

Kentucky Response to the Federal Register Vol. 76, No. 65/ issued Tuesday, April 5, 2011
(Request for Public Comments on the CFSR)

1. How could ACF best promote and measure continuous quality improvement in child welfare outcomes and the effective functioning of systems that promote positive outcomes for children and families?

In general, Kentucky does support some of the APHSA/NAPCWA on this topic; but would follow up with the some specific points of recommendation:

- The CFSR/PIP should be streamlined by folding the process into the CFSP/APSR.
 - The CFSR onsite should be eliminated and the CFSP self-assessment could adapt some elements from the onsite and serve as the mechanism by which state performance is evaluated for improvement planning.
 - The new self-assessment process should not require a case review element, if the state can demonstrate an adequate case review system sufficient to measure the outcomes evaluated by the CFSR instrument.
 - The PIP process should be eliminated and replaced by enhancement of the current CFSP/APSR planning and annual reporting.
 - No more than three key practice areas should be targeted for improvement in a given time—to give adequate time for analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
 - The state should be permitted within reason to format its CFSP and APSR in a way that is best representative of the state's activities, as long as all outcome areas are represented.
2. To what extent should data or measures from national child welfare databases (*e.g.*, the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System) be used in a Federal monitoring process and what measures are important for State/Tribal/local accountability?
 - The measures suggested by APHSA/NAPCWA are easier to understand and interpret than the current CFSR measures. They have appropriate denominators, and they are more often based on entry cohorts rather than exit cohorts, which tells the true story of the groups' collective experience. The proposed recurrence measure is a tremendous improvement over the current measure because of the way repeat maltreatment was previously defined. The proposed caseworker visit measure is more achievable, while the previous measure actually discouraged visits following any single missed visit with a child.
 3. What role should the child welfare case management information system or systems that States/Tribes/local agencies use for case management or quality assurance purposes play in a Federal monitoring process?
 - States should submit AFCARS/NCANDS data as required, and submit qualitative data from their case review system annually. APSR submission content would be relevant to the goals and measures established at the CFSP submission.
 4. What roles should State/Tribal/local child welfare agencies play in establishing targets for improvement and monitoring performance towards those targets? What role should other stakeholders, such as courts, clients and other child-serving agencies play?
 - External entities can best assist during self-assessment or evaluation, however, states should have some flexibility in how they solicit and process stakeholder input as long as the state can articulate the usefulness and appropriateness of their individual process.
 - Child welfare agencies should be able to set their own improvements as long as they can cite reasonable reasons for those targets. Stakeholders sometimes lack sufficient understanding of practice issues, relevant state law, relevant federal law, ethical practice, etc. to meaningfully assist in target setting. Thus, stakeholder input into target-setting could become its own barrier in terms of time, and could be more contentious than helpful.
 5. In what ways should targets and performance goals be informed by and integrated with other Federal child welfare oversight efforts?
 6. What specific strategies, supports, incentives, or penalties are needed to ensure continued quality improvement and achievement of positive outcomes for children and families that are in substantial conformity with Federal child welfare laws?

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- States do need greater flexibility in federal funding streams so that resources can be allocated to address the state's unique challenges.
 - State child welfare agencies should not be penalized or required to make improvement efforts on systemic issues that are not exclusively within their control.
 - Financial penalties sabotage state efforts toward improvement.
7. In light of the ability of Tribes to directly operate title IV-E programs through recent changes in the statute, in what ways, if any, should a Federal review process focus on services delivered to Indian children?
- If a tribe is operating a IV-E program, then the Tribe should be obligated to IV-E standards comparable to those applied to states.
 - Sufficient requirements currently exist around state/Tribe information sharing
8. Are there examples of other review protocols, either in child welfare or related fields, in which Tribal/State/ local governments participate that might inform CB's approach to reviewing child welfare systems?