

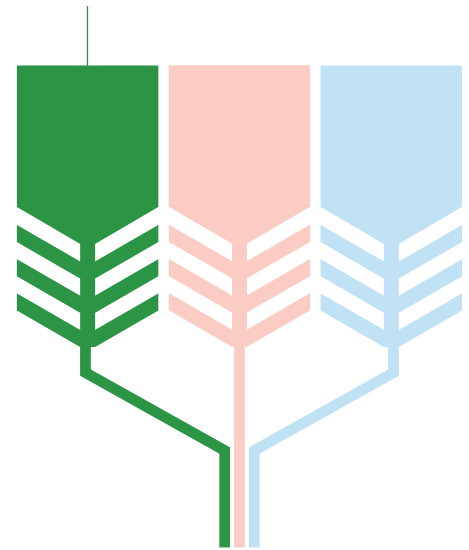
## APPENDIX B: THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Legislators are responsible for enacting legislation related to child safety and well-being, allocating resources to promote effective child safety partnerships and providing ongoing cross-agency oversight. In a three-branch approach, legislators can also lead and staff the initiative; recruit legislators and legislative staff (including key legislative policy and committee staff) to be members of the implementation and extended teams; and engage families, foster youth, community-based organizations, representatives of the faith community and many others in this work.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❑ Enact legislation. The legislative branch takes a lead role in drafting legislation resulting from the three-branch approach, shepherding it through committee, gaining support from other legislators and championing the legislation when it comes to a vote.
- ❑ Authorize funding. Legislators are responsible for adequately funding the initiative through the state appropriations process.
- ❑ Galvanize support among legislative stakeholders and constituents. Legislators are responsible for building understanding and consensus among legislators and community members for proposed legislation resulting from the initiative.
- ❑ Educate the extended three-branch team on the policy landscape, background on policy development and existing state policies related to the outcome being examined. Legislators are directly accountable to their constituents and understand the environment that local service providers face. In a three-branch approach, legislators can use this knowledge to inform their team of what can be done at the local level.

### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH



### BEST PRACTICES

#### Engage colleagues within the branch.

- ❑ Host meetings to build rapport and a shared sense of the problem among legislators.
- ❑ Hold a joint hearing or briefing for the full legislative body.
- ❑ Develop talking points and fact sheets to share with colleagues.
- ❑ Engage colleagues in informal or private meetings over meals.
- ❑ Prepare packets with information for other legislators and legislative staff on related committees, such as health, education, judiciary, public safety and appropriations.
- ❑ Establish clear and ongoing channels of communication over email, through project management software or through regularly scheduled phone calls.
- ❑ Develop a legislative action plan to clarify the branch's role in the state's three-branch approach.
- ❑ Mandate and develop legislative children's caucuses that can hold educational meetings on child welfare during the legislative session.



### Engage with the executive branch.

- ❑ Schedule a meeting with the governor, lieutenant governor or first spouse.
- ❑ Invite state agency leaders to testify at legislative hearings.
- ❑ Partner with state agencies (child welfare, health, behavioral health, human services) to request and review data.
- ❑ Participate in legislator ride-alongs, or spend a day with a caseworker.
- ❑ Establish a three-branch policy or implementation work group to examine and develop policies, plan for implementation and be responsible for oversight of the initiative.
- ❑ Assist with development and engagement of implementation and extended teams.



### Engage with the judicial branch.

- ❑ Visit courts and observe hearings as appropriate.
- ❑ Schedule meetings far in advance to give judges with active dockets an opportunity to participate.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for judges to interact with other legislators and legislative staff to ensure that legislation is helpful and not an obstacle.
- ❑ Host or participate in cross-branch training sessions and judicial roundtables.



### Review existing state policies, procedures and laws.

- ❑ Create an interim study committee or another mechanism to examine existing policies, processes and standards in child welfare and to identify potential policy barriers, gaps in services or service delivery and any gaps in policy support.
- ❑ Learn about promising evidence-based practices, and assess the policy support or changes that may be needed to implement those practices in the state.



### Examine needs across the state.

- ❑ Consult with community providers and agencies to learn about the needs of families at risk of child welfare involvement.
- ❑ Examine the services available in the state that support and stabilize families.
- ❑ Hold local or regional listening sessions to learn from families, providers, county workers and community members.
- ❑ Ensure that families, children and youth have a voice in system reform; invite them to plan and participate in hearings, listening sessions, meetings, task forces and work groups.