National Child Welfare Workforce Institute
LEARNING, LEADING, CHANGING

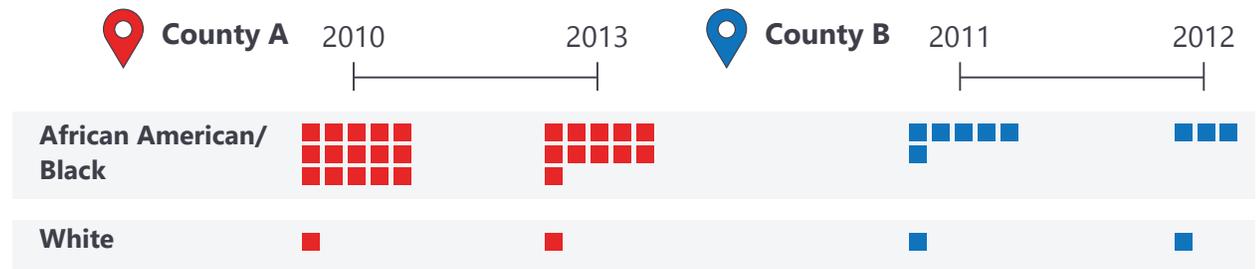# Addressing Racial Disparity in Foster Care Placement

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This article examines a case study that identified aspects of child welfare practices that contributed to a decrease in the number and disproportionality of African American/Black children in foster care in two New York counties.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

In the case study, counties identified key practice-related factors that emerged while they were participating in the statewide Disproportionate Minority Representation (DMR) initiative from 2009-2013 that were instrumental in lowering the counties' placement rates of African American/Black children.

Ratio of African American/Black children to White children being placed in foster care:

Factors identified by both counties:

Community-Level
- Provided community resources and prevention services
- Collaborated across community systems

Agency-Level
- Prioritized staff development and training on racial equity
- Implemented Family Assessment Response approach
- Increased family input and involvement

Factors identified by County A:
- Implemented blind removal meetings to facilitate unbiased decision-making
- Increased workforce diversity

Factors identified by County B:
- Streamlined services through a unique system of care
- Strengthened relationship between court system and social services

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Child welfare systems need case-level strategies and community-supported interventions to reduce racial disparities in removal decisions and disproportionality in foster care systems. Child welfare administrators should consider development and training on case-practice and decision-making processes that reduce racial bias and increase racial equity. Additionally, it is critical to create collaborative community partnerships to develop systems of care that impact racial disparity within the larger community.