

**Alternative Response Stakeholder Survey:
Year 1**

**Submitted to
The Nebraska Department of Health and
Human Services
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509**

**Submitted by
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Executive Summary

As a part of the Alternative Response (AR) program evaluation, CCFL created and distributed a survey to gather information about the experiences and perceptions of AR stakeholders. This 45-item survey was developed in collaboration with the DCFS AR Program Administrator and was comprised of the following dimensions: Purpose of the Group, Meeting Schedule, Meeting Processes (Agendas, Minutes, Action Items), Participation, History of Collaboration, Appropriate Cross Section of Members, Perceived Utility, Inclusiveness in Process, Open Communication, Appropriate Pace of Development, Political and Social Climate for AR, and Perceptions of AR Program Elements.

Contact information was provided by DCFS to CCFL for all individuals that DCFS considered to be AR stakeholders. This included a broad range of individuals internal and external to the department. A total of 166 individuals participated in this online survey. This survey was the first formal gathering of stakeholders' input on the AR implementation process thus far. AR was implemented in 5 pilot counties in October of 2014. This survey was emailed to participants on December 3, 2014, just shortly after initial AR implementation. Responses were collected between December 3, 2014 and December 19, 2014. Therefore, these responses are reflective of the early implementation period. This survey will be administered again midway through the demonstration and near the end of the project.

Responses to this survey were separated into three main groups for comparison purposes: statewide external stakeholders, internal workgroup and subgroup members, and local implementation team members. Most of the average ratings did not vary significantly between groups. Generally, AR stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in the survey, meaning most AR stakeholders had generally favorable perceptions of the AR implementation process so far. However, there were some (8 items) significant differences between groups, mostly in regards to perceptions of specific AR program elements. These significant findings, along with comments, indicate that future efforts should be directed at actively involving stakeholders (both currently participating and possibly inviting additional stakeholders to attend AR meetings), examining or reexamining AR program elements with stakeholders, and communicating field-level experiences of AR implementation so far to stakeholders.

About “Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project Evaluation”

Through a Title IV-E waiver, the Nebraska Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) plans to improve contractor accountability and child and family outcomes by conducting a demonstration project with two interventions: Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) and Alternative Response (AR). RBA provides a framework and process for measuring and improving the performance of contracted service providers, which in turn is expected to improve the outcomes of children and families receiving these services. AR allows for Nebraska’s child welfare system to engage with families in a non-investigative and more collaborative way, based on the severity of allegations received at initial intake. It is also expected that this family-centered response will lead to improved outcomes for children and families participating in this approach. The evaluation of these two interventions will contribute to an understanding of whether and how the demonstration accomplished its goals by assessing the planning and implementation process, contextual factors, and barriers and facilitators; achievement of intended outcomes; and the cost effectiveness of each intervention. DCFS has contracted with the UNL-Center on Children, Families and the Law (CCFL) to conduct the program evaluation.

Purpose of AR Stakeholder Survey

As a part of the AR program evaluation, CCFL created and distributed a survey to gather information about the experiences and perceptions of AR stakeholders. Specifically, this survey sought to address stakeholder’s perceptions of the following:

- Group functioning and effectiveness
- Effectiveness of local and statewide advisory structure
- Adequacy of meeting frequency and type of interactions
- Opportunities to provide meaningful input into development and implementation of AR
- Inclusiveness of advisory group process and resultant decisions and products
- Ongoing monitoring and revision of implementation plans
- The availability and utility of AR program data
- The extent of partnership with DCFS to expand services and results of those efforts, and perceived changes in level of partnership over time
- Stakeholder and community member knowledge of AR elements
- Stakeholder, community member, and CFS staff support/ endorsement of AR program

This survey was developed in collaboration with the DCFS AR Program Administrator and comprised of the following dimensions: Purpose of the Group, Meeting Schedule, Meeting Processes (Agendas, Minutes, Action Items), Participation, History of Collaboration, Appropriate Cross Section of Members, Perceived Utility, Inclusiveness in Process, Open Communication, Appropriate Pace of Development, Political and Social Climate for AR, and Perceptions of AR Program Elements. Possible respondents included a broad range of AR stakeholders, including statewide external stakeholders (Director’s Steering Committee and the Statewide Alternative Response Advisory Board), internal workgroups and subgroups (Alternative Response Internal Workgroup and Alternative Response Internal Subgroup), and local implementation teams from the initial 5 pilot counties (Alternative

Response External Leadership Team for the Southeast Service Area, Fremont Alternative Response External Team, Hall County Alternative Response External Stakeholder Group, Hall County Community Collaboration, Sarpy County Alternative Response External Steering Committee, Scotts Bluff County Alternative Response Advisory Team, and Internal Alternative Response Pilot Site Leadership Team). Because some of the survey items specifically addressed meeting effectiveness, which may vary from group to group, participants were asked to identify the one group with which they felt most strongly affiliated or attended most regularly, and respond to the survey items with that group in mind.

This survey was the first formal evaluation of stakeholders' input on the AR implementation process thus far. This survey will be conducted again midway through the demonstration (April-June 2016) and near the end of the project (January-March 2019). The purpose of this survey is to address a number of short term and intermediate outcomes on the DCFS AR Program Logic Model:

- Stakeholders and community members are engaged and offer meaningful input in AR program development, including initial implementation and the ongoing monitoring and revision of implementation plans
- Building an understanding and buy-in for the AR program
- Community providers work together and with DCFS to expand or enhance services/supports

Ultimately, these outcomes are expected to lead to the long term outcome of strengthened partnership between DCFS, provider agencies, and community stakeholders.

Method

Participants

DCFS provided CCFL with email contact information for all individuals that they considered to be AR stakeholders. This included a broad range of individuals internal and external to the department. In total, DCFS provided 477 names and email addresses. All of these individuals were invited to participate in the AR stakeholder survey. However, six individuals contacted the researchers and asked to be removed from the mailing list because they did not consider themselves to be involved in AR. Additionally, 94 respondents reported that they did not consider themselves a member of any of the groups listed in the survey, and thus did not complete the remaining survey items. Considering nearly 20% of stakeholders did not identify with the groups listed in the survey, future survey efforts will be more inclusive and designed to accommodate an even broader range of individuals participating in AR discussions (i.e., not exclusive to specific AR groups). For this survey, the resulting pool of valid respondents included 377 individuals. Of those, 166 completed the survey for a response rate of 44%. This included 23 statewide external stakeholders, 27 internal workgroup and subgroup members, and 116 local implementation team members.

Procedure

This survey was administered by CCFL using Qualtrics, an online survey site. Invitations asking stakeholders to complete an online survey were emailed on December 3, 2014. A reminder email was sent to individuals who had

not yet completed the survey as of December 10, 2014 and again if they still had not completed the survey as of December 17, 2014. The survey was closed February 10, 2015; however, the last responses were received on December, 19, 2014.

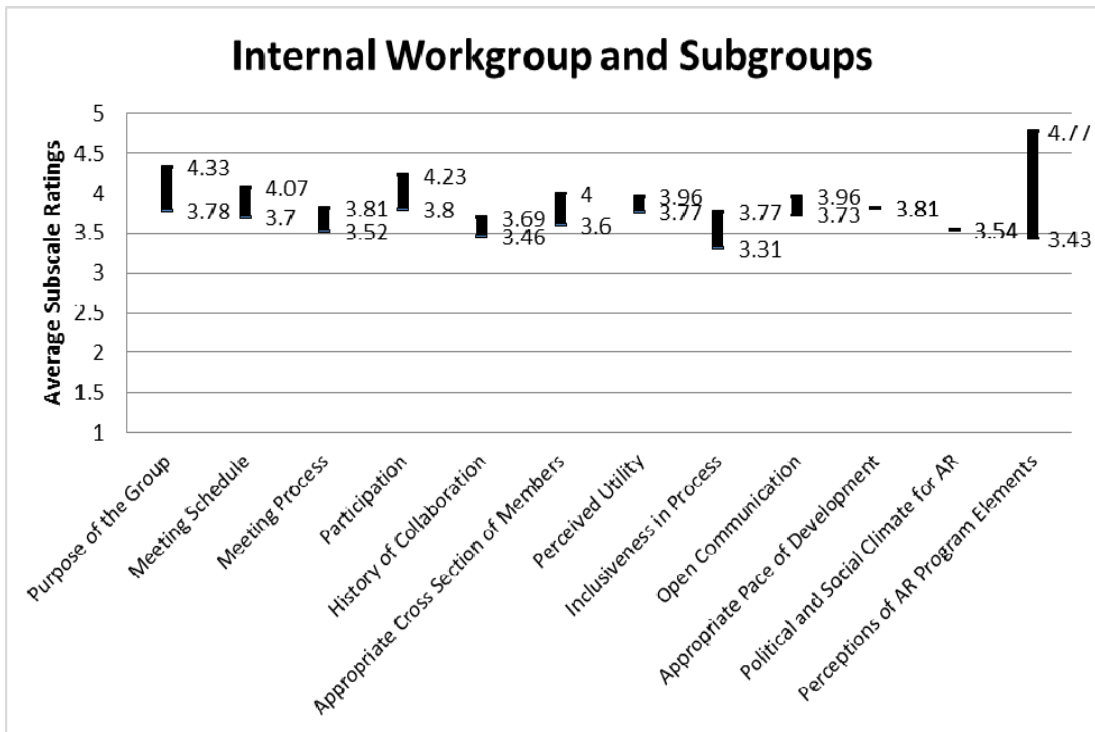
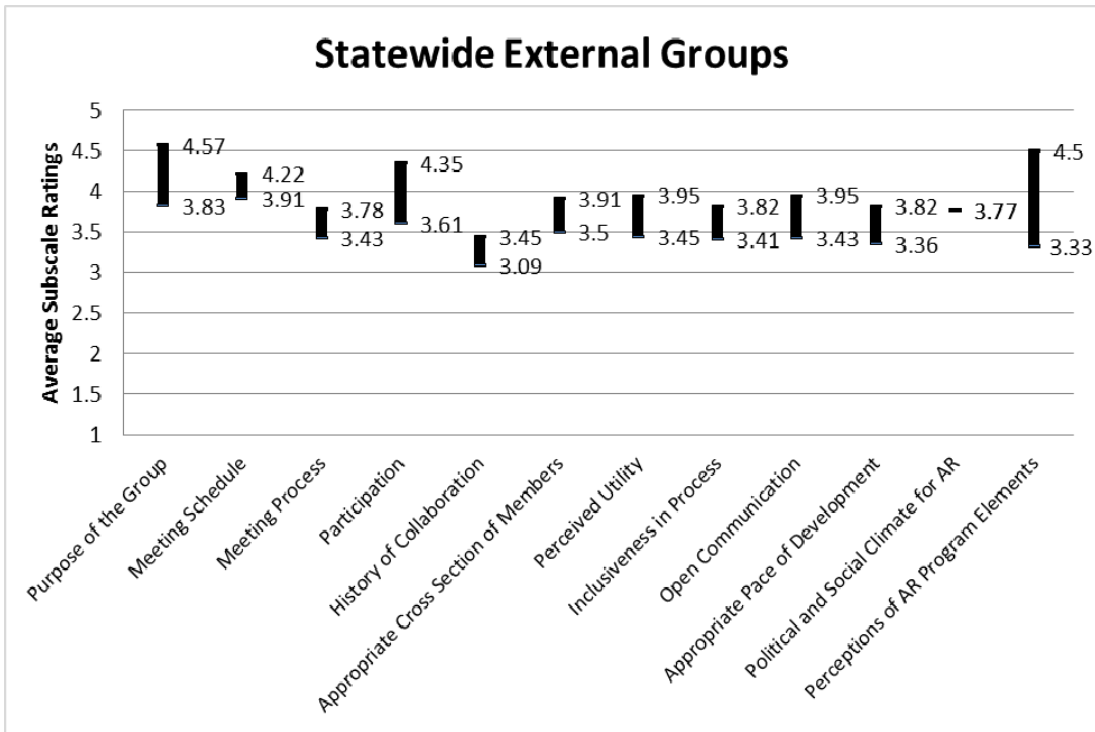
Results

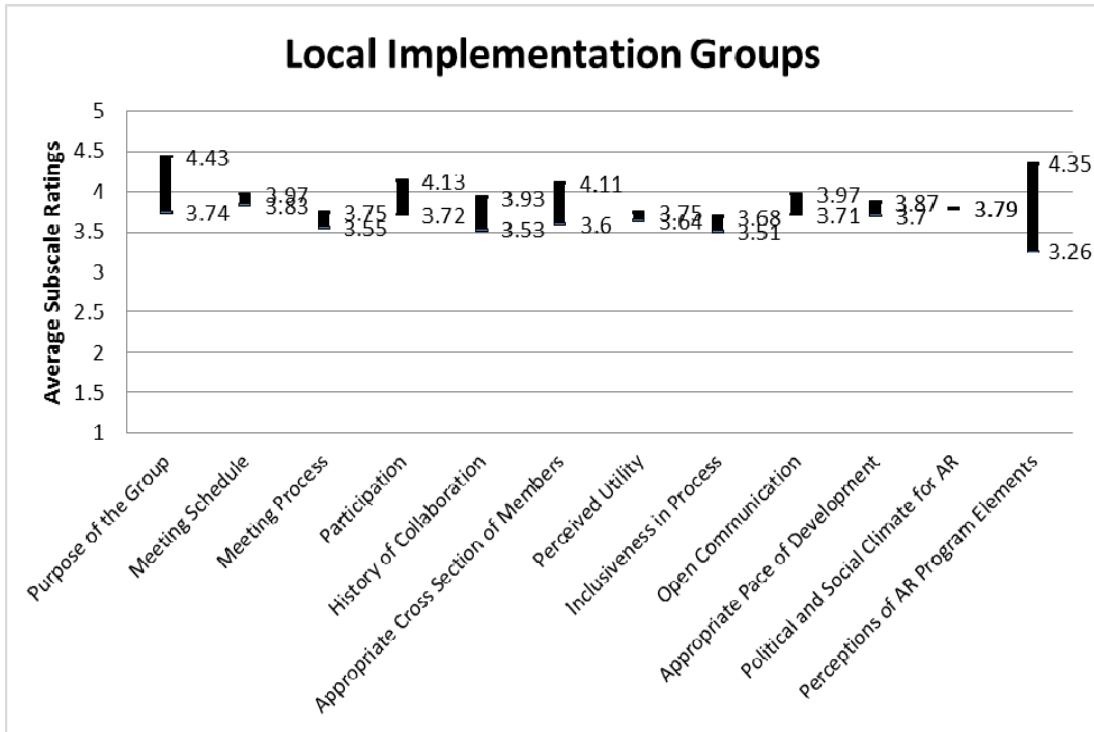
Summary of Responses

The AR stakeholder survey included 45 items across 12 dimensions: Purpose of the Group (4 items), Meeting Schedule (2 items), Meeting Processes (4 items), Participation (6 items), History of Collaboration (2 items), Appropriate Cross Section of Members (2 items), Perceived Utility (3 items), Inclusiveness in Process (4 items), Open Communication (5 items), Appropriate Pace of Development (2 items), Political and Social Climate for AR (1 item), and Perceptions of AR Program Elements (10 items). Respondents included a broad range of AR stakeholders, which for the purpose of comparisons were grouped into three categories: 1) statewide external stakeholders (Director's Steering Committee and the Statewide Alternative Response Advisory Board), 2) internal workgroup and subgroups (Alternative Response Internal Workgroup and Alternative Response Internal Subgroups), and 3) local implementation teams (Alternative Response External Leadership Team for the Southeast Service Area, Fremont Alternative Response External Team, Hall County Alternative Response External Stakeholder Group, Hall County Community Collaboration, Sarpy County Alternative Response External Steering Committee, Scotts Bluff County Alternative Response Advisory Team, and Internal Alternative Response Pilot Site Leadership Team). Ultimately, this included 23 statewide external stakeholders, 27 internal workgroup and subgroup members, and 116 local implementation team members.

Respondents rated each survey item on a 5-point scale of agreement (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). Generally, respondents indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the survey items, indicating that AR stakeholders had favorable perceptions of the AR implementation process so far, overall. The only exception was the item, "law enforcement should be involved in AR cases." Responses for this item were more moderate, tending towards neutral. Detailed information about the number and percentage of responses for each item can be found in Appendix A, *Overall AR Stakeholder Item Frequencies*. In order to make comparisons, participants were grouped according to membership (statewide external stakeholders, internal workgroup and subgroup members, and local implementation team members). Rating averages for each question by group membership are included in Appendix B, *Average AR Stakeholder Item Ratings*.

The following graphs display the range of average ratings for each dimension by group (statewide external groups, internal workgroup and subgroups, and local implementation groups). For example, the first vertical line on the left represents the range of averages for the *Purpose of the Group* dimension; for the statewide external groups, the lowest question average was 3.83 and the highest questions average was 4.57.





Significant Results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare item means between the three overall groups: 1) statewide external stakeholders, 2) internal workgroup and subgroups, and 3) local implementation teams. For statistically significant differences, a Tukey post-hoc test was used to examine the specific group differences observed. For the 45-item survey, responses were generally positive and did not vary significantly between groups. This means that stakeholders generally feel positive about the AR implementation so far. However, significant differences were observed between groups on 8 items, most of which were in the *Perceptions of AR Program Elements* dimension. For these, the two main suggested strategies are 1) greater communication to convey DCFS’s intent with the program element and/or a need to better understand stakeholders’ insight about the program element, or 2) a need to better explain how DCFS intends to accomplish specific outcomes through AR. Statistically significant differences and potential strategies to address these items are discussed below.

Participation

I regularly participate in the discussions during our meetings, $F(2,156) = 4.60, p = 0.01$

The average rating from the local implementation teams (3.83) was significantly lower than that from the statewide external stakeholders (4.35). This indicates a need to elicit greater participation from members of the local implementation teams. Because ratings were higher among statewide external stakeholders, perhaps strategies used to engage these members could also be helpful in raising the perceived level of participation for local implementation team members.

History of Collaboration

Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this local community, $F(2,159) = 3.34$, $p = 0.04$

The average rating from the local implementation teams (3.95) was significantly higher than that from the statewide external stakeholders (3.45). Meaning, local implementation team members perceive greater levels of community collaboration than statewide members. Perhaps this is due to the composition of the statewide external groups (if there were more members from areas with less community collaboration), or may simply be due to the fact that there is greater variety of members participating on the statewide groups.

Perceptions of AR Program Elements

AR families should not be placed on the Central Registry, $F(2,149) = 4.67$, $p = 0.01$

The average rating from the local implementation teams (4.19) was significantly lower than that from the internal group (4.76). Meaning, while both groups tended to agree with this statement, local implementation team members were less likely to agree that AR families should not be placed on the Central Registry. Given that this is a central tenant of Nebraska's AR model, it appears greater communication may be necessary to convey the State's intent with this program element.

Law enforcement should be involved in AR cases, $F(2,147) = 7.15$, $p = 0.001$

The average rating from the local implementation teams (3.26) was significantly lower than those from the statewide (4.06) and internal (3.88) groups. Although this question is worded in the positive, responses were reverse-coded (meaning, *Strongly Agree = 1 and Strongly Disagree = 5*), as DCFS has indicated potential issues with law enforcement involvement in AR cases. Therefore, these ratings indicate a more moderate viewpoint on behalf of the local implementation teams. This may indicate a need for greater communication on behalf of DCFS to convey the importance of this program element or perhaps the local implementation teams have greater insight about how law enforcement could be incorporated within the AR program model without issue.

Contacting parents prior to interviewing their children is an important feature of AR practice for enhancing family engagement, $F(2,147) = 3.25$, $p = 0.04$

The average rating from the internal groups (4.60) was significantly higher than that from the local implementation teams (4.11) and approached significance with the statewide external stakeholders (4.00). Meaning, statewide and local stakeholders were less likely to agree with the need to contact parents prior to interviewing children in AR. Although this program element is considered to be best practice, it is understood that safety must be assessed within the required timeframes. This nuance is not explicit in the survey item. Therefore lower agreement levels could be due to respondents thinking less about the ideal and more about the relative importance of safety. However, it may also be possible that stakeholders have suggestions about how interviews can be accomplished without prior parental

notification. Greater communication may be needed from DCFS to convey the importance of this program element.

Nebraska's AR model is designed to serve families with less severe allegations, $F(2,155) = 4.42, p = 0.01$

The average rating from the internal groups (4.77) was significantly higher than those from the statewide (4.23) and local (4.35) groups. Meaning, while all three groups generally agreed with the statement, statewide and local groups are less likely to agree that AR serves families with less severe allegations. This indicates a potential need for DCFS to better communicate their intentions with the AR model and explain to stakeholders how it has been designed to serve families with less severe allegations.

Families in AR will receive more frequent contact with their caseworker, which will allow for better outcomes and quicker resolution, $F(2,136) = 4.96, p = 0.01$

The average rating from the internal groups (4.71) was significantly higher than those from the statewide (3.89) and local (4.16) groups. This means that statewide and local stakeholders are less likely to agree that AR will lead to better outcomes and quicker resolution for families as a result of more frequent contact with a caseworker. Further communication from DCFS may be necessary to explain to external stakeholders how this will be accomplished through AR.

Concrete supports will be better addressed through AR as compared to Traditional Response, $F(2,140) = 6.26, p = 0.002$

The average rating from the statewide external stakeholders (3.33) was significantly lower than those from the internal (4.29) and local (3.92) groups. Meaning, statewide external group members were less likely to agree that concrete supports will be better addressed through AR (as compared to TR). This indicates a need to better inform statewide external stakeholders on how DCFS plans to accomplish this outcome through AR. Perhaps strategies used to communicate with the local implementation teams would be helpful to raise statewide stakeholders' level of agreement with this statement.

Summary of Comments

The AR Stakeholder survey included areas for participants to write comments after each dimension and one general comment section. Out of 166 respondents, a total of 283 comments were provided by 108 individuals. These comments were reviewed overall and are summarized below.

Meeting Processes

Conversations appear to be open and honest between the different agencies and representatives that attend the various AR meetings. Some respondents also indicated a diligent effort on behalf of DCFS to keep stakeholders informed. However, others indicated that DCFS' style of communication has been too focused on the delivery of information, rather than asking questions or providing stakeholders with options to advise on the direction of the AR program. One respondent said, "I felt like I was there for show and tell only." This appears to be leading some stakeholders to view AR meetings as an inefficient use of their time, as they would like to more clearly see the

effect of their input and observe more productivity result from these meetings. One respondent stated their sense was, “DHHS was going to go this direction despite the feedback.” Another felt AR decisions were “driven internally and we were given documents to respond to, but often the feedback provided resulted in no changes.” It was noted that apparent decision-makers are not always present at meetings; although stakeholders want to understand how their participation is impacting the final decisions being made by DCFS. One respondent said:

“At times it feels as though decisions can’t be made without certain people present and yet those folks aren’t always available to attend the meeting, in turn decisions aren’t made timely. I feel as though the meeting becomes stagnant at times and we circle around the same information with no clear decision even when the people at the table can make the decision.”

Considering this feedback, it may be beneficial to provide stakeholders with a written summary or documentation of clear action items, details about how past action items have been addressed, or decisions that have been made since the last meeting. A possible solution would be for DCFS to more clearly communicate through the use of agendas (prior to meetings) and the distribution of meeting minutes (after meetings), as comments suggested these are not consistently being used. Stakeholders also commented on how they have assumed additional AR duties voluntarily and in addition to their regular responsibilities. One respondent suggested that if or when meetings are just to share information; email may be a better medium. It also appears that clearer communication is needed for some stakeholders regarding when meetings are scheduled or canceled.

While comments indicated that the level of collaboration within communities is perceived to be strong, some comments indicated a lack of trust in DCFS to follow through with AR as discussed at meetings. Additionally, some are concerned about AR continuing to be made a priority through leadership changes. Comments suggest the need for greater collaboration between DCFS and the community to create more service links, breakdown divisions, and create sustainable change for families needing services after DCFS involvement ends. However, several respondents also remarked on the developing relationships between DCFS and community partners, indicating a recent shift in collaboration and that trust is evolving. One stakeholder remarked that “it was good to see them ask for stakeholder input and participation.” Another said, “I think working collaboratively is something we are striving towards and becoming better at. Over the last 5 years we have broken down many silos and are doing a much better job.” Stakeholders appear to see the need for AR and feel like progress has been made regarding the relationships and level of trust in DCFS. Some commented on the level of community involvement in AR thus far and feel that collaboration between DCFS and most agencies is good. One respondent indicated:

“This is the great thing we have accomplished! Before starting this process we had numerous local agencies and non-profit organizations working on the same issues but not communicating or working hand in hand. This resulted in too much redundancy in many areas and huge gaps of need in others. Getting everyone on the same page has resulted in a much more effective use of our time, our energy and our resources.”

Moving forward, participants would like to hear more about how the AR program is progressing, especially as it rolls out to additional sites and the model is adjusted from the original implementation plans. External stakeholders are requesting more communication about what is being experienced by workers in the field, while

some internal DCFS staff commented on their desire to be more involved regarding the current and ongoing status of the AR program. As implementation progresses, it may also be necessary to revisit the purpose of the different AR groups, as some respondents expressed a need for more defined roles and group direction. One stakeholder indicated that “it would be beneficial to regroup and ensure each party is aware of their role within the group and within AR as a whole. At times it feels as though people are unsure of their role and the goals of what DHHS is attempting to accomplish with this initiative.” A local stakeholder stated, “I think the group is still trying to ‘form’ and see their purpose. People are interested, but don’t yet see their own roles, responsibilities, and how each can contribute.” Additionally, there may be a need to reach out to other stakeholders to make sure all necessary system partners are involved. Comments suggested the following stakeholders should be included in AR discussions: more people that are familiar with the research, additional provider agencies, faith-based community partners, cultural centers (including tribal), educational personnel, mental health professionals, law enforcement, legal partners (attorneys, CASA, GAL, judges), and youth and families.

Overall AR Program

Several respondents remarked that AR is a “move in the right direction” and commented on the potential benefits of AR being implemented. One stakeholder commented, “I am excited about the potential outcomes for families serviced in AR.” Another stated, “CFS is definitely on the right track with AR. AR should prove to keep families out of the system and address their needs in a much more proactive manner.” It appears that stakeholders believe AR can be successful and are eager to see how AR is impacting families. Negative program comments were minimal and appeared to be specific to particular program features (e.g., contact requirements, interview protocol). Several comments expressed a need to figure out the specifics for funding, including funding services in the community, and how workers can access flexible funding sources for AR families. There were also concerns about AR overloading IA workers, especially with the requirement for more frequent family contacts and managing a mixed (AR and TR) caseload. More supports may be necessary to fully, or at least more quickly, realize some of the outcomes proposed to be associated with AR.

Stakeholders would like to see future efforts focused on providing additional training or more comprehensive training for future sites. Stakeholders would also like to further review and consider the exclusionary criteria. Comments indicated that there are too many criteria excluding families from AR, in other words the current criteria are too restrictive. Additionally, some comments underlined a need to manage external perceptions of the AR program, as not all conditions are within the department’s control, nor can all conditions be predicted or managed. Respondents expressed recognition that some of the outcomes proposed will take a long time to occur, if at all. A couple of comments highlighted concerns about the evaluation, specifically the use of the randomizer. These comments indicated that the randomizer is “just not right” and “is going to hurt people in the short run.” Further communication about the value of the evaluation and how it can be informative, not hurtful, may be necessary.

Conclusion

AR began implementation in 5 pilot counties on October 1, 2014. This survey was the first formal gathering of stakeholders’ input on the AR implementation process thus far. Contact information was provided by DCFS to CCFL for all individuals that DCFS considered to be AR stakeholders. This included individuals internal and external

to the department. A total of 166 individuals participated in this online survey. The survey was emailed to participants on December 3, 2014. Responses were received between December 3, 2014 and December 19, 2014. Therefore, these responses are reflective of the early implementation period.

For comparison purposes, respondents were separated into three main groups: statewide external stakeholders, internal workgroup and subgroup members, and local implementation team members. Generally, AR stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in the survey and most of the average ratings did not vary significantly between groups. Significant findings, along with comments, indicate that future efforts should be directed at actively involving stakeholders (both current and possibly inviting more stakeholders to attend AR meetings), examining or reexamining AR program elements, and communicating field-level experiences of AR implementation so far.

The purpose of this survey was to address a number of short term and intermediate outcomes:

- Stakeholders and community members are engaged and offer meaningful input in AR program development, including initial implementation and the ongoing monitoring and revision of implementation plans
- Building an understanding and buy-in for the AR program
- Community providers work together and with DCFS to expand or enhance services/supports

Although respondents generally agreed with the survey statements, it appears there is room for improvement with regards to these outcomes. Future survey efforts will examine any increases or changes in respondent ratings as well as the frequency and valence of comments. This survey will be conducted again midway through the demonstration (April-June 2016) and near the end of the project (January-March 2019). Ultimately, these outcomes are expected to lead to the long term outcome of strengthened partnership between DCFS, provider agencies, and community stakeholders.

Appendix A:
Overall AR Stakeholder Item Frequencies

For each survey item, the following tables detail the number and percentage of responses selected for each response option. *SD* = strongly disagree (1), *D* = disagree (2), *N* = neutral (3), *A* = agree (4), *SA* = strongly agree (5). *Total* represents the total number of respondents that provided a rating for that item. For the *Perceptions of AR Program Elements* dimension, *Don't Know* was also included as a response option. For these items *DK* = Don't Know. If a different rating scale was used for an item, it is defined within the table. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Purpose of the Group	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
1. I have a good understanding of the purpose of the group. I know what we are trying to accomplish.	3 (2%)	6 (4%)	7 (4%)	95 (57%)	55 (33%)	166
2. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this group seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	1 (1%)	8 (5%)	13 (8%)	105 (63%)	39 (24%)	166
3. People in this group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the AR initiative.	2 (1%)	14 (8%)	38 (23%)	80 (48%)	32 (19%)	166
4. What we are trying to accomplish with this initiative would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	14 (9%)	65 (39%)	84 (51%)	165

Meeting Schedule	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
5. The meeting format (e.g., location, time) makes it easy for me to attend in person.	2 (1%)	10 (6%)	14 (9%)	96 (58%)	43 (26%)	165
6. Meetings occur with the right amount of frequency.	2 (1%)	6 (4%)	35 (21%)	99 (60%)	23 (14%)	165

If respondents did not agree or strongly agree with item 6, the following question was displayed:

7. How frequently should these meetings take place?	Never	Semi-Annually	Once a Quarter	Once a Month	2-3 Times a Month	Total
	-	1 (2%)	16 (38%)	24 (57%)	1 (2%)	42

Meeting Process (Agendas, Minutes, Action Items)	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
8. All relevant materials needed for our meetings (e.g., draft policies, sample communications) are distributed in advance, enabling us to read and digest the information before we meet or to share input when we are unable to attend in person.	5 (3%)	23 (14%)	27 (17%)	86 (53%)	22 (14%)	163
9. Meetings are well documented so that we have clear accountability, a reference point when we have questions and a history that keeps us from revisiting territory we have already covered.	2 (1%)	17 (10%)	44 (27%)	85 (52%)	16 (10%)	164

Meeting Process (Agendas, Minutes, Action Items)	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
10. Commitments made at our meetings are followed up and not forgotten.	2 (1%)	10 (6%)	35 (22%)	96 (59%)	20 (12%)	163
11. When considering meeting to meeting, there are tangible accomplishments and substantive progress that reinforces the sense that these meetings are effective and productive.	3 (2%)	15 (9%)	41 (25%)	86 (53%)	17 (11%)	162
Participation	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
12. The organizations that attend these meetings invest the right amount of time and effort.	0 (0%)	9 (6%)	39 (24%)	92 (58%)	20 (13%)	160
13. I feel involved in what's going on during our meetings.	2 (1%)	13 (8%)	23 (14%)	93 (58%)	29 (18%)	160
14. I am well informed about the AR initiative (why AR is necessary, how the AR model fits within current child welfare practice, major policy decisions, how community and provider agencies will be affected, etc.)	0 (0%)	6 (4%)	15 (9%)	87 (54%)	53 (33%)	161
15. I regularly participate in the discussions during our meetings.	1 (1%)	8 (5%)	28 (18%)	83 (52%)	39 (25%)	159
16. Other's participation is usually energetic and stimulating.	0 (0%)	8 (5%)	42 (26%)	90 (56%)	20 (13%)	160
17. During our meetings, people are generally focused on the task at hand (e.g., minimal sidebars, no passing notes or reading e-mails).	1 (1%)	6 (4%)	21 (13%)	104 (65%)	29 (18%)	161
History of Collaboration	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
18. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this local community.	1 (1%)	16 (10%)	25 (15%)	86 (53%)	34 (21%)	162
19. Agencies in our local community have a history of working collaboratively with DCFS.	3 (2%)	27 (17%)	39 (24%)	73 (45%)	19 (12%)	161
Appropriate Cross Section of Members	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
20. The people that attend these meetings represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	1 (1%)	5 (3%)	17 (11%)	97 (61%)	39 (25%)	159
21. All the organizations that need to be members of this group have become members of this group.	3 (2%)	18 (11%)	37 (23%)	87 (55%)	13 (8%)	158
Perceived Utility	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
22. The quality of our discussions is high (e.g., issues are examined in depth; problems are addressed and not skirted).	3 (2%)	17 (11%)	25 (16%)	91 (57%)	24 (15%)	160
23. Our meetings are a valuable use of my time because we deal with important content.	4 (3%)	11 (7%)	29 (18%)	93 (58%)	23 (14%)	160

Perceived Utility	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total	
24. People feel that our meetings are worthwhile because their participation makes a difference in the outcomes, decisions, and results.	4 (3%)	15 (9%)	39 (24%)	82 (51%)	20 (13%)	160	
Inclusiveness in Process	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total	
25. The processes used to elicit the group's input are effective.	3 (0%)	11 (6%)	36 (24%)	96 (58%)	14 (13%)	160	
26. It is clear that the group's input is heard and serves a valuable role in the decisions made by DCFS.	6 (4%)	7 (4%)	44 (28%)	77 (48%)	25 (16%)	159	
27. When major decisions are made about AR program design and implementation, we are always informed.	4 (3%)	26 (16%)	38 (24%)	76 (48%)	16 (10%)	160	
28. Progress updates are regularly shared so that this group is informed about the current status and ongoing direction of the AR initiative.	4 (3%)	19 (12%)	35 (22%)	87 (55%)	13 (8%)	158	
Open Communication	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total	
29. People really listen to each other during our meetings.	0 (0%)	4 (3%)	24 (15%)	107 (67%)	25 (16%)	160	
30. There is a high level of trust between participants in our meetings.	3 (2%)	13 (8%)	40 (25%)	80 (50%)	24 (15%)	160	
31. People feel comfortable challenging the ideas and comments of others in our meetings.	1 (1%)	11 (7%)	40 (25%)	87 (54%)	21 (13%)	160	
32. Different ideas and perspectives are often explored in our meetings.	3 (2%)	11 (7%)	34 (21%)	91 (57%)	20 (13%)	159	
33. Other members in this group value my opinion.	2 (1%)	4 (3%)	46 (29%)	86 (55%)	19 (12%)	157	
Appropriate Pace of Development	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total	
34. DCFS has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace with this AR initiative.	0 (0%)	7 (4%)	38 (24%)	88 (55%)	26 (16%)	159	
35. In my opinion, DCFS is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	4 (3%)	14 (9%)	35 (22%)	85 (53%)	22 (14%)	160	
Political and Social Climate for AR	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total	
36. DCFS has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace with this AR initiative.	4 (3%)	8 (5%)	33 (21%)	94 (59%)	21 (13%)	160	
Perceptions of AR Program Elements	<i>DK</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
37. AR will be able to keep kids as safe as Traditional Response.	14 (9%)	1 (1%)	5 (3%)	14 (9%)	48 (30%)	76 (48%)	158
38. Nebraska's AR model is designed to serve families with less severe allegations.	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	7 (4%)	67 (42%)	80 (51%)	158

Perceptions of AR Program Elements	<i>DK</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	Total
39. The exclusionary and RED (review, evaluate, and decide) team criteria DCFS is using to identify AR-eligible families are the right criteria.	21 (13%)	4 (3%)	13 (8%)	28 (18%)	70 (44%)	23 (14%)	159
40. An important feature of AR is to avoid the use of labels like “perpetrator” or “victim,” but rather, use “caregiver” and “child.”	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	18 (11%)	64 (40%)	70 (44%)	159
41. AR families should not be placed on the Central Registry.	7 (4%)	1 (1%)	8 (5%)	16 (10%)	43 (27%)	84 (53%)	159
42. Families in AR will receive more frequent contact with their caseworker, which will allow for better outcomes and quicker resolution.	19 (12%)	2 (1%)	7 (4%)	15 (9%)	50 (32%)	65 (41%)	158
43. Families will receive services faster in AR as compared to Traditional Response.	22 (14%)	0 (0%)	13 (8%)	36 (23%)	51 (32%)	37 (24%)	159
44. Concrete supports will be better addressed through AR as compared to Traditional Response.	16 (10%)	2 (1%)	11 (7%)	27 (17%)	63 (39%)	40 (25%)	159
45. Law enforcement should be involved in AR cases.*	9 (6%)	5 (3%)	23 (14%)	48 (30%)	46 (29%)	28 (18%)	159
46. Contacting parents prior to interviewing their children is an important feature of AR practice for enhancing family engagement.	8 (5%)	2 (1%)	9 (6%)	15 (9%)	58 (37%)	66 (42%)	158

**This item was reverse coded*

Appendix B:
Average AR Stakeholder Item Ratings

Respondents rated each survey item on a 5-point scale of agreement (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). The following tables display the average item ratings for each group of stakeholders (statewide external groups, internal workgroup and subgroups, and local implementation groups). For the following tables, *Average* = average item rating, *SD* = standard deviation, and *N* = number of responses. For the *Perceptions of AR Program Elements* dimension, *Don't Know* was included as a response option. For purposes of calculating the mean, these responses were treated as missing data.

Statewide External Groups

Purpose of the Group		Average	SD	N			
1.	I have a good understanding of the purpose of the group. I know what we are trying to accomplish.	4.04	1.07	23			
2.	My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this group seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	3.96	0.98	23			
3.	People in this group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the AR initiative.	3.83	1.07	23			
4.	What we are trying to accomplish with this initiative would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.	4.57	0.66	23			
Meeting Schedule		Average	SD	N			
5.	The meeting format (e.g., location, time) makes it easy for me to attend in person.	4.22	0.74	23			
6.	Meetings occur with the right amount of frequency.	3.91	0.79	23			
<i>If respondents did not agree or strongly agree with item 6, the following question was displayed:</i>							
7.	How frequently should these meetings take place?	Never	Semi-Annually	Once a Quarter	Once a Month	2-3 Times a Month	N
		-	-	50%	50%	-	6
Meeting Process (Agendas, Minutes, Action Items)		Average	SD	N			
8.	All relevant materials needed for our meetings (e.g., draft policies, sample communications) are distributed in advance, enabling us to read and digest the information before we meet or to share input when we are unable to attend in person.	3.43	1.31	23			
9.	Meetings are well documented so that we have clear accountability, a reference point when we have questions and a history that keeps us from revisiting territory we have already covered.	3.57	0.95	23			
10.	Commitments made at our meetings are followed up and not forgotten.	3.65	1.07	23			
11.	When considering meeting to meeting, there are tangible accomplishments and substantive progress that reinforces the sense that these meetings are effective and productive.	3.78	1.00	23			

Participation	Average	SD	N
12. The organizations that attend these meetings invest the right amount of time and effort.	3.61	0.72	23
13. I feel involved in what's going on during our meetings.	4.13	0.69	23
14. I am well informed about the AR initiative (why AR is necessary, how the AR model fits within current child welfare practice, major policy decisions, how community and provider agencies will be affected, etc.)	4.22	0.90	23
15. I regularly participate in the discussions during our meetings.	4.35	0.78	23
16. Other's participation is usually energetic and stimulating.	3.87	0.82	23
17. During our meetings, people are generally focused on the task at hand (e.g., minimal sidebars, no passing notes or reading e-mails).	4.09	0.67	23

History of Collaboration	Average	SD	N
18. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this local community.	3.45	1.06	22
19. Agencies in our local community have a history of working collaboratively with DCFS.	3.09	1.11	22

Appropriate Cross Section of Members	Average	SD	N
20. The people that attend these meetings represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	3.91	1.11	22
21. All the organizations that need to be members of this group have become members of this group.	3.50	1.01	22

Perceived Utility	Average	SD	N
22. The quality of our discussions is high (e.g., issues are examined in depth, problems are addressed and not skirted).	3.77	1.11	22
23. Our meetings are a valuable use of my time because we deal with important content.	3.95	1.05	22
24. People feel that our meetings are worthwhile because their participation makes a difference in the outcomes, decisions, and results.	3.45	1.22	22

Inclusiveness in Process	Average	SD	N
25. The processes used to elicit the group's input are effective.	3.82	1.05	22
26. It is clear that the group's input is heard and serves a valuable role in the decisions made by DCFS.	3.68	1.17	22
27. When major decisions are made about AR program design and implementation, we are always informed.	3.41	1.18	22
28. Progress updates are regularly shared so that this group is informed about the current status and ongoing direction of the AR initiative.	3.82	1.01	22

Open Communication	Average	SD	N
29. People really listen to each other during our meetings.	3.95	0.84	22
30. There is a high level of trust between participants in our meetings.	3.45	1.06	22
31. People feel comfortable challenging the ideas and comments of others in our meetings.	3.82	0.59	22
32. Different ideas and perspectives are often explored in our meetings.	3.68	0.95	22
33. Other members in this group value my opinion.	3.43	0.68	21
Appropriate Pace of Development	Average	SD	N
34. DCFS has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace with this AR initiative.	3.82	1.10	22
35. In my opinion, DCFS is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	3.36	1.22	22
Political and Social Climate for AR	Average	SD	N
36. The political and social climate seems to be “right” for AR to be successful.	3.77	1.02	22
Perceptions of AR Program Elements	Average	SD	N
37. AR will be able to keep kids as safe as Traditional Response.	4.11	1.15	22
38. Nebraska’s AR model is designed to serve families with less severe allegations.	4.23	0.81	22
39. The exclusionary and RED (review, evaluate, and decide) team criteria DCFS is using to identify AR-eligible families are the right criteria.	3.68	0.95	22
40. An important feature of AR is to avoid the use of labels like “perpetrator” or “victim,” but rather, use “caregiver” and “child.”	4.18	0.91	22
41. AR families should not be placed on the Central Registry.	4.50	0.76	22
42. Families in AR will receive more frequent contact with their caseworker, which will allow for better outcomes and quicker resolution.	3.89	1.15	22
43. Families will receive services faster in AR as compared to Traditional Response.	3.47	1.22	22
44. Concrete supports will be better addressed through AR as compared to Traditional Response.	3.33	1.07	22
45. Law enforcement should be involved in AR cases.*	4.06	1.11	22
46. Contacting parents prior to interviewing their children is an important feature of AR practice for enhancing family engagement.	4.00	1.17	22

**This item was reverse coded*

Internal Workgroup and Subgroups

Purpose of the Group		Average	SD	N			
1.	I have a good understanding of the purpose of the group. I know what we are trying to accomplish.	4.33	0.62	27			
2.	My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this group seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	4.22	0.64	27			
3.	People in this group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the AR initiative.	3.78	0.85	27			
4.	What we are trying to accomplish with this initiative would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.	4.11	0.93	27			
Meeting Schedule		Average	SD	N			
5.	The meeting format (e.g., location, time) makes it easy for me to attend in person.	4.07	0.68	27			
6.	Meetings occur with the right amount of frequency.	3.70	0.91	27			
<i>If respondents did not agree or strongly agree with item 6, the following question was displayed:</i>							
7.	How frequently should these meetings take place?	Never	Semi-Annually	Once a Quarter	Once a Month	2-3 Times a Month	N
		-	11%	22%	56%	11%	9
Meeting Process (Agendas, Minutes, Action Items)		Average	SD	N			
8.	All relevant materials needed for our meetings (e.g., draft policies, sample communications) are distributed in advance, enabling us to read and digest the information before we meet or to share input when we are unable to attend in person.	3.74	0.94	27			
9.	Meetings are well documented so that we have clear accountability, a reference point when we have questions and a history that keeps us from revisiting territory we have already covered.	3.52	0.89	27			
10.	Commitments made at our meetings are followed up and not forgotten.	3.81	0.74	27			
11.	When considering meeting to meeting, there are tangible accomplishments and substantive progress that reinforces the sense that these meetings are effective and productive.	3.70	0.91	27			
Participation		Average	SD	N			
12.	The organizations that attend these meetings invest the right amount of time and effort.	3.84	0.69	25			
13.	I feel involved in what's going on during our meetings.	3.80	0.96	25			
14.	I am well informed about the AR initiative (why AR is necessary, how the AR model fits within current child welfare practice, major policy decisions, how community and provider agencies will be affected, etc.)	4.23	0.71	26			
15.	I regularly participate in the discussions during our meetings.	4.12	0.73	25			
16.	Other's participation is usually energetic and stimulating.	3.96	0.60	26			
17.	During our meetings, people are generally focused on the task at hand (e.g., minimal sidebars, no passing notes or reading e-mails).	4.00	0.49	26			

History of Collaboration	Average	SD	N
18. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this local community.	3.69	0.79	26
19. Agencies in our local community have a history of working collaboratively with DCFS.	3.46	0.76	26
Appropriate Cross Section of Members	Average	SD	N
20. The people that attend these meetings represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	4.00	0.76	25
21. All the organizations that need to be members of this group have become members of this group.	3.60	0.87	25
Perceived Utility	Average	SD	N
22. The quality of our discussions is high (e.g., issues are examined in depth, problems are addressed and not skirted).	3.96	0.92	26
23. Our meetings are a valuable use of my time because we deal with important content.	3.77	0.95	26
24. People feel that our meetings are worthwhile because their participation makes a difference in the outcomes, decisions, and results.	3.85	0.88	26
Inclusiveness in Process	Average	SD	N
25. The processes used to elicit the group's input are effective.	3.69	0.84	26
26. It is clear that the group's input is heard and serves a valuable role in the decisions made by DCFS.	3.77	0.82	26
27. When major decisions are made about AR program design and implementation, we are always informed.	3.31	1.01	26
28. Progress updates are regularly shared so that this group is informed about the current status and ongoing direction of the AR initiative.	3.31	0.97	26
Open Communication	Average	SD	N
29. People really listen to each other during our meetings.	3.96	0.60	26
30. There is a high level of trust between participants in our meetings.	3.77	0.82	26
31. People feel comfortable challenging the ideas and comments of others in our meetings.	3.77	0.82	26
32. Different ideas and perspectives are often explored in our meetings.	3.88	0.82	26
33. Other members in this group value my opinion.	3.73	0.92	26
Appropriate Pace of Development	Average	SD	N
34. DCFS has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace with this AR initiative.	3.81	0.63	26
35. In my opinion, DCFS is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	3.81	0.80	26

Political and Social Climate for AR	Average	SD	N
36. The political and social climate seems to be “right” for AR to be successful.	3.54	0.71	26
Perceptions of AR Program Elements	Average	SD	N
37. AR will be able to keep kids as safe as Traditional Response.	4.54	0.58	26
38. Nebraska’s AR model is designed to serve families with less severe allegations.	4.77	0.43	26
39. The exclusionary and RED (review, evaluate, and decide) team criteria DCFS is using to identify AR-eligible families are the right criteria.	3.43	0.99	26
40. An important feature of AR is to avoid the use of labels like “perpetrator” or “victim,” but rather, use “caregiver” and “child.”	4.56	0.65	26
41. AR families should not be placed on the Central Registry.	4.76	0.44	26
42. Families in AR will receive more frequent contact with their caseworker, which will allow for better outcomes and quicker resolution.	4.71	0.55	26
43. Families will receive services faster in AR as compared to Traditional Response.	3.82	1.01	26
44. Concrete supports will be better addressed through AR as compared to Traditional Response.	4.29	0.69	26
45. Law enforcement should be involved in AR cases.*	3.88	1.05	26
46. Contacting parents prior to interviewing their children is an important feature of AR practice for enhancing family engagement.	4.60	0.58	26

**This item was reverse coded*

Local Implementation Groups

Purpose of the Group		Average	SD	N			
1.	I have a good understanding of the purpose of the group. I know what we are trying to accomplish.	4.15	0.79	116			
2.	My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this group seem to be the same as the ideas of others.	4.02	0.72	116			
3.	People in this group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the AR initiative.	3.74	0.89	116			
4.	What we are trying to accomplish with this initiative would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.	4.43	0.66	115			
Meeting Schedule		Average	SD	N			
5.	The meeting format (e.g., location, time) makes it easy for me to attend in person.	3.97	0.89	115			
6.	Meetings occur with the right amount of frequency.	3.83	0.72	115			
<i>If respondents did not agree or strongly agree with item 6, the following question was displayed:</i>							
7.	How frequently should these meetings take place?	Never	Semi-Annually	Once a Quarter	Once a Month	2-3 Times a Month	N
		-	-	41%	59%	-	27
Meeting Process (Agendas, Minutes, Action Items)		Average	SD	N			
8.	All relevant materials needed for our meetings (e.g., draft policies, sample communications) are distributed in advance, enabling us to read and digest the information before we meet or to share input when we are unable to attend in person.	3.59	0.93	113			
9.	Meetings are well documented so that we have clear accountability, a reference point when we have questions and a history that keeps us from revisiting territory we have already covered.	3.61	0.83	114			
10.	Commitments made at our meetings are followed up and not forgotten.	3.75	0.75	113			
11.	When considering meeting to meeting, there are tangible accomplishments and substantive progress that reinforces the sense that these meetings are effective and productive.	3.55	0.83	112			
Participation		Average	SD	N			
12.	The organizations that attend these meetings invest the right amount of time and effort.	3.79	0.75	112			
13.	I feel involved in what's going on during our meetings.	3.79	0.86	112			
14.	I am well informed about the AR initiative (why AR is necessary, how the AR model fits within current child welfare practice, major policy decisions, how community and provider agencies will be affected, etc.)	4.13	0.72	112			
15.	I regularly participate in the discussions during our meetings.	3.87	0.83	111			
16.	Other's participation is usually energetic and stimulating.	3.72	0.74	111			
17.	During our meetings, people are generally focused on the task at hand (e.g., minimal sidebars, no passing notes or reading e-mails).	3.95	0.77	112			

History of Collaboration	Average	SD	N
18. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this local community.	3.93	0.86	114
19. Agencies in our local community have a history of working collaboratively with DCFS.	3.53	0.97	113
Appropriate Cross Section of Members	Average	SD	N
20. The people that attend these meetings represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	4.11	0.63	112
21. All the organizations that need to be members of this group have become members of this group.	3.60	0.85	111
Perceived Utility	Average	SD	N
22. The quality of our discussions is high (e.g., issues are examined in depth, problems are addressed and not skirted).	3.70	0.87	112
23. Our meetings are a valuable use of my time because we deal with important content.	3.75	0.82	112
24. People feel that our meetings are worthwhile because their participation makes a difference in the outcomes, decisions, and results.	3.64	0.84	112
Inclusiveness in Process	Average	SD	N
25. The processes used to elicit the group's input are effective.	3.68	0.75	112
26. It is clear that the group's input is heard and serves a valuable role in the decisions made by DCFS.	3.68	0.90	111
27. When major decisions are made about AR program design and implementation, we are always informed.	3.51	0.91	112
28. Progress updates are regularly shared so that this group is informed about the current status and ongoing direction of the AR initiative.	3.55	0.85	110
Open Communication	Average	SD	N
29. People really listen to each other during our meetings.	3.97	0.61	112
30. There is a high level of trust between participants in our meetings.	3.74	0.88	112
31. People feel comfortable challenging the ideas and comments of others in our meetings.	3.71	0.84	112
32. Different ideas and perspectives are often explored in our meetings.	3.71	0.83	111
33. Other members in this group value my opinion.	3.81	0.71	110
Appropriate Pace of Development	Average	SD	N
34. DCFS has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace with this AR initiative.	3.87	0.69	111
35. In my opinion, DCFS is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.	3.70	0.86	112

Political and Social Climate for AR	Average	SD	N
36. The political and social climate seems to be “right” for AR to be successful.	3.79	0.83	112
Perceptions of AR Program Elements	Average	SD	N
37. AR will be able to keep kids as safe as Traditional Response.	4.33	0.83	111
38. Nebraska’s AR model is designed to serve families with less severe allegations.	4.35	0.74	110
39. The exclusionary and RED (review, evaluate, and decide) team criteria DCFS is using to identify AR-eligible families are the right criteria.	3.75	0.95	111
40. An important feature of AR is to avoid the use of labels like “perpetrator” or “victim,” but rather, use “caregiver” and “child.”	4.26	0.73	111
41. AR families should not be placed on the Central Registry.	4.19	0.98	111
42. Families in AR will receive more frequent contact with their caseworker, which will allow for better outcomes and quicker resolution.	4.16	0.92	110
43. Families will receive services faster in AR as compared to Traditional Response.	3.89	0.86	111
44. Concrete supports will be better addressed through AR as compared to Traditional Response.	3.92	0.93	111
45. Law enforcement should be involved in AR cases.*	3.26	1.00	111
46. Contacting parents prior to interviewing their children is an important feature of AR practice for enhancing family engagement.	4.11	0.93	110

**This item was reverse coded*