives on what needs they may have in their communities.
- ✓ By calling or emailing communities to see who can help
- ✓ Meet with them and allow them to have their voices heard to able to understand what their needs are
- ✓ Agencies can host community feedback sessions to act as a messenger to policymakers
- ✓ Regular visits with people in their communities: at local Community Action Programs, Neighborhood Resource Centers, Family Resource Centers, and churches
- ✓ Agencies should have regular meetings in neighborhood community centers with people impacted by these policies, plus community members on committees, task forces and boards.
- ✓ Allow for voices to be heard through community surveys and community leadership meetings. Also, find ways for the underserved to have access to policymakers.
- ✓ Opportunities for minorities or the underserved to have a voice in what they need and how those needs could be met based on their own cultural values.
- ✓ Community coalitions should work with parent leaders to speak during public comment at public meetings with policy makers.

- ✓ Boots on the ground. Have social workers and community members be more involved when it comes to policy making. Go to the legislative sessions and give their input.
- ✓ Regular community holdings of cafés for parents and families
- ✓ Peer Support
- ✓ Setting up opportunities at town halls for feedback, sending staffers out to hear from constituents, transparent communication of opportunities and new policies
- ✓ Increased access, Wi-Fi, information in public and mobile places
- ✓ Practices should be used in ways to hear their voices in the underserved communities and listen to what they think and then hypothesize around their responses.
- ✓ School outreach
- ✓ Perhaps having a variety of community providers – doctor offices, utility agencies, etc. – do a brief screening with three-four crisis questions to identify families that need help. (Are you homeless or in danger of losing your housing? Are there any unmet medical needs? Have you gone without any of your basic needs [food, shelter, clothing] in the last 30 days?)
- ✓ Community forums are a good way for reaching our parents. Schools, however, could be a better place to reach them. Assistance with transportation would be a helpful tool in getting families to these classes. Big barriers can be removed by providing a gas card or providing a ride for parents to get to school and also providing childcare while attending the classes.
- ✓ Work with the community to complete community asset mapping. This allows underserved communities the opportunity to highlight their unique strengths while helping to identify where external resources are needed to meet basic needs.
- ✓ Values-based practices. Anti-oppressive social work practices. Build relationships and mandate that CPS incorporate feedback into CFSR and/or service plan delivery. Make non-profits and government funded institutions build bridges and communication pipelines.
- ✓ Focus groups.
- ✓ Create intentional outreach and hold agency personnel accountable to ensure underserved populations and areas have equal access to the services in outreach.
- ✓ There needs to be a communication line for the rural communities so that they can have a voice in these discussions. Technology that works in urban areas may not meet the needs of these communities. Because that often is the case, there does need to be a human presence for needed communication.
- ✓ Family Resource Centers in the city provided with funding to travel
- ✓ Help young parents be better parents and help incarcerated parents have an opportunity to be a reunited family.
- ✓ Agencies can seek out the voices of the underserved people in rural communities by sending representatives to ask their opinions and/or provide feedback on policies that affect their community. Sending out a needs assessment is also a good way to gain information that could shape policy.
- ✓ Operate in the communities served. Hire from the community.
- ✓ Now that there is Zoom, being more strategic with community meetings/town halls to hear the voices and connect with the people.
- ✓ Provide adequate compensation for involvement. Involve lived experts in genuine decision making.
- ✓ Go to rural areas and to meet with members of these communities in places where they are comfortable.
- ✓ Identify people from those communities to act as liaisons/communication and information gathering teams. Provide whatever concrete supports that are necessary to make this communication possible.
- ✓ More advocacy
- ✓ Support and fund Parent Advisory Councils.
- ✓ Direct mail provides multiple ways of providing feedback; posters at doctor offices, urgent care, emergency rooms
- ✓ Agencies should build in community champions who will bring the work to the community, empowering the members of the community to grow the effort, and bring relatability and peer support.
- ✓ Have educational meetings.
- ✓ Maybe send them a letter granting a gift card when participating in a survey
- ✓ Quarterly meetings
- ✓ First, we need to ask them for their input on what they need. Communication is the beginning.
- ✓ *Try to make things easier and less difficult – we need help.*
- ✓ *Have mobile units that can go to rural and underserved communities to identify the needs and address the needs. Set up one-stop shop locations to include assistance to address issues of disparities and needs. Build community clinics to address health needs. Provide safe and low-income housing in underserved communities that are comparable to the minimum wage earnings.*
- ✓ *Reach out to youth and build a bridge, build and foster relationships with people in the places they frequent. Have less meetings and more community connections, face-to-face or virtually. Ask questions. Reach people through the people they already trust and believe truly care about them. This will not exploit them but help them.*

✓ *Make sure the voices of the people are represented, nurtured and celebrated.*

✓ *Put measures in place to hold yourselves accountable to families and the community. Systems/government ask a LOT of families, especially in child welfare. Meet communities halfway.*

✓ *Bringing parent voice to the table is helpful. We learn what worked and what isn't working by listening to parents who have used the programs. Conduct surveys with parents who are involved in the child welfare system. Recommend that policy makers listen to those who were affected by the policy and ask what was missing and how they would make it more realistic.*

- ✓ It should be affordable and available to all those that live in those places and information should be provided on how to qualify; should also be able to qualify for free lunches. Help the community involved in local politics to understand the bigger politics. Let them know that their voices matter, by being heard and seeing change.
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Always have someone go into communities and talk with community members. Invite them to the table and allow them to talk. Be open minded and listen.
- ✓ Provide community listening and input sessions to get opinions about policies before they are made. Connect with the community once policies are implemented to see if they are working, and follow up and be willing to change policies if they don't serve the community.
- ✓ Have the agencies come to the area that needs the most work.
- ✓ Help with prevention. Listening to understand rather than to respond and build a case.

- ✓ Make parent mentor programs available! Increase substance abuse treatment facilities for families and increase the threshold for state agencies to make decisions about removal of a child from their home with their parents and provide families with supports and services to prevent removals.
- ✓ Require Congress and others to visit/schedule listening tours of their Districts. Conduct surveys similar to the Census to obtain data on what the local communities see as their greatest needs. Hire local community members to be a part of the Community economic development teams. Whatever happened to the Empowerment Zones created under Clinton's administration? Create more local training programs at the Community College level for the new jobs of tomorrow.
- ✓ INTENSE Family Preservation
- ✓ Town meetings, address language and cultural barriers
- ✓ Policy makers should be from the rural communities and from the communities in need. More representation is needed from underserved areas.



EQUITY ASSESSMENTS AND STRATEGIES

What are some of the approaches and methods for assessing the equity of Federal policies and programs?

- ✓ Removing language that allows discrimination.
- ✓ I'm not sure what the steps are but like many programs, it's difficult to get the right person...is there a simple website/number/person of contact to eliminate the stress? I don't know how programs are listed for people to learn about. Many don't know that they can search programs. And please make the policies and programs written in a way that is understandable to those that may have learning disabilities, cognitive deficits, lower IQ functioning, etc.
- ✓ Education, less requirements, no proof of income needed, etc.
- ✓ Data that shows the federal policies and programs are working on behalf of those it is supposed to serve.

- ✓ Who helped formulate policy? Are there ways of looking outside the box?
- ✓ Go into the community and gather input. Allow community members to share how they feel.
- ✓ Using the Racial Equity Toolkit would help identify and deconstruct methods that are not working, rebuild what is currently working, change the way decisions are made and how the work is considered, and provide healing and transformation of structures, the environments and the people. (Retrieved from the Racial Equity Toolkit)
- ✓ Make sure that the people who are affected by lack of service and resources are part of the discussion.
- ✓ Using the numbers from research and data can help with analyzing the equity of Federal policies and programs.
- ✓ Involving those who have lived experience in the CQI process.

- ✓ Display equity at the Federal Level. Be what you want to see.
- ✓ Check data every year to see who needed help.
- ✓ Ask the people in the programs receiving the services to get their perspectives on how they feel the program is doing serving people equally.
- ✓ Everyone has the right to better themselves and succeed in life.
- ✓ Hire the emerging community and family leaders who come from and are experts in the needs of disadvantaged communities. You cannot serve these places equitably by knowledge and data alone. Lived experts can be a more welcoming ear that listens, as well as a guide to both the underserved and the government on how to better meet the needs of disadvantaged communities.
- ✓ Educating those in underserved communities about their eligibility for many programs that exist. A lot of communities are unaware they qualify for certain programs.
- ✓ Programs affect people in different ways. For instance, there are more Black children in foster care than in the general population.
- ✓ Good data collection, consultation with universities and watchdog agencies who will study the data, studies and surveys seeking feedback from impacted people; Meetings with community members IN their communities.
- ✓ Community surveys
- ✓ Accurate and ethical data
- ✓ Providing an opportunity for people to express their opinions about whether the program works for their values and beliefs. We should not impose one set of values or beliefs on all communities. We have to make sure everyone's values and beliefs are considered.
- ✓ Federal policies and programs should assess equity efforts by tracking the improvement of the social determinants of health in underserved communities.
- ✓ The policies should be reviewed by equity liaisons to determine if the policies make sense and are truly equitable.
- ✓ Visiting the clinics and seeing firsthand what they are doing to help the underserved. You can always do surveys. Data mining, looking at the charts of those they serve to see if everyone is getting the same services.
- ✓ Constituent feedback and engagement
- ✓ Survey the community. Ask them if they feel policies and programs are equitable. Listen to the community.
- ✓ In a program evaluation, ensuring that outcomes are assessed by very specific racial subgroups (not just OMB categories, but considering nationality, tribal affiliation, language spoken, sexual orientation, and gender identity) – to see if there is disproportionality and disparity. Identify how money has been allocated to different populations and programs – this information may indicate if people's needs are being met or help provide information about root causes of problems (e.g., poverty/income inequality/lack of wealth).
- ✓ Make efforts to reach people instead of requiring people to come. Use leaders of diverse populations.
- ✓ Assess the equity of Federal policies and programs by receiving input from the individuals receiving the Federal programs benefits.
- ✓ Ask representatives of many different communities, not just the people who are frequently asked or know how you want them to respond before you even ask.
- ✓ Engage people of different cultures.
- ✓ Data needs to be collected on ease of access to services as well as asking how the program worked. Families need to be included in the assessment of benefits for programs and policies. Evaluation needs to be funding with programming as more than an afterthought or a satisfaction survey.
- ✓ Making sure we all have equal opportunities, and if someone is lacking in one area others can help so that it is an equal opportunity.
- ✓ Federal policies should be using targeted universalism in their approach if they are going to be truly equitable in their approaches and methods. All communities need to have a voice in the discussions and highlighting their specific needs. Policies and programs need to clearly address these diverse needs and not put one community's needs above another.
- ✓ Provide a chance to reunite incarcerated fathers and mothers with their children as soon as possible and provide ways to help the family.
- ✓ Fund programs that are working in bigger communities for rural areas.

✓ *Are the highest risk populations accessing those programs? Can folks with disabilities access and use those programs? Do they have inherent barriers? Create systems for people with disabilities and you are creating systems for everyone.*

✓ *ACE's evaluations are a great way to see where programs should be. What is the ACE score of the individuals receiving services? If the ACE scores are high, this is where the program should be. Protective Factors Surveys are also a great way to find out if the services are working.*

✓ *The feds must get crystal clear about what they are saying YES to. Equity or Racial Justice? Start there and then you'll be in better position to know exactly what to learn and how to act on teaching.*

✓ *Talk to local organizations representing the interests of People of Color, LGBTQ and other subsets in the community.*

✓ *This will be difficult but doable – hire parents and community leaders to help... This will create jobs and a sense of accountability to the community and families. Assessing programs is vital because many are saying they are doing certain work but the quality is very low and the outcomes are stagnated or worse.*

✓ *Asking the people who are living it. People with the lived experience can tell you better than anyone can.*

- ✓ Gathering and analyzing the data regarding the actual results of the policies and programs. Asking the hard questions: Is a particular race benefiting more from this policy/program? Is this policy/program having a negative impact on minority races?
- ✓ One approach to have the federal grantee officer be sensitive, trained and represent the population that they serve.
- ✓ Listen to community
- ✓ Client testimonials
- ✓ Look at data. Is disproportionality being significantly reduced or eliminated? Are outcomes improving considerably for impacted individuals/communities?
- ✓ Talk to the people/families who are impacted by the policies and programs. Let them create/give feedback on the assessment tools and methods used.
- ✓ Advocacy, Peer Support, Word of Mouth, Statistics
- ✓ People would need to answer the “optional” questions to get a true reading.
- ✓ Measure and assess the demographics of those who are recipients. Involve members of the communities you are trying to reach. Be honest about what you see, what you do, how your results are really impacting families and individuals.
- ✓ Benchmark goals need to be centered on the core barriers to equity in federal policy, and be open to frequent improvement.
- ✓ Make it understandable to laymen. I work a full-time job and have multiple children with multiple activities. It does not have to be worded so formally that I have to discover what it means before I can answer the question. In other words, keep it simple.
- ✓ Schools might be able to help in those areas with assessment. From elementary to colleges – the younger generation is eager to use their voice
- ✓ Talk with the city officials.
- ✓ Ask the people who listen to their voice and make sure they have a seat at the table in all aspects of decision-making and that their voice is the one driving the policy.
- ✓ Statistics
- ✓ Rely on community agency data. They know what is helping the communities they serve and what is a waste of money and more importantly why something works or doesn't work.
- ✓ Ensure underserved communities are at the table at every level of the process of the creation and implementation of policy. Check in on a regular basis with communities about policies in place to see if they are helpful or harmful to the community being served. Use aggregated data as a tool but also engage communities for the narrative behind policies.
- ✓ Incorporate individuals with lived experience for their input and compensating them for their time. This includes parents who are the most stigmatized group within child welfare and should not be an afterthought. You should also incorporate the voice of reunified youth who are often left out.
- ✓ The Census but also the local representative.
- ✓ Not the Clearinghouse. We need to listen first.
- ✓ Maintain and keep statistics on race, gender and socio-economic trends on all federal policies and programs. Have the federal government be transparent about what the goal is relating to a particular policy and program. After a policy or program has been enacted, conduct an analysis of who, when, where and how was the targeted group affected – did people's lives improve in light of the policy and program as well as document the unintentional consequences of said policies and programs.
- ✓ This is the problem. Federal policies limit cultural and or community innovative solutions.
- ✓ Surveys via text message.
- ✓ Assess and evaluate programs by independent universities to identify and label racial inequities that exist.



BARRIER AND BURDEN REDUCTION

What have you seen as useful in assessing and correcting any inequities in accessing public services?

- ✓ Not allowing credit scores that reflect persons in poverty to be denied homes and or jobs to provide for their families.
- ✓ 211 is an automated system that allows you to access information for what you are needing. This is helpful for those that cannot call during the day, etc. because all of this does take up a good amount of time. It's hard for us single parents that work, go to school, and tend to our house duties. I wish a needs assessment would be sent out – that way the department can gather information/resources and review it with the person either virtually in-person. I wish there were at-home services where workers could visit the family. Build connections, allow everyone the opportunity to get help. So 211 might be helpful for me but not for someone deaf or someone who has a short attention span or sensory processing issues, etc.
- ✓ Access to programs or treatment regardless of insurance or Medicare, Medicaid
- ✓ Flatten hierarchy in organizations and include user voice in decision making.
- ✓ Parent Leader Network – Parent Manifesto
- ✓ Being aware that there is a problem and training using actual stories from the communities being served.
- ✓ Mentor program
- ✓ None – since the agency oversees itself
- ✓ I don't see any approaches
- ✓ I haven't seen anything yet that has been useful. Intentionality has to be paid to this.
- ✓ Having someone from the actual communities in decision making seats. Connect the work to the people.
- ✓ Awareness and community provider collaboration.
- ✓ When some community stakeholders attend People's Institute for Survival and Beyond Undoing Racism trainings and begin to have a shared analysis, collect data, continue trainings, establish goals, address inequities in policies, etc.
- ✓ Gathering data, soliciting feedback from community and agencies, etc.

- ✓ Overhauling the service and starting over! This needs to be done with the Section 8 housing program! This government/private partnership is NOT working anymore!!! This program was designed to get low-income people out of the cities to give them and their children better opportunities in the suburbs. In America today a person waits years to get a section 8 voucher and when they finally get the voucher, they can't find a place to live outside of the "ghetto" because landlords in the "nice areas" of town refuse to take section 8 vouchers. This forces their kids to grow up in the same environment they were trying to leave, so the cycle of poverty continues generation after generation. When the section 8 program was established, the goals were to help lift people out of poverty and better their families. These goals are NOT being met anymore, so it's time to take serious action before we have more homeless families in America!!
- ✓ They been helping the poor to stay in their homes.
- ✓ Using local navigators rather than departmental caseworkers to help people know about and access public services. Many people do not trust governments or feel stigma about accessing services.
- ✓ Town Hall meetings
- ✓ Warmlines, peer support groups and parent advisory committees help to address inequities by removing barriers for participation (child care, food/meal, lost wages, and transportation) and honor their subject matter expertise with a quality stipend (\$30/hour). This meaningful engagement also creates an employment pipeline for community organizations as families increase their stability and are connected to community resources.
- ✓ Open dialogue with those who are willing to listen on both sides of the table.
- ✓ Ensuring that communities are speaking the same equity language and create equity partners from all sectors of the community to convene regularly to discuss, plan, and make actual changes within the community.
- ✓ Nothing
- ✓ Family advisory councils
- ✓ Peer Support, community involvement efforts

- ✓ *When government leaders intentionally lean into the uncomfortable conversations, acknowledge the past hurt, adversities, and other challenges, it makes a difference. To change the policies and perceptions it helps to collaborate with community and family leaders who can listen better to those who are experiencing disadvantages now, as well as providing recommendations for and feedback on more effective services. Again, it is useful to do this within, welcoming spaces within a community where anyone can come for support. A few examples include: community centers, cultural centers, libraries, schools, farmers markets, parks, neighborhood gardens, and sporting centers.*
- ✓ *Governments and systems gather data, but do nothing to correct methods and practices that are not working. It seems we are relatively in the same position as we have always been.*
- ✓ *Actually, provide what people say they need and not what caseworkers, service providers think people need.*

✓ *Peers helping peers. This is the most successful tool that I have seen. This is when you have walked in the shoes that another peer is currently walking in and shared your experiences while providing compassion and encouragement.*

✓ *Universal support and accessibility to all families eliminates stigma and is truly equitable. This would also apply to reparations. Check out Springboard to Opportunities in Mississippi for how they are using universal income to lift and keep families out of poverty using support without strings attached, relying on the wisdom of parents and families.*

✓ *Allowing families to become leaders in existing agencies. Giving families a role in the overall policy and practice at the agency level. Having families serve as advisory members on boards at our agencies. Supporting parent advisory councils. Using a peer support system-wide.*

- ✓ When you focus on the most marginalized population's needs, everyone benefits. For example, focusing on the disabled population ("curb cut effect") helps make society more accessible for all. Focusing on the trans population will help all feel more included.
- ✓ Meeting people where they are
- ✓ I have seen it to be useful when the individuals who are receiving the services are able to engage in policy changes.
- ✓ One-on-one – one person at a time as they come in contact with our agency
- ✓ Easier when it is in your language and familiar culture
- ✓ Community engagement in the development and delivery of programs.
- ✓ Process together over projects. Create values, vision and structured learning environments with Black people in the community. Asking the people is the most useful assessment tool around.
- ✓ What we have learned over the past two years are that a free connection to the internet and access to technology are pathways that provide access to public services for all communities.
- ✓ Free parenting classes that will help incarcerated parents in court be reunited with their children and family.
- ✓ I'm not sure that I have any specific incidences of witnessing this and that is actually sad.
- ✓ Diversified information to different location and platforms – think outside the box.
- ✓ People that have been honest and intentional about sharing power, sharing information and not being afraid to address people that do not want to see systemic change. People that have tried to shift their mindset to think as advocates and not just seeing people as problems or cases.
- ✓ Listen to and take direction from community
- ✓ Client feedback is crucial to assessment but correction begins with awareness, acknowledgment, and a long-term commitment to practice change
- ✓ Partnering with a bigger county to bring resources to the rural areas
- ✓ Open communication with everyone involved. Shared responsibility for the outcomes which elevates and values the voices of the families involved.
- ✓ Not too much
- ✓ Health and Human service providers should be within walking distance from the Public Housing sector.
- ✓ Uncertain if I have seen any that were useful.
- ✓ The United Way near me is able to use "community homes" in a variety of communities, that have access to all public/social services and social workers and other community members there to provide support for the community while they engage in these services.
- ✓ Approaching people with respect.
- ✓ People with compassion and with life experiences helps the people not feel targeted or profiled.
- ✓ I'm seeing low-income new homes being built.
- ✓ Involvement of the public that you're serving, that the VOICES and not just heard but LISTENED TO. For everyone coming together and listening to the similarities and the difference. Doing what is good for the whole.
- ✓ Employees of the public – services
- ✓ Having community members at the table. For example, I live in Minneapolis where the police have had a hard time. They went to communities and learned from community members why they were offended by police. They took those fears and thoughts and applied them to the work they do every day.
- ✓ Community input
- ✓ Having folks with lived experience help write the policies and be a valued member for providing input which includes compensation for their time.
- ✓ Engagement with the families. Talking to them about making services accessible.
- ✓ More grants and programs in the area.
- ✓ Family Partner – paid "normal" helpers with lived experience.
- ✓ Communication. Publicity. Analysis of what were the barriers to the targeted group in accessing the public service. Has the public service been identified as one that the community requests assistance for? Easy access to the service that is being offered. Transportation. Pleasant environment. Presentation is important.
- ✓ Following cultural way of life with helpers who can walk families/individuals through the maze of services.



PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING

What do you want the Federal Government to do to address inequities in federal procurement and contracting processes?

- ✓ Remove statues of limitations on the communities that are not seeing growth. The cycle is real. Stop sweeping underserved communities under the rug.
- ✓ Access should be to everyone
- ✓ Review their ways of doing things, identify the inequities and put measures in place to fix it.
- ✓ Contracts for underserved populations
- ✓ Hire minority people to make the pitch to communities of Color
- ✓ Listen and be aware of what is going on and make changes
- ✓ The Federal Government has to closely look at practices and methods and evaluate the inequities present, be willing to change these practices and methods, and aggressively address inequities in every aspect for every program in every area all the time. The Federal Government should employ several people to help keep the equity lens clear of past, and present debris. The Federal Government should partner with community and others who are willing to do the hard work of identifying, exposing, deconstructing, and reconstructing areas where inequities are present. The Federal Government should consider relaxing some of the stringent requirements for contracts in order to give others a true fighting chance at obtaining the contract.
- ✓ Make sure that, we can see the outcome of the processes
- ✓ Just like in government it must have checks and balances
- ✓ The government should allocate more funds for technology to rural areas
- ✓ Push forward to help all in need
- ✓ Rethink the procurement and contracting processes to make it more diverse and use an equity lens to widen the breath of contractors
- ✓ Require lived experience
- ✓ Have community members be part of the selection process.
- ✓ Follow the money a little closer to make sure that it actually ends up serving the population it was intended for after all the “middle men” get done with it.
- ✓ Check to see who needs help
- ✓ No one has more power than another
- ✓ Develop more programs and benefits with incentives for underserved populations and communities
- ✓ It's not enough simply to create SWAM lists to choose from. Many SWAM contractors do not have the resources to bid on large contracts. Lower the barriers and front load compensation; build the bench.
- ✓ Require equity and inclusion practices and awareness from contractors.
- ✓ Find a way to make sure everyone's needs are addressed by making sure the money and program address the population.
- ✓ Regional offices should work directly with community coalitions to develop funding applications and facilitate subcontracts with underserved communities.
- ✓ Those that are applying for grants should be afforded the opportunity to have a government grant writer assist them in applying for the grant if they are also a minority owned company that has limited means already to seek these types of funds.
- ✓ Listen to Parent Advisory Council feedback
- ✓ Fund the communities and listen to them; listen to their needs and fund those needs.
- ✓ Ensure that people who are doing the work in their local communities and who might not have access to communications or development teams, and thus might not be eligible for certain grants, do have access to federal money.
- ✓ Make sure diversity protocols are followed
- ✓ I want the Federal Government to have an open mind about who sits at the table. Allowing the communities to have a seat. Voicing what inequalities they experience, and what they think should be done differently.
- ✓ Be fiscally responsible with tax payer money
- ✓ Support BIPOC businesses
- ✓ Be culturally aware
- ✓ Continue to support social and economically disadvantaged small business owners. Usually, monies that are given to small businesses remain within a disadvantaged community. These small business owners work with community leaders to support individuals and families because it means a better quality of living for everyone within disadvantaged areas. People of color, indigenous tribes, women, and other minorities should be given contracts and procurement first because traditionally they often come last. Also, services contracted and procured should align with the culture or community being served. It makes no sense to offer services to a disadvantaged community from those who come from privileged places.
- ✓ It's important that those working in the communities understand what inequities are present, why they are present, and truly connect with the person instead of identifying them as a case number. Relationships are important. Disadvantaged communities need economic growth, job creation, mental health services, medical services and basic life skills training.

✓ *I think the amount of time an individual has to be on public transportation in order to get to the needed service should be considered. It should be easier for organizations that are in walking distance from public housing or rural communities that have a high child welfare involvement for example to get funding. If not in walking distance, a plan for transportation should be included in the funding.*

✓ *Be a lot more flexible. Allow a variety of ways to procure and contract. Explore models such as Best Starts for Kids in King Co, WA.*

✓ *Change the system. Get lived experience voices at the table. Invite the community and listen to what works in the communities. Talk with tribes about what will make real change based on what the people need.*

- ✓ What would be helpful is to bring more racial equity to our community. Remove the stigma that you are your past. Stop keeping the history of a parent's wrong doing and not allowing them to move forward because of a previous history of involvement with the child welfare or court systems or criminal charges from their past. In today's society it is too common for one to be denied the opportunity to start with a clean slate.
- ✓ Make the process less challenging.
- ✓ Realign funding
- ✓ When it comes to procurement of contractors the federal government should be looking at ways that they can increase the outreach to potential service providers.
- ✓ Help incarcerated parents that have minor children so that they can help raise their children with active parenting and counseling.
- ✓ Level the playing field for all those involved; do not provide special favor to those who donated to a particular party's campaign.
- ✓ Include the voices of lived experience and create and encourage states to work together with parents with lived experience as joint team.
- ✓ Recruit, train and hire people in their communities to review and score contractors and purchases. Use community surveys and evaluations to address the needs within the community. Create innovative ways to create dialogue and feedback within the community that will continuously look at what is being done well and what is just simply not working in order to reach people that need to be reached or helped.
- ✓ Diversify staff. Recruit and hire from communities served. Decision makers should be reflective of the communities they serve.
- ✓ Be honest about shortcomings and do better going forward.
- ✓ Make more intentional efforts in decision making, by making sure underserved communities are part of the conversation.
- ✓ Pay attention to who is hired to do the work!
- ✓ Practice transparency. Simplify language. Adhere to standards and expectations. Expect and accept only good to excellent results.
- ✓ Look at who is getting contracts, look at board of directors of companies, pay attention to the communities being served and whether they are TRULY represented by the organization.
- ✓ Don't just use tried and true vendors. Open the process up to different vendors.
- ✓ Contact underserved contractors. Include at least one minority contractor bid in all government projects.
- ✓ Make the process as easy as possible to gain access, allocate dollars to trusted sources, ask the community members who they want to see funded, give guidance and assistance to apply and get accepted, be willing to think outside the box to bring new contacts in
- ✓ Ensure federal cooperative agreements are more flexible and less money wasted upfront so they can actually be used for something good. Too much time is wasted with federal technical consultants taking a part the plan and money being soaked up by agencies rather than actually serving families.
- ✓ A higher accountability to those that work with families. Put in place resources that are attainable.
- ✓ Have more local people speak on what's needed the most in that area. More voices from actual people that need help or from people who have been helped and see if there are areas still missing.
- ✓ Reinvent the minority contracting process. Consider the Urban Leagues proposals made many years ago and update them.
- ✓ Have a staff of Native American Consultants who understand the limitations of federal grants for Tribes and effectively develop grants that will help in sustaining programs.
- ✓ Have parents and service users be required to participate in the procurement and contracting process.
- ✓ Quit giving the same contract to the same people. These agencies generally do not have any kind of accountability, nor any measurement of true action that would change the community. Start letting the people's voices be heard and be the one who says what is going to work effectively for their community. One size does not fit all nor should it. Quit talking and start doing.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

How can the Federal Government assess equity in its administration of agency grant programs and other forms of financial assistance?

- ✓ Really look at what they are actually bringing home as income. Don't count rent and insurance as income. Families often bring home just enough to cover rent but earn too much to qualify for food and child care assistance.
- ✓ By evidence-based research?? Gathering information from communities, workers, statistics. Respect and understand cultural diversity and know how families are impacted differently. You must know that certain cultures are more collective and others are individualist.
- ✓ Higher percentage of grant programs for underserved communities and provide technical support for implementation.
- ✓ Make applying for grants easier
- ✓ The Racial Equity Toolkit is an excellent resource that the Federal Government should utilize in day-to-day operations and across programs. I also believe that if someone has a drug conviction, there should be a limit to the amount of time this can be used against someone, and/or the case should be looked at as a whole and not simply looked at as a conviction. Many people make mistakes, but if that mistake was paid (monetarily, probation, jail/prison time, parole, etc.) then this person has "paid their debt to society" and should not be hindered from obtaining assistance if they are no longer breaking the law.
- ✓ Make it easier for the average person to access.
- ✓ The amount that is dispersed should be equally distributed amongst underserved communities in terms of education, grants for community development and financial assistance programs.
- ✓ More programs
- ✓ Partner with families in the community to build the programs.
- ✓ Follow the money and make sure the grant programs are actually serving the population there were intended for.
- ✓ By helping the people in need
- ✓ Have people come together and organize
- ✓ To assess equity, you need to work with family and community leaders to understand what positive or negative impact a program or funding has on a disadvantaged community. Collect data, but also listen to stories that connect to that data. This helps administrators and policymakers understand whether or not assistance is effective and equitable. If someone privileged is taking advantage, then you will hear about it from those leaders.
- ✓ Request proposals for programs specific to serving underserved populations
- ✓ What do the grantees look like? Who are they assisting? Are there POC and consumers on their boards?
- ✓ Accurate data
- ✓ Regional offices should assess equity by the number of underserved zip codes applying for federal funding. To increase access, regional offices should work directly with community coalitions to develop funding applications and facilitate subcontracts with underserved communities.
- ✓ They should review new agencies and not just the typical go to agencies that have been providing the services all along.
- ✓ No more CAPS like with income and how much you make to get this assistance. Have grants be available to the public and not just agencies.
- ✓ Involve community members.
- ✓ Data driven diversity protocols in every step
- ✓ The Federal Government can assess equity in its administration agency grant program by really doing the grass roots work and understanding the view through a lens not of their own.
- ✓ Universal access. This reduces stigma. Support without stigma makes it FEEL more accessible and therefore it will BE more accessible.
- ✓ There should be a way we can measure the true success of the programs and how their financial assistance to families was actually used. We should be able to go back to see where the families are "today". How have things changed for the better. We need to be able to keep track of our families served.
- ✓ *Don't just look at scoring in grant proposals. Look at the services they are wanting to provide. Many large organizations have grant writers who are experienced in writing grants while smaller non-profits don't have that luxury.*
- ✓ *Rethink the grant programs to change the white normative standards so it is more equitable for others who do not normally have access or opportunities.*
- ✓ *It starts with data collection. If Black and Brown folks or disabled folks are having worse outcomes, you should change policy. Also, engage with universities and community groups to develop satisfaction surveys for all aspects of the administration of programs.*

✓ *Actually, listen to the community in which the grants are being distributed. Listen to success stories from the community as well as complaints.*

✓ *The government should never be the hope for the people. The people should be the hope for the government. When you can help us do for ourselves then we can help others do for themselves. Learning to be victorious not victims – the government **SHOULD NEVER CREATE VICTIMS.***

✓ *Simplify the grant process to make the funding more easily and readily available to communities. Support community level organizations. Change the requirements for who can be a fiscal agent.*

- ✓ Ask the workforce and families
- ✓ Make the process easier. By not needing so much information, it is so cookie cutter.
- ✓ When it comes to grant programs, the federal government can provide assistance to small agencies that might be able to serve the needs of rural or isolated communities.
- ✓ Unrestricted funding helps more people
- ✓ Help incarcerated parents with section 8 housing for their children and family.
- ✓ Again, analyzing the data and taking action to ensure that those in need are provided access
- ✓ More training on fairness and do more focus groups to get updated information
- ✓ Hire people within the community to review and look at financial programs, help people to move away from using people to get grant money. Hire parents and community leaders on an annual basis to evaluate the programs. The Federal Government can start with being honest about its implicit bias in how it responds to community needs and be intentional on investigating what people want versus how they have been served and provide support and financial assistance that encourages hands up not handouts.
- ✓ Listen to community
- ✓ Ensure that the work of agencies receiving grant funding is truly equitable in practice and monitor
- ✓ Again, collect and look at data. Emphasize qualitative data as well as quantitative.
- ✓ Provide easily accessible access for requests and feedback
- ✓ Make grants more available to people who don't know about them
- ✓ Where are the zip codes with the highest rates of child abuse and neglect? Those are the areas in which programs should be funded.
- ✓ Be honest.
- ✓ Understand the community being served and pay attention to the administration.
- ✓ Educate the agencies in writing for grants.
- ✓ Making sure the funds are spent in the right place
- ✓ Offer minority parents the opportunity to serve on grant boards
- ✓ Make things easier to apply for. Quit asking what race someone is while applying. Take down the barriers that hold people back from receiving the help they need.
- ✓ Make the administration as easy as possible to work with, willing to be in a partner relationship, employ people from the community, give guidance and assistance, be willing to think outside the box to make sure contractors are successful
- ✓ Do what Jerry Milner did!
- ✓ Ask the people what works and what doesn't work. Utilize parent partner voices to elevate the needs of the families they serve
- ✓ Local government would provide the right programs based on income in that area, and also look at the needs of the school system in that area.
- ✓ Collect the data and be transparent about the results. Once a problem has been identified create a diverse team to tackle the problem.
- ✓ Who are in the positions that make these decisions? You need Indian professionals and most importantly identified language speakers. Tribal and urban Indian communities know what will work in their communities and experienced representatives are needed in the federal offices to work as liaisons to tribal and urban communities to make sure what is being developed is developed with an Indian lens.
- ✓ Educate those who implement the policies on the needs of people based on demographics.



FEEDBACK LOOPS

What kinds of feedback mechanisms have you seen as useful for beneficiaries of services by Governmental agencies and programs?

- ✓ Collaboration between agencies and individuals – the client is first (e.g., wraparound services)
- ✓ Keep us up-to-date with informational emails.
- ✓ Include constituents/community in decision making. Train those people to take part and pay them for their work.
- ✓ Hire minorities to extract information.
- ✓ Listen to the voices of the community – particularly families who are involved in services.
- ✓ Surveys are useful.
- ✓ Surveys, Round Tables, Panels, Workshops, etc.
- ✓ Childcare
- ✓ The best mechanism is those that do not judge someone for the conditions they are found living within. Rather it asks what happened to them and how they can help. When agencies and programs focus on the most challenging aspects of the disadvantaged, often nearby is the greatest strength. For example, a single mother living in a car with children. If is not treated as a “bad parent,” not willfully involved in child abuse or neglect, and is recognized as someone who is experiencing a housing crisis, then an agency can see she is a mother who found shelter and other basic essentials under extremely adverse conditions. The mother demonstrates she is capable of providing for her children but lacks the full capacity to do so. As the mother and children are moved temporary housing, the agency can work with her to identify places within the community that have supported her needs, places that need strengthening to provide protective factors for families. Agencies should not expect similar situations to be the same. Every family’s need and story is different. Small dollars spent on a community program working with a local social worker and neighborhood leaders is more effective and less expensive overall than a large contract with a centralized regional agency.
- ✓ Embedding feedback and lived experience to shape programming.
- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Town halls, including telephonic town halls, listening tours that reach people where they are
- ✓ Use social media to circulate feedback surveys for agencies and programs. Collect comments and scores and implement policies that reflect this feedback.
- ✓ Surveys, parent cafes, town hall meetings
- ✓ Advisory councils
- ✓ Surveys where answers are anonymous and not someone standing over them pressuring them to make quick answers rather than well thought out ones.
- ✓ Community cafés, parent advisory committees and peer support groups can collect public comment
- ✓ Parent Advisory Councils
- ✓ Five survey questions; focus groups
- ✓ Data driven diversity protocols
- ✓ I haven’t seen any feedback mechanisms for beneficiaries of services by Governmental agencies and programs.
- ✓ Third party satisfaction inquiries to avoid real criticism of the system by customers.
- ✓ The best kind of feedback has been a parent who called and shared how their services helped them to turn their life around and become stable.
- ✓ Community cafés, focus groups, advisory board membership (funding for participation on advisory boards), listening sessions
- ✓ Town hall and community informational listening sessions
- ✓ Sharing from people with lived experience
- ✓ CalWORKS does not fully help pay rent or bills
- ✓ Focus groups, surveys with incentives for low-income families, Group Feedback from emails
- ✓ Help accessing services and building on existing strengths to prepare people for success at the end of their services
- ✓ *The feedback should be consistent and align with a strength-based approach in helping every agency that is funded consistently to integrate equity in the work they are providing to communities. This may entail, in some cases, a hands-on approach to help guide agencies to understand how to make their services equitable. This should include community feedback, from those receiving the services; feedback from those who may potentially need the services; and feedback from the direct care staff that provide the services.*
- ✓ *The best feedback is what you see, feel and learn from our lived experiences.*
- ✓ *The poor and underserved are often afraid to participate due to fear of retaliation and because of past failures that when they have spoken out no real change happened in their lives. Focus groups have been helpful. Brain storming sessions. The people of power have to be willing to engage in these difficult conversations.*

✓ *Parent Advisory Councils or Parent Leader Networks. The CSSP has a COFI training that activates parents to get feedback from their communities.*

✓ *Just make the policies understandable to those with learning disabilities, cognitive deficits, etc. Mental health services, medical services, job opportunities, child care, transportation, etc. are important topics. We also need to understand trauma and how that's affected families. It's hard to overcome these barriers when we are struggling internally. I know of a psychologist in Longview, TX that travels to Texarkana, TX to conduct psych evaluations. He travels there because nobody else will. They are underserved. We need more resources, connections made within our own towns. Hopefully, this made sense. (I'm not exactly sure about all of this but I did my best in researching, exploring, and contributing in my own words.)*

- ✓ Community-based in person support groups, surveys through medical providers, schools etc.
- ✓ Survey
- ✓ Surveys. Interviews.
- ✓ Not surveys. Round tables might work.
- ✓ Survey monkey
- ✓ Listening sessions, surveys, engagement with community served
- ✓ Hearing from parents!

- ✓ Parent partners voices.
- ✓ Helping young moms with newborns, providing fresh fruit to the local area families, free child care to moms. Local advocacy programs.
- ✓ Feedback surveys, meeting people where they are
- ✓ Talking Circles
- ✓ Parent cafés
- ✓ Support of a Parent Advisory Council and of peer service



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What else would you like to share with decision makers about addressing barriers and creating equity within policies and practices?

- ✓ I appreciate you taking the time to get our input. I pray many will respond to give you well-balanced feedback.
- ✓ Equity is not equality – you will have to upset those who believe in equality to truly implement an equitable system.
- ✓ GIVE MINORITIES SEATS AT THE TABLE.
- ✓ Most communities that are underserved contain people of color. It's imperative that resources, policies and practices demonstrate equity for these communities as well. Things such as finances, lack of technology, transportation, food and housing insecurities along with a complex application process make it harder for these communities to access the proper resources. These key areas must be addressed and fixed.
- ✓ Culture and climate are difficult to change. It will take great intention, time and lifting those up that are closest to the harm to help address the challenges and transform the system
- ✓ Intention verses impact. I believe the intentions are great but we aren't seeing the impact that is hoped for. There is a disconnect.
- ✓ Look at how important human beings are.
- ✓ Get more impacted people at the table and compensate them.

- ✓ The US Constitution is held up as the paragon of freedom and democracy, the first and best among peers. Let us be honest, it is no such thing. It was founded on racist ideals from 250 years ago. I understand many people are very protective against any changes or interpretations of the constitution, so I am not suggesting any changes to it at this time. However, it is time to examine some of the protections offered by other constitutions. For example, the one Mexico drafted about 100 years ago is much more equitable. My point is leaders need to form policies and practices based on modern ideas of equity and stop interpreting whatever racist slave owners intended for a privileged few. It is important to dig deep and reframe protections for all people under US governance, as well as see our nation being connected with the larger world. For better or for worse we are stuck on this planet together. We need to build a space where everyone within disadvantaged areas can receive support and support each other.
- ✓ Everything should be viewed through an equity lens; input should be sought from consumers
- ✓ Educate leaders and create a data informed culture
- ✓ We have to start taking new approaches and not just doing the same thing and calling it a different name. We need to consistently hold funded agencies accountable for ensuring equitable practices.

- ✓ There should not be any inequities with any of the public, the citizens of this country. Everyone should be able to get food stamps even if they are working.
- ✓ I would like to see parents and families that have lived through these system challenges whether it be federal or state government agencies pull together to address these issues in each state.
- ✓ Father engagement is important
- ✓ It has been most helpful to parents to have someone they can talk to about their experiences and get the encouragement from that person who was once there and had no hope. Recovery Coaches and Peer Supporters are what we need more of.
- ✓ Co-create the questions with members of the community you are engaging. Often times there are language and cultural barriers in the questions. Systems speak system language that can feel foreign to how families and communities interact with the world. Partnership throughout the process is key.
- ✓ Ask yourselves if you truly understand what it is you're saying YES to. Also, there isn't a "fix" to systems of oppression. We must first understand why they exist in order to advance racial justice. Also, if you ask yourselves what you "want" to do, you may find that community will help you. Just as much as you seek concrete thinking, the community will need you to be clear about your "why".
- ✓ Help release incarcerated parents who have served at Fire Camps.
- ✓ Parent voices are important and necessary for parent and children Issues, especially fathers' voices. Many times, fathers' voices are overlooked and forgotten. In my opinion, African American fathers' voices are drowned out the most.
- ✓ In order to serve and help communities there has to be a level of understanding, basic knowledge and wisdom about the people that live and move, play and eat in those communities. Not based on stereotypes or media. Parents are leaders in their homes and communities and should play a major role in the decision-making process. Parents and effective community leaders should be interviewed as they are aware and can share more about people that create more barriers for people versus those people, programs and ideals that are working and helping people. If a service is working the people should be aware and the process should be duplicated and shared broadly. I believe this will create a way to reach underserved communities and not so many people will fall through the cracks.
- ✓ Full acknowledgment of harm caused and reparations given
- ✓ We need to address income inequality and dismantle the current power structure.
- ✓ Working with teaming, transparency/honesty and compassion to find ways to validate, elevate and include the voices of those impacted by inequity needs need to be a top priority
- ✓ Ask people you don't usually ask. Ask people with actual lived experience
- ✓ I'd love to see Peer-Led Resource Centers with individuals who have experience receiving services in areas where there is a high rate of child welfare involvement. I'd like each Resource Center to have a Parent Advisory Council that trains parents to be leaders and to help these parents activate their community to find out what is needed and not what the government thinks they need.
- ✓ You probably have enough data compiled. Get to work!!!!
- ✓ A lot of people in the community are not even aware that their voices matter. Getting families going through the barriers is the only way to find solutions. Meeting people in the community exactly where they are and seeing what even a temporary/trial project can do to bring families with needs together.
- ✓ Remember that they are human.
- ✓ Don't create hate – actions speaks louder than words.
- ✓ Include minority groups in the decision-making process.
- ✓ Go into tribal communities and add their cultural perspectives and ways into policy.
- ✓ Having ALL States expand the Medicaid program – too many people fall through the cracks.
- ✓ Ask – don't tell – the rural and underserved communities what they need.
- ✓ Please place grass roots people in this process. They are the ones who are connected to the communities that need the help. They can lead, assist and teach the "professional."

- ✓ *Making sure parents have the proper services. Dads in our area lack major support. Parents of special needs children need help! Listen to the voices of our community. Preserving families. During the pandemic so many parents lost their children due to the clock not being stopped. While the world stopped that clock kept ticking.*
- ✓ *We have to make services to families more about helping families and less about policing. We need to change the laws to make them more about supporting and less punitive. We need to give families what they need especially support for child care services so that people can work. There is a great need to support child care, food, transportation and housing services as major priority areas. These are the issues that truly affect our families. We need to make services more about helping and not about punishing parents. We need to get rid of the shaming and punishing of families who are struggling. We need to help families rise.*



ctfalliance.org

Children's Trust Fund Alliance is a national membership organization that provides support to state children's trust funds (CTFs) and strengthens their efforts to prevent child maltreatment. State CTFs are the entities created by legislation in almost all states in the United States to lead and support efforts to strengthen families, promote the well-being of children and prevent child abuse and neglect. Since 1979, the Alliance and its CTF members have worked with communities and multiple systems to strengthen all families. Our network invests more than \$260 million each year in prevention strategies for families.

The Alliance's mission is to ensure that all states have a strong and effective children's trust or prevention fund capable of leading and investing in strategies, policies, and best practices to prevent child maltreatment before it occurs. The Alliance also works with national partners, state organizations, parents, federal agencies and others to impact policies, practices, systems changes and trainings. We are committed to looking at all our work through a lens of anti-racism and to join with our members, parent partners and others who are doing this work to more completely live up to our own ideals

Since 2006, the Alliance has developed and partnered with networks of parents to elevate their voices to policymakers and to join with them in developing policies and practices that help support families and lead to better outcomes for children and youth. Learn more about the Alliance's parent partner work and networks: ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents

The **Alliance National Parent Partnership Council (ANPPC)** is an advisory group to the Children's Trust Fund Alliance and their work aligns with the Alliance's strategic plan and priorities. The ANPPC raises awareness about the Alliance and its mission to strengthen all parents and communities from a prevention point of view. The Alliance and the Council serve as a national model for effectively partnering with parents and expanding and integrating the powerful role of parent leaders in state children's trust and prevention funds and community-based programs. ANPPC members are parent leaders who are familiar with the work of their state CTFs and who have experience and

expertise that are helpful on the national level. Learn more about the ANPPC and download some of their informative and innovative materials: ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/anppc

In addition to the ANPPC, the Alliance partners with Casey Family Programs to support three other parent networks:

1. The **Birth Parent National Network (BPNN)** is a dynamic and diverse network with hundreds of parents and organizational members that work together to support parents in helping to educate policymakers and other key leaders about the needs and challenges that families face and to recommend policy and practice solutions. The BPNN works to promote and champion birth parents as leaders and strategic partners in prevention and child welfare systems reform. To learn more about and to join the BPNN, visit ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bpnn
2. The **Birth and Foster Parent Partnership (BFPP)** was formed in 2016 to support a national movement of birth parents, foster families, kinship caregivers and staff focused on improving relationships, building connections and using their collective voices to transform systems, culture, policies and practices to improve outcomes for children and families. The partnership is being managed through a collaboration between the Children's Trust Fund Alliance, Youth Law Center's Quality Parenting Initiative and Casey Family Programs. For more information about the BFPP and to download its popular relationship building guides, visit ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bfpp
3. The **Birth Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC)** is a select group of parents from across the country that have a range of expertise and personal experiences within the child welfare system. They serve as strategic partners with Casey Family Programs and the Alliance. The BPAC members serve in a variety of leadership roles such as parent mentors, policy advocates, grassroots organizers and organizational administrators. They use their advocacy skills to ensure that the voices of parents are heard in the development of policies and practices that affect families.