COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON THE STATE-APPROVED TRAINING PROGRAM REVISION

Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is revising the State-Approved Training (SAT) program. The primary goal is to ensure that the program design is data-driven, reflects the needs of all of our stakeholders, advances racial equity and mitigates unintended consequences, and holds our team accountable to continuous quality improvement.

Community Engagement Process

We conducted a community engagement effort using webinars, surveys, focus groups, and phone interviews to reach out to:

- Current trainers
- Trainer applicants
- Providers (English and non-English speakers in family home and center programs)
- Training program administrators

The goal was to gain insight into how providers are making decisions about what professional learning they should participate in and what they value in their professional learning experiences. Across these efforts, nearly 130 respondents provided candid feedback regarding the program.

Addressing Critical Issues and Design Challenges

Our team has created detailed action steps to address each of the priority areas identified through the robust response from the impacted community. They are summarized here:

1. **Anti-Biased and Anti-Racist Trainers and Content**
2. *Easy-to-Navigate Trainer Application and Training Process*
3. **Trainer Workforce That is Representative of Communities Served**
4. **Regularly Engage Stakeholders in Program-Level Developments**
5. **State-Approved Trainers Have Access to Support Resources**
6. **Fair, Relevant, Objective, and Reliable Quality Assurance Process**

Next Steps in the Revision Process

DCYF will use these data to guide the development of a multi-year project plan. The plan will show how the strategies that will be used to meet each of the objectives listed in this report, as well as the intended outcomes, targets, and timelines. Some of the actions described in this report are dependent on additional resources to complete. Whenever possible, we will share the proposed revisions back with the field and all relevant stakeholders for another cycle of review.

Introduction

The Professional Development Team with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is revising the State-Approved Training (SAT) program. The purpose of the revision is to:

1. Grow anti-biased and anti-racist state-approved trainers and content
2. Create easy-to-navigate trainer application and training process
3. Develop a trainer workforce that is representative of communities served
4. Regularly engage stakeholders in program-level developments
5. Provide state-approved trainers with access to support resources
6. Implement quality assurance process that offer a fair, relevant, objective, and reliable assessment

These areas of focus are based on the feedback that we received from various stakeholders over the years (e.g., Trainer Advisory Board, state-approved trainers, DCYF professional development contractors, trainer observers, providers, and training program administrators). We also conducted stakeholder engagement efforts to gather insights on the areas of focus listed above and surface additional areas that are in need of attention.

This report will provide an overview of our engagement methods, detail the feedback that we received, and discuss the recommendations that emerged related to our priorities.

Methods

We reached out to current trainers, trainer applicants, providers, and training program administrators using several different methods. DCYF's *Growing the Workforce Newsletter* provided information on the coming revision. Interested individuals were given an opportunity to provide recommendations for the revision by participating in the August Professional Development Listening Tour webinar and completing an online survey. Across these efforts, nearly 130 respondents provided candid feedback regarding the program.

Non-English Speaking Providers

DCYF made an effort to reach out to English and non-English speaking early learning professionals in family home child care and center-based settings. The goal was to gain insight into how providers are making decisions about what professional learning they should participate in and what they value in their professional learning experiences. This was done through four focus groups with North Seattle College's early childhood education immersion cohorts (Arabic, Somali, and Spanish), as well as phone outreach to Spanish speaking providers. We reached:

- 54 Spanish providers
- 12 Arabic providers
- 8 Somali providers
- 1 English-speaking provider

Phone outreach was not successful. Participants were not interested or available to provide feedback in Spanish or English. After leaving voicemails and calling randomly selected providers, we concluded this approach.

Professional Development (PD) Listening Tour Webinar: State-Approved Training Program

The August webinar focused on soliciting feedback from state-approved trainers, trainer applicants, training program administrators, and other valuable stakeholders about their experiences with the state-approved training program. The webinar was organized around several questions:

1. What experience and knowledge should a trainer have?
2. What are some things that are working in the trainer application?
3. How would you describe the trainer application?
4. How can we improve the application process?
5. What kind of recruitment and support strategies should we consider?
6. Are there any policies that are difficult to implement and/or push you to find a workaround?
7. What type of professional learning would help you as a trainer?

The PD Listening Tour had nearly 50 attendees, while more than 100 participants were registered. Although we did not collect participant demographic information during registration or the webinar, participants self-reported as new trainer applicants, existing trainers, organization trainer mentors, and other program administrators.

State-Approved Training Program Survey

The State-Approved Trainer Survey consisted of rating scale, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. It had 80 participants: 69% were current state-approved trainers, 24% supported trainers, and 7% were in the application process when they responded. Those who were not state-approved trainers were most likely to be licensed child care providers (43%), relationship-based professionals such as coaches/mentors (19%), or program administrators (24%).

Of the trainers who responded, there was variation in how long they have been in the trainer role:
- 0-1 years: 7.41%
- 1-3 years: 33.33%
- 3-5 years: 20.37%
- 5+ years: 38.89%

Most of these trainers delivered content only in English (80%), some in Spanish (20%), one person trained in Somali, while two others used a language that was not listed.

All state-approved trainers and those interested in the state-approved training program were given the opportunity to provide feedback directly to the training inbox or the staff person coordinating the effort. The Professional Development Team has not received feedback through these methods to date.

Findings from the Community Engagement Effort

This section provides a detailed review of the insights, challenges, and suggestions that came from individuals in different roles. Every participant in the webinar and survey had an opportunity to provide insight. This section attempts to capture the prevailing themes and unique comments that we received.

Webinar and Survey Participants

What makes a great trainer and training? (Webinar)

Participants believed great trainers are those who can engagingly deliver their content. They have confidence and passion for the content areas they teach as well as a positive attitude. Effective trainers are knowledgeable in their content areas and deliver their content in a way that meets a wide range of learning needs; this includes the trainer being responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity in the group. Overall, great trainers made participants feel welcomed and respected in their presence; they were empathetic and understanding of the learner's experience.

Impactful trainings were those that had clear learning objectives and offered interactive learning experiences that were responsive to the learning needs of participants. These trainings followed adult learning principles, provided many ways to learn the content, opportunities for reflection, and some form of action planning to encourage implementation. Great trainings referred to developmentally appropriate practices and were data-driven.

What experience and knowledge should a trainer have? (Webinar and Survey)

There were a range of ideas about the type of experience and knowledge trainers should have. Anti-bias and anti-racism expertise was called out multiple times, as well as trainers being up-to-date on their subjects and current best practices. There was energy around having trainers who had early childhood program experience as well as some training experience. Participants also called out that trainers should have knowledge about the resources available in their community so that they could serve as a connector for their participants.

What is working in the state-approved trainer application? (Webinar and Survey)

The characteristics that were called out included the advantages of an online application, having live trainer observations instead of written submissions, and use of trainer observations rubrics. The observations were seen as valuable sources of information for new trainers because they were able to practice delivering training and received immediate feedback, while the rubric helps trainers understand expectations for their role.

How would you describe the state-approved trainer application process? (Webinar and Survey)

Many respondents referred to the application process as challenging. The issues included:
- Finding the application
- Length of time for completing education verification
- Completing the application due to:
  - Length
  - Application timing out
  - Lack of a save function
  - Confusing competencies demonstration section
  - Missing trainer modules
  - Lack of information about how different aspects of application are counted toward the core competency demonstration

One participant said that this was an application process "for English speakers." The majority of survey participants reported that the application process was:
- Not easy to understand: 27%
- Somewhat easy to understand: 57%
- Very easy to understand: 16%

How can we improve the application process? (Webinar and Survey)

Participants were asked to provide their top three ideas for improving the application process. There were 43 responses to this survey question. The responses are grouped according to themes:

Trainer Types	• Consider a specialty trainer classification for non-early learning professionals (e.g., nurses and speech pathologists)
MERIT	• Create a save function in application • Prevent applications from timing out • Create an ability to move between application pages • Develop an easier process for re-assessing core competencies and levels
Application Support	• Provide one-on-one, individualized assistance • Provide clear, step-by-step instructions • Bring back adult learning and cultural equity modules • Create a video tutorial for the process • Provide mentoring or coaching from a more experienced trainer
Communication	• Offer up-to-date resources • Consolidate all information in one resource/site • Respond promptly and accurately to MERIT and training inbox inquiries • Be transparent about length of application and materials needed • Provide feedback on the application • Provide clear guidance on who to contact with questions
Application	• Simplify the process • Reframe the competency demonstration section • Update the trainer modules • Align trainer observation rubrics with each mode of delivery • Provide application in multiple languages

If you had a magic wand to change something about the state-approved training program, what would you change and why? (Webinar and Survey)

Many participants provided detailed responses to this question. To avoid repetition, the comments that were related to other recommendations were pulled out from this section. The comments below were selected because they offered unique changes to the state-approved training program. The changes included:

- Creating an alternative pathway for certifying content experts outside of early learning
- Clarifying DCYF's expectations for high-quality training
- Appointing a single point-person for trainer applications
- Creating community engagement efforts so trainers can inform changes
- Developing training on the core competencies and other trainer-related policies and procedures

What was the most helpful support for completing the state-approved trainer application? (Survey)

Forty-eight people responded to this question. About 48% explained the most helpful support came in the form of technical assistance from peers, coaches/mentors, organization trainer mentors, current state-approved trainers, and phone correspondence with the Professional Development Team. Others mentioned that they used different print resources, including the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, Core Competencies, and step-by-step guides to complete the application.

Once you became a state-approved trainer, did you have the information that you needed to start delivering training for early learning providers? (Survey)

Fifty-two people responded to this question. Seventy-eight percent of these individuals said that they had all of the tools they needed to get started, while 22% shared that they did not. They needed support understanding the:

- Forms required to input a training in MERIT
- Trainer competencies and what they look like in practice
- Process for developing a curriculum and making it available to the public
- Process for participating in train-the-trainer opportunities
- State-approved trainer tab in MERIT

Others reported that they did not receive the training certificates, evaluations, and other training-related documents when they became approved trainers.

Were you able to find the information that you needed to apply on the DCYF website? (Survey)

The majority of survey participants were able to find the information that they needed to complete the application process. Many of the respondents who reported being able to find the information they needed also had someone assisting them through the process. About 28% of trainer applicants worked with a peer or colleague to help them through the application process; 25% were paired with a coach or current trainer through the application process. A significant number of respondents (47%) went through the application process using their own information; three respondents (<5%) were not able to complete the application process because it was too complicated.

What kind of recruitment and support strategies would help build a more diverse workforce? (Webinar and Survey)

Recruitment

Participants suggested a simplified strategy to recruit content experts who have significant experience in early childhood education or a related field; there are also potential opportunities to embrace partnerships with other state agencies (i.e., the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Child Nutrition Services).

Existing state-approved trainers and others who do provider-level work in the community could support the recruitment of new trainers. For example, those who work within Early Achievers or who are part of Head Start can nominate potential trainers. Additionally, there are early learning providers within the k-12 system who may be strong candidates for a trainer role. Posters, brochures, and other tools can be used as aides in recruitment.

Several responders also mentioned the need for economic incentives to successfully recruit trainers.

Support Strategies

Participants reported that we need to offer more support for applicants, including: having materials in multiple languages as well as coaching or mentoring younger professionals through the application and during their early years as trainers. The approval application should heavily weigh individuals' experience in early learning and explicitly value all cultures and aspects of diversity.

A theme among the survey responses shows there is a need for all state-approved training program documents to be available in multiple languages simultaneously, and that there should be translations available in a wider array of languages, not just Somali and Spanish. This would bring Russian, Arabic, and Vietnamese-speaking trainers into the program.

Are there any policies that are difficult to implement and/or push you to find a workaround? (Webinar and Survey)
There are often challenges in MERIT that involve a workaround. Some trainers rely on the Professional Development Team for technical assistance. Several people pointed out that the training delivery options do not match what is described in the Standards of Practice and Professionalism and virtual online trainings do not match the fields currently in MERIT.

Survey participants mentioned that there were challenges with navigating MERIT, such as:
- Not being able to upload agendas for trainings
- Indicating that training occurrences are part of a series of workshops
- Having to copy and paste information when offering a repeat of a training

A participant mentioned that organizations that often use content experts who are not state-approved trainers must have that expert partner with a state-approved trainer to 'co-teach' to ensure the training is eligible for in-service hours. This has created tension between the state-approved trainer and the content expert.

What type of professional learning would help you as a trainer? (Webinar and Survey)
Over the course of the state-approved training program, there have been various, time-limited strategies for supporting trainers. Participants asked for more coaching and mentoring and regular reflective group learning opportunities (e.g., professional learning communities) specific for the trainer role.

There was also a strong interest in the following resources and learning opportunities:
- Example videos of trainers
- How-to resources (e.g., aides and videos)
- Resources in multiple languages

Participants wanted to learn more about:
- Delivering engaging trainings virtually and in-person
- Early learning content
- Adult learning
- Using virtual platforms
- Conflict resolution and facilitating a training with challenging participants
- Training culturally diverse participants
- Facilitation
- Instructional design

How did you keep up-to-date on state-approved training policies and procedures? (Survey)
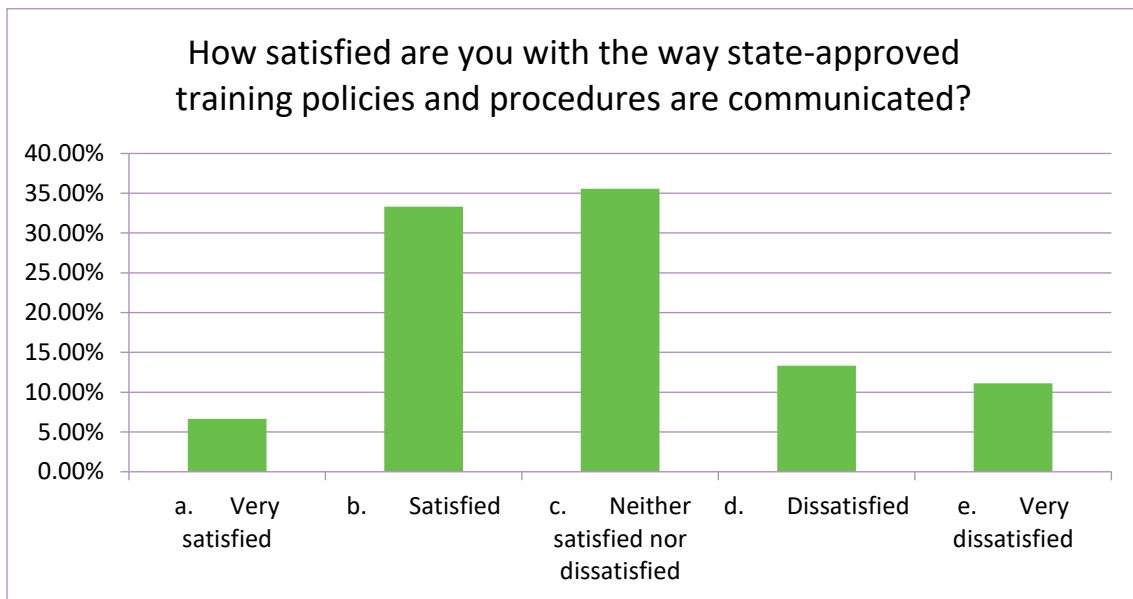Forty-five individuals responded to this question and selected the most commonly used strategies:
- Trainer peers: 55.56%
- Professional Development Team Newsletters: 51.11%
- Emails from DCYF: 71.11%

- Standards of Practice and Professionalism: 40%
- DCYF Social Media: 17.78%
- Other: 42.22%

Other strategies included:
- Listening to their Organization Trainer Mentor or organizational training program coordinator (e.g., Child Care Aware's regional Professional Development Coordinators)
- Updates from the Imagine Institute Trainer pathway
- DCYF website

Responses reflected a resounding theme of inconsistent communication from DCYF. Some state-approved trainers and training program coordinators are not receiving timely information.

How satisfied are you with the way state-approved training policies and procedures are communicated?

a. Very satisfied	~6.5%
b. Satisfied	~33%
c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	~35.5%
d. Dissatisfied	~13%
e. Very dissatisfied	~11%

What can DCYF do to improve communication about the state-approved training program? (Survey)
DCYF has an ability to reach all current state-approved trainers regarding policy updates, changes in procedure, and other relevant announcements. These email, newsletter, and social media messages are sent out in English; participants have requested that this information is made available in other languages as well.

Thirty-eight participants provided detailed responses to this question. The most common themes included:
1. Advance communication about coming changes
2. Opportunity for stakeholders to comment on changes that will impact their trainer role
3. Regular and ongoing communication through newsletter or email
4. Feedback loops regarding community engagement efforts and next steps
5. Timely responses to emails; requests for phone calls instead of long email threads

Early Learning Providers (Focus Groups and Phone Interviews)

What words of feelings come to mind when you think of a great trainer or a great training?
Providers look for trainers who are knowledgeable in the content area and are able to answer case-specific questions about practices in their classrooms and programs. They offer the training and resources in the providers' primary language. Critical soft skills include:
- Motivating and encouraging students' mastery of new concepts
- Facilitating the learning experience
- Creating a respectful, loving, and accepting environment

Skilled trainers are those that are responsive to the learners' comments and needs. They bring positive energy, build trust, and show patience as learners grapple with new materials. Trainers must be able to effectively resolve conflicts and be willing to go the extra mile to make sure their participants understand the content.

How do you find trainings or learning events?
Providers reported they rely on:
- Existing peers and professional networks to learn about professional learning opportunities (e.g., Early Achievers coaches, Child Care Aware training emails, training calendar emails from The Imagine Institute)
- Trainers or training organizations that they have learned from in the past

In addition to their networks, several reported they sometimes use MERIT to find trainings, but find the website is challenging to use, especially for non-native English speakers.

Monolingual providers reported the training emails they receive are often written in English. They skim the content looking for text in their native language and skip over anything that is written in English. This approach means that they may overlook training content that is relevant to their learning goals.

Participants during the Spanish-speaking North Seattle College focus group had several suggestions to improve their ability to find relevant and timely training, including:
- A Spanish language website with all of the trainings available separated by counties
- A periodic advertising of Spanish training opportunities
- Translating MERIT into Spanish

With the COVID-19 pandemic, all trainings are virtual. Providers reported that they struggle with Zoom and other technologies. This has become a barrier to participation in trainings.

What motivates you to participate in trainings or other types of learning?
The resounding source of motivation reported by the participants was the internal motivation to improve knowledge and practice so that children are able to thrive. They use the information they learn to better educate and care for children. One participant mentioned that her "motivation is being able to learn and having the power of knowledge so that in a moment or situation be able to make a decision to help children or colleagues."

Other participants mentioned they were motivated by trainings that keep them informed and current in the ever-changing world of education. The ultimate goal for them is to gain more knowledge to better serve their communities, ultimately serving the children they work for. A provider stated, "we learn and benefit from all of our trainings, none are a waste of time."

If you could pick one thing to change about our training program, what would it be?
The provider outreach effort showed that language is a tremendous barrier to effective professional development. A Spanish speaking provider captured this sentiment in her response:

> *We need people who are prepared and ready in our language and people who know our topics and language we speak…so that they can guide us…We often follow something because we need it…We only understand half of it.*

Many were frustrated that they are often not able to implement the training concepts in their workplace or personal life because their limited English skills do not allow them to understand the concepts. Their major request was to see more trainings in their preferred language during non-operational hours (e.g., early mornings, late evenings).

Additionally, several providers mentioned they are located in remote rural areas that are geographically distance from many of the places where in-person trainings are offered. Participating in learning requires a lengthy commute. They

also reported challenges with internet connectivity that make it difficult to participate in online learning. They asked for additional options to participate in professional development that removed these barriers.

Recommendations

Anti-Biased and Anti-Racist Trainers and Content

View theory of change model

Objective: All trainers and training organizations must be able to integrate anti-bias and anti-racist approaches in their instructional design and while working with participants.

Currently, there is a lack of expectations for knowledge, skills, and abilities that trainers and instructional designers should have in this content area. If we *create an anti-biased and anti-racism standard for trainers*, they would have a clearer understanding of what they need to know and will require *training so that they are able to implement the competencies*. Anti-bias and anti-racism learning opportunities will help trainers and all other relevant stakeholders, such as instructional designers and quality assurance monitors, to build their skills. Training curriculum that will meet some of this need is in progress, but new funding would be needed to get this to the scale we would need to see growth in the trainer workforce. *Trainers should be required to participate in ongoing anti-bias and anti-racism in-service as part of their 15-hour annual in-service requirement.*

We know that some of the content that is delivered on behalf of the program has information, examples, approaches, images, and language that may be offensive and harmful to some people. By setting expectations for an anti-biased and anti-racist design, then there would be more inclusive curricula in our program. Therefore, *DCYF will create guidelines for instructional designers so that the development content has anti-biased and anti-racism approach.*

Professional development providers across the state have varied approach for onboarding trainers around anti-biased and anti-racist approaches. In addition, the protocols for quality assurance processes vary between Organization Trainer Mentors (OTMs), contractors, and independent state-approved trainers in ways that impact the quality of trainers in this content area. If all of the stakeholders who were involved in the quality assurance process understood the anti-bias and anti-racism expectations, they would be better able to conduct an observation that provides relevant feedback in this area. To address this issue, we will *build an onboarding process for all training observers, organization trainer mentors, and DCYF staff who participate in trainer approval and observation.*

Easy-to-Navigate Trainer Application and Training Process

View theory of change model

Objective: All trainer applicants are able to understand and navigate the trainer application.

The current design of the trainer application has created challenges for applicants. They do not receive clear, step-by-step instruction and do not have a sense of the requirements, time commitment, or knowledge of the professional development system to connect their training objectives to essential framework documents (e.g., Core Competencies). If we provide an overview of the application sections, clear instructions for each section as well as all supporting resources at relevant points of the application, then we can expect to see less confusion with navigation. Therefore, our action step would include *revising the trainer application so that applicants have access to an overview and instruction prior to beginning the application*.

There are also challenges with MERIT's functionality that impacts users of the application. The application times out and does not have a save function. Applicants are not able to move between the application pages. Finally, applicants no longer have access to the trainer modules. *DCYF is currently working with developers to address the navigation changes to the application as well as to build out the trainer modules.*

Applicants have also posed questions about how the different sections of the application are weighed and calculated toward the Core Competency and level assignment. If we develop a trainer application that is shared with applicants as

they complete their application, they will understand how they can earn points toward their application. *DCYF will develop a trainer application rubric and train relevant staff on how to use it to process applications.*

Various stakeholders have mentioned that they receive delayed or inaccurate responses to application-related inquires to the training inbox. *DCYF has appointed a single point-of-contact who is trained to address inquiries regarding applications.*

Language barriers have repeatedly risen up as accessibility barriers. MERIT is not compatible with languages other than English. The supporting materials are mostly in English. Since non-native English speakers have a difficult time navigating MERIT, they are unable to complete the applications. *If we revise the application and translate the materials into Spanish and Somali, and provide interpretation services for other languages, we will be able to increase the language diversity of our trainers.*

Finally, trainer applicants have stated that they do not receive detailed feedback on rejected applications and do not understand why they did not meet the standards. If applicants receive detailed, accurate information about why their application was rejected, they will be better prepared to resubmit their application. This will reduce barriers of entry. *DCYF will create and consistently implement a process for sharing feedback on rejected applications.*

Objective: State-approved trainers participate in a program that has consistent processes, procedures, and expectations for all trainers.

MERIT has some critical design challenges that, if addressed, will improve the user experience. First, the training template fields are outdated (e.g., school readiness statement) and do not collect the most relevant information (e.g., alignment with trainer standards). Next, while trainers are able to enter training in MERIT that are part of a series of workshops, they report challenges with entering separate attendee rosters for each separate training instance. Finally, the training template delivery mode options do not match the delivery modes that are in the Standards or Practice and Professionalism in that it doesn't capture the various ways people can engage in online training. *DCYF PD will partner with MERIT IT developers to make adjustments to the training template MERIT.*

Objective: State-approved training program is able to regulate approval of training organizations and the curricula they offer.

Currently, the quality assurance observation feedback for online training is provided for the state-approved trainer on record for that event. The trainer often has limited ability to make changes to the training content because it is owned by the training organizations. We provide quality assurance to the trainer not the organization. Furthermore, the training organizations have reported not receiving or understanding state-approved training program and policies. Communications often go only to the trainer on record; the communication is not always shared with training program administrators. If there is a training organization approval process, training organizations will be held to the training policies as well as the standards of practice and professionalism for training. *DCYF will develop a training organization approval process that will supplement the state-approved trainer application.*

Another current design challenge in the system is that there is no established process for assessing the quality of curricula that is being offered by trainers or training organizations. If we establish a process for curricula review, we will be able to regulate and provide quality assurance on the content and will be able to connect trainers and organization to professional development. *DCYF will develop a process for assessing the quality of training curricula.*

Through the DCYF quality assurance monitoring process, we have identified that many online training curricula do not meet the requirements for online training that are outlined in the Professional Development Policy Manual and the Standards of Practice and Professionalism for State-Approved Training. *DCYF will conduct a quality assurance process to determine if trainers are accurately classifying trainings.*

Trainer Workforce that is Representative of Communities Served

View theory of change model

Objective: Trainers' linguistic and cultural diversity reflects the diversity of providers that are served by the training program.

A critical issue that has been pointed out again and again is that most policy, procedure, and process documents are available only in English. Trainer applicants whose primary language is not English often struggle with understanding and completing the application process. If state-approved training program documents were translated into Spanish and Somali and interpretation services were available in other languages, trainers whose primary language is not English will be better able to navigate the problems. *DCYF will improve the process of translation and interpretation of key documents.*

Another design challenge in the training program is that there are no existing strategies to recruit trainer applicants who represent culturally and linguistically diverse communities. If we created an information-sharing campaign about this role in different languages, we would be able to reach a wider audience of potential candidates. *This would include the development of a recruitment toolkit.* Next, if we partnered with organizations that engage in provider-level work in communities across the state, they would be able to identify strong candidates for the roles. *DCYF will establish partnerships with organizations that would be able to support with recruitment of trainers.*

Regularly Engage Stakeholders in Program-Level Developments

View theory of change model

Objective: Program updates are responsive to and reflect the needs of stakeholders.

There have been times when changes to program design and framing documents have been disconnected from implementation reality (e.g., training mode options in the Standards of Practice did not match MERIT language). If we gather feedback from stakeholders prior to changing the program and throughout the development process, we will have a more user-driven design. This can be accomplished by *engaging stakeholders for feedback for all major program-level design updates*. Additionally, there are few consistent feedback loops for stakeholders who participate in community engagement efforts about how their feedback is used to inform the program. By showing stakeholder how their feedback is being used, we may begin to see higher levels of engagement in and buy-in for our program. That means that we must *create feedback loops as part of the communication plan for each project.*

Objective: Stakeholders receive timely information about program-level changes.

The fast pace of work has led to inconsistent communication of program-level changes and follow-through that created implementation challenges. Additionally, most communications that have been sent out in English have not been accessible to trainer and other stakeholders whose primary language is not English. *We will implement a communication plan for significant program-level changes, account for multiple languages, and provide enough time for implementation so that stakeholders will be better prepared to take on the changes.* Providing communications in multiple languages comes with a known time constraint. It takes longer to provide time-sensitive communication; communications in languages other than English may take longer to distribute.

State-Approved Trainers Have Access to Support Resources

View theory of change model

Objective: New trainers have the resources they need to begin providing trainings after approval.

When a trainer is approved, they receive a welcome packet with training-related information. Based on the feedback that DCYF received, the packet does not provide practice information (e.g., business license, marketing, trainer tab navigation in MERIT) for how they can get started as a trainer in Washington. *We can address these challenges by making updates to welcome packet to be more comprehensive with additional supports.*

Objective: Trainers are able to complete 15 in-service hours in role-specific training for their renewal.

Trainers currently have a 15-hour requirement for renewal; however, there are very limited in-service learning opportunities that are available to trainers. Trainers have also requested more peer learning experiences and would like for this professional development to count toward in-service hours. *DCYF will develop multiple routes for completing the trainer in-service requirements (e.g., mentoring program, peer learning, training, self-paced learning, etc.).* Some of these route may take longer to implement and would be dependent on staff time and funding availability.

Objective: Trainers have access to an up-to-date library of adult learning resources.

Currently, the program does not provide trainers with role-specific resources that can enhance their practice. Trainers would be more capable to improve their professional practice if they were readily able to access a resource library. *DCYF will coordinate the development of a resource library for trainers.* This effort will take dedicated staff time and funding.

Fair, Relevant, Objective and Reliable Quality Assurance Process

View theory of change model

Objective: Individuals making decisions regarding the approval of a trainer applicant or about the quality of a trainer during an annual review are well-versed in the state-approved training program, trainer standards, and the observation processes.

Historically, there have been varied onboarding approaches for trainer observers and DCYF staff who conduct trainer review and observations. Additionally, not all trainer observers had a similarly subtle understanding of the state-approved training program. If all observers and staff received training on the program and the review process, then trainers would receive a fair, relevant, and objective assessment. These challenges can be addressed by *revising existing onboarding resources and ensuring that all individuals providing quality assurances have completed the training.*

Objective: Quality assurance process is individualized and responsive to the different modes of training delivery.

We know that there are challenges with the existing rubrics. They do not match the different characteristics, settings, and activities that arise across the various delivery methods. The rubrics will also be outdated once the Trainer Standards are revised. *DCYF will update the observation rubrics for in-person, online, self-paced/correspondence, and hybrid, and create guidance on how to use the observation rubrics.*

Objective: A quality assurance process for national online training organizations.

We have mentioned that while individual trainers are approved in our current system and are accountable for the quality of each of their training instances, organizations as whole do not have the same opportunity to demonstrate their accountability for the overall quality in training delivery. *We will develop a quality assurance process for online training organizations to hold them accountable to the same standards and expectations as trainers.*

Next Steps

The DCYF Professional Development Team will use the feedback from these community engagement efforts to guide the development of a project plan. The plan will show how the strategies that will be used to meet each of the objectives listed in this report, as well as the intended outcomes, targets, and timelines. This will be a comprehensive revision that will be based on the feedback from all of the participants, emergent feedback from the field as well as from training participants. Whenever it is possible, we will share the proposed revisions back with the field and all relevant stakeholders for another cycle of review. Our goal is to provide many avenues for feedback so that many people have an opportunity to share their ideas and influence our direction.