

AR (AR) IMPLEMENTATION READINESS ASSESSMENT

The AR Implementation Readiness Assessment provides counties with an opportunity to appraise their current vision and plan for AR. The assessment assists counties in the consideration of benchmarks that both facilitate and indicate the successful implementation of AR. The document will guide counties to critically think through such matters as: goals and vision, leadership commitment, community partnerships, internal infrastructure, procedures and tools, workforce capacity and competence, measures and data, service accessibility, communication/messaging and training.

In completing the assessment, it is likely new insights will emerge and counties will learn what strengths they possess to implement AR and what challenges they face. The document will also assist the Department of Children and Families (DCF) when determining which counties will be next to join the initiative, and how to then support them throughout the planning and implementation process.

Instructions

- Assign a numeric value based on the scale provided- please score each statement within the key component. Base your score on the extent to which each stated benchmark is implemented right now in your county;
- Describe the strengths and challenges in your county as it relates to each key component. When describing strengths and challenges, please provide examples of activities or functions that are established or need to be expanded or enhanced;
- Describe what would increase your rating.

The scoring portion of the readiness assessment allows counties to score themselves:

The numeral **1** indicates the benchmark has **not been discussed nor considered**.

The numeral **2** indicates the benchmark is **under discussion**.

The numeral **3** indicates the benchmark is **in development**.

The numeral **4** indicates the benchmark is **operational**.

The numeral **5** indicates the benchmark **has been completed or is currently being maintained**.

Please provide contact information below so that we can track and respond to the information received.

COUNTY: _____

NAME OF PRIMARY CONTACT: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

This readiness assessment framework is adapted from the *Redesign Implementation Readiness Matrix*; the Matrix was developed as part of California's Child Welfare Services Redesign effort in 2003, it was later revised by the state of Ohio.

Goals and Vision for AR: AR practice reflects a shift in thinking about how we practice in certain cases. In order to successfully plan for such a change, it is important to consider and then articulate how AR is anticipated to make a difference.

- There is a goal and vision that articulates what AR implementation aims to achieve in the agency and community.
- The goal and vision clearly states how AR practice will enhance the lives of children and families in the community.
- Agency staff is familiar with the goal and vision and they are able to clearly articulate it.
- Community stakeholders are familiar with the goal and vision and they are able to clearly articulate it.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Leadership Commitment: Successful implementation of AR (AR) is largely dependent upon the commitment of agency leaders.

- Leadership is a voice and champion for AR practice.
- Leadership reflects a style that is inclusive, responsive, transparent, flexible, and able to share in decision making.
- Leadership is committed to advancing AR practice across the county.
- Leadership is committed to promoting successes in AR.
- Leadership is able to eliminate barriers to implementation.
- Leadership has the time needed to commit to the continued work of AR as its practice grows and changes.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Community Partners: Community Partners are valuable in the successful implementation of AR. Their understanding and support of its practice is important from the beginning of implementation.

- There are examples of engagement and participation between community partners and the county.
- There are established practices that encourage community partners to provide constructive feedback regarding child welfare.
- There are exiting partnerships between community stakeholders and the county that positively impact safety, permanency and child and family well-being in your community.
- There are established partnerships and practices in the community that promote family involvement and input in agency planning.
- There is an outreach plan developed in order to introduce AR practice and develop external champions of its practices.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Internal Infrastructure: In an agency practicing AR, a Child Protective Services (CPS) report that is screened in for a primary assessment can be assigned to one of two pathways. In order to accurately assess whether the case is eligible for AR, it is important to establish an internal infrastructure for the screening and assignment of such cases.

- The agency has a well-defined process outlined for determining case eligibility (e.g., one supervisor screens all cases and determines eligibility, or there is a team decision making model utilized).
- The agency has a well-defined staffing plan and structure for AR implementation that promotes continued delivery of quality child protection services in Traditional and AR.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Procedures & Tools: AR implementation requires an established process that promotes the continued use of standardized procedures and tools.

- The agency consistently utilizes standardized tools that bring uniformity to decision making around child safety and well-being.
- The agency is able to amend internal policies and procedures in order to respond to emerging conditions within the county population.
- The agency is able to develop and institute agency policies and procedures which promote quality CPS practice that facilitates collaboration with families.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Workforce Capacity & Competence: Effective implementation is most likely when staff is supported with the knowledge, skills, workload balance and supervision necessary to successfully practice AR.

- Staff are supported and empowered to practice AR in their respective roles, including agency endorsement of behavior change in worker-family interactions.
- The agency supports a well-coordinated workforce, strengthening each team member's competency.
- There is a forum for staff to communicate their questions and concerns.
- The agency effectively addresses the coaching needs of staff- building knowledge, skills, abilities and other critical characteristics needed to perform job responsibilities.
- There is an existing plan to monitor and address workload issues and there is a plan to address any issues that may present as a direct result of AR implementation.
- There is a forum for leadership to encourage staff behaviors that support AR practice.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Measures & Data: The state plans to engage in evaluation of AR, including its effectiveness in relation to Traditional Response (TR). Please rate your willingness and ability to participate in such efforts:

- The agency currently uses data to make decisions for improvements to practice.
- There is a person or group designated to collect such data.
- There is a person or group responsible for providing the data to appropriate groups.
- Agency staff is familiar with data that is collected and they understand the desired outcomes.
- The agency is willing to participate in a randomized, controlled trial, which may mean randomly assigning eligible families to either AR or TR.
- The agency is willing to participate in a study, even if it means delaying implementation of AR in order to be a "control group" county.
- The agency has the capacity to distribute and collect surveys from families regarding their experience with child welfare services.
- Staff is willing to participate in focus groups and/or complete surveys about their experience with AR practice.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Assessment of Service Needs & Availability and Access to Needed Services:

Agencies/workers conducting AR assessments will determine, with the family, if there are any service needs. Since AR assessments are not incident driven, the needs that are identified may be outside the scope of what brought the family to the attention of the agency. How would you assess accessibility to services, and willingness to advocate for needed services in your county and your stakeholder community?

- County and agency stakeholders are aware of the broad range of services available to families throughout your community?
- County and agency stakeholders are aware of the gaps in services available to families within your community?
- County and agency stakeholders are able to provide flexible funding to help meet the needs families identify?
- County and agency stakeholders have the will/capacity to grow the array of services available to families?

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Communications and Messaging: AR represents a shift in thinking about the child welfare system. This shift requires an effective and well developed communication plan.

- The agency has a communication plan to educate the community on AR.
- The communication plan highlights how staff will be educated about the shift.

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area:

Training: Implementation of AR requires a significant amount of training for supervisors, workers and community partners.

- Is your county able to commit to several days of training around the principles of AR practice?

Numeric score:

Discuss score, including strengths that exist within your county as well as any challenges you face in each area: