



Child and Family Services Reviews

Iowa

Final Report

2018



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

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Final Report: Iowa Child and Family Services Review

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of Iowa. The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for Iowa are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) and submitted to the Children's Bureau on February 15, 2018. The statewide assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
- The results of case reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home) conducted via a State Conducted Case Review process in the Cedar Rapids; Des Moines; and Eastern, Northern, and Western Iowa Service Areas between April 1, 2018, and September 30, 2018
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Administrative Review Board
 - Attorneys for the agency, children, youth, parents
 - Author and data provider for the statewide assessment
 - Child welfare agency caseworkers and supervisors
 - Contract agency caseworkers and supervisors
 - Child welfare agency and Juvenile Justice Department senior managers
 - Child welfare agency administrators and program managers
 - Child welfare agency and private agency training staff
 - Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) staff
 - Court-appointed special advocates (CASA)
 - Court system and Court Improvement Program staff

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- Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA)
- IV-E fiscal and program staff
- Federal and other coordinating agency staff
- Information system staff
- Juvenile Justice Department staff
- Foster and adoptive parent licensing staff
- Foster and adoptive parents
- Judges
- Parents and guardians
- Relative caregivers
- Service providers
- State licensed/approved child care facility staff
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, the Children’s Bureau suspended the use of the state’s performance on the national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. For contextual information, Appendix A of this report shows the state’s performance on the 7 data indicators. Moving forward, the Children’s Bureau will refer to the national standards as “national performance.” This national performance represents the performance of the nation on the statewide data indicators for an earlier point in time. For the time periods used to calculate the national performance for each indicator, see 80 Fed. Reg. 27263 (May 13, 2015).¹

Background Information

The Round 3 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates 1 or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome.

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state’s substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a

¹ May 2017 revised syntax (pending final verification) uses 2 years of NCANDS data to calculate performance for the Maltreatment in Foster Care indicator. National performance is based on FY 2013–2014 and 2013AB files. All other indicators use the same time periods identified in the May 2015 Federal Register notice.

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Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the statewide assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity.

The Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. As such, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides tables presenting Iowa's overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about Iowa's performance in Round 2.

I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

Iowa 2018 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

None of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity.

The following 2 of the 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity:

- Agency Responsiveness to the Community
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Children's Bureau Comments on Iowa Performance

The following are the Children's Bureau's observations about cross-cutting issues and Iowa's overall performance:

Iowa operates a state-administered system of child welfare programs and services under its DHS. DHS provides a wide spectrum of performance-based contracted services to children and families involved in child welfare, including Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES), Safety Plan Services, and Family Safety, Risk and Permanency (FSRP) Services. CWES approaches range from in-home interventions through short-term foster care and shelter placements, in response to referrals from DHS, Juvenile Court Services (JCS), and law enforcement.

Of the seven systemic factors assessed in the CFSR, Iowa was found to be in substantial conformity with two: Agency Responsiveness to the Community and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. CFSR case review results showed that the state's highest performing outcome was Well-Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs, followed by Safety 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect, and Permanency 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children. In many of the cases reviewed, DHS made efforts to respond in a timely manner to reports of maltreatment and to place children in foster care with their siblings and relatives.

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The identification and involvement of relatives was another positive factor in many of the outcomes. Case review results showed that Iowa uses relative placements to maintain stability, help achieve permanency goals such as adoption and guardianship, and maintain significant connections for children removed from their homes. Iowa also routinely identifies and locates paternal and maternal relatives when a child enters care and evaluates possible relatives for placement and support. Case review results indicated that DHS is effective in placing siblings together when possible and appropriate, and in ensuring that siblings placed in different foster homes have frequent and quality contact to keep the siblings connected.

The lowest performing outcomes for Iowa were Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs; Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations; and Safety 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. Positive areas to highlight in Iowa's practice include establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care and keeping children stable in their placements. However, the agency and courts often do not make concerted efforts to achieve the goals in a timely manner, and a lack of concurrent planning was identified as a barrier to achieving timely permanency. This was more evident in cases where reunification was no longer an appropriate goal; often children with permanency goals of guardianship or adoption were found to languish in care for long periods of time. In stakeholder interviews, the practice of delaying permanency hearings to combine them with Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) hearings was identified as a concern that potentially may cause delays in achieving permanency for children in care. All five items assessed in the Case Review System systemic factor were rated as areas needing improvement. The Children's Bureau recommends that Iowa further analyze agency and court-related challenges and barriers that affect timely permanency for children and families.

Areas of challenge for both in-home and foster care cases included accurate assessment and management of risk and safety; comprehensive assessment of the needs of children and parents; provision of appropriate and individualized services; and a lack of frequent and quality caseworker visits with children and parents. In-home cases were rated significantly lower than foster care cases in these areas, often due to a lack of agency efforts to effectively assess or meet with all family members, especially children. Case review results also showed noteworthy differences between Iowa's engagement and assessment of parents, with fathers typically less involved and engaged by the agency than mothers.

The Service Array systemic factor was not in substantial conformity. A lack of resources across Iowa is a cross-cutting concern identified by stakeholders during the review. Information gathered from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates significant challenges in accessing and individualizing needed services in the more rural areas of Iowa, primarily areas farther from Des Moines and Cedar Rapids. The top concerns across the state include a lack of access to mental health services, housing, substance abuse treatment services including in-patient care, developmental disability services, and transportation services. A lack of drug testing locations and services to get parents to those locations was also a statewide concern, as were limited drug testing hours that can be a barrier for parents employed during traditional work hours. Stakeholders indicated the possible overuse of drug testing in Iowa, such as even when behavioral indicators of substance abuse are not present. Another service concern expressed was whether placement resources are routinely individualized for youth in foster care, with some stakeholders reporting that placement resources are not individualized to address youth with high needs, and as a result, youth are placed in homes or facilities based on bed availability or location rather than on services that match the youth's needs.

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The final two systemic factors with which Iowa was not in substantial conformity were Quality Assurance and Staff and Provider Training. The Children's Bureau notes that although Iowa has a functioning Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system in place in all regions of the state, the quality assurance system varies in operation across regions. The CQI system also lacks a healthy feedback loop to ensure that frontline staff and providers can readily identify strengths and areas needing improvement statewide. All three items under Staff and Provider Training were rated as areas needing improvement, with a noted lack of available supervisor training to enhance supervisor leadership and management skills.

In addition to the issues affecting initial and ongoing training of staff and providers, statewide assessment information and numerous stakeholder interviews highlighted workforce challenges, including caseload size, workload, turnover, and a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities across DHS frontline staff and contract child welfare providers of FSRP. According to the statewide assessment, caseload sizes are the largest since 2010 while the DHS workforce responsible for providing the services is the smallest. Stakeholders noted that in some service areas, caseload challenges are handled by assigning cases to other counties with lower caseloads, but without consideration of how that affects the receiving county's staff workload (e.g., having to travel greater distances to accomplish the work). Caseload and workload issues for contract child welfare providers can be attributed, according to stakeholders, to the lack of a limit on cases or caseload size, as well as restrictions on DHS staff in terms of availability and work hour limits that result in transition of the workload to contract child welfare providers. A lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities was noted, as some stakeholders indicated that contract child welfare workers handle case management whereas the statewide assessment identifies DHS staff only as having case management responsibility. Turnover is high, particularly among contract providers, especially in urban areas of the state, leading to inconsistency for children and families that negatively affects their access to services.

Finally, the Children's Bureau noted that DHS implemented a system-wide initiative in fiscal year 2017 to keep children in foster care as close to their communities of origin as possible. New contracts in place include a "no reject/no eject" policy so that children will be served in the Service Area in which they are located. This new initiative is expected to support agency efforts to preserve children's connections and to achieve timely and appropriate permanency outcomes, among others. During the stakeholder interviews, however, a significant practice concern, one that did not affect CFSR conformity decisions on outcomes and systemic factors, was identified by multiple stakeholders. As mentioned above, DHS manages the contracts for group care facilities for children adjudicated as abused and/or neglected, as well as for youth committed to the JCS. Many stakeholders expressed concern regarding co-placement of these children and youth together in the same group care setting, including shelters. This co-placement, or commingling, may include DHS children who have developmental disabilities or have experienced trauma as a result of abuse or neglect. The Children's Bureau encourages Iowa to fully assess the scope of this issue across the state, and to evaluate the appropriateness of continuing this practice.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. Iowa provides an alternative/differential response to, in addition to

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a traditional investigation of, incoming reports of child maltreatment or children in need of services. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care, in-home, and in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to DHS. The state is encouraged to conduct additional item-specific analysis of the case review findings to better understand areas of practice that are associated with positive outcomes and those that need improvement.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Item 1.

State Outcome Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 71% of the 35 applicable cases reviewed.

Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes.

State policy requires that initiation in response to reports of child abuse accepted by the DHS occurs according to the risk level assessed. A response to initiate a child abuse assessment and efforts to observe the alleged child victim are required within 24 hours of receiving a report, unless there is an immediate threat, which requires initiation within 1 hour. An exception exists when the alleged perpetrator clearly does not have access to the alleged child victim, in which case the response must be made within 96 hours. A response to initiate a family assessment and efforts to observe the alleged child are required within 72 hours of receiving the report.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 71% of the 35 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Safety statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

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State Outcome Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 51% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 55% of the 40 foster care cases, 46% of the 24 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 2. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 86% of the 14 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 100% of the 10 applicable foster care cases and 50% of the 4 applicable in-home services cases. The 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case was not applicable for assessment of this item.

Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 51% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 55% of the 40 foster care cases, 46% of the 24 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6.

State Outcome Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 45% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

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Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 80% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 85% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 6. Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 60% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Permanency statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

State Outcome Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 68% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

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Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 7. Placement With Siblings

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 88% of the 25 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,² and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 74% of the 31 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 89% of the 9 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 82% of the 28 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 63% of the 16 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

Item 9. Preserving Connections

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 63% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

² For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

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Item 10. Relative Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 78% of the 36 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father³ or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 66% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 78% of the 27 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 50% of the 16 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

State Outcome Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 38% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 48% of the 40 foster care cases, 25% of the 24 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

³ For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

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Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 12. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents,⁴ and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 45% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as a Strength in 53% of the 40 foster care cases, 33% of the 24 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

Sub-Item 12A. Needs Assessment and Services to Children

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 66% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 80% of the 40 foster care cases, 42% of the 24 in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Sub-Item 12B. Needs Assessment and Services to Parents

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 44% of the 59 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 50% of the 34 applicable foster care cases, 38% of the 24 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.
- In 59% of the 58 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.

⁴ For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

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- In 45% of the 51 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

Sub-Item 12C. Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 85% of the 33 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents⁵ and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 49% of the 63 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 61% of the 38 applicable foster care cases, 33% of the 24 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.
- In 65% of the 40 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 64% of the 58 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 50% of the 50 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 51% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 60% of the 40 foster care cases, 38% of the 24 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

⁵ For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

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Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers⁶ of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 25% of the 59 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 32% of the 34 applicable foster care cases, 17% of the 24 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.
- In 43% of the 58 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 44% of the 50 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Item 16.

State Outcome Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 84% of the 43 applicable cases reviewed.

Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if

⁶ For Item 15, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

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the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 84% of the 43 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 89% of the 37 applicable foster care cases and 50% of the 6 applicable in-home services cases. The 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case was not applicable for assessment of this item.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 using the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

State Outcome Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 48% of the 61 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 53% of the 40 foster care cases, 35% of the 20 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance

Item 17. Physical Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 59% of the 44 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 60% of the 40 foster care cases and 50% of the 4 applicable in-home services cases. The 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case was not applicable for assessment of this item.

Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 56% of the 43 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 68% of the 25 applicable foster care cases, 35% of the 17 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.

III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item and a description of how the rating was determined. The CFSR relies upon a review of information contained in the statewide assessment to assess each item. If an item rating cannot be determined from the information contained in the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau conducts stakeholder interviews and considers information gathered through the interviews in determining ratings for each item.

Statewide Information System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 19.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Statewide Information System Item Performance

Item 19. Statewide Information System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data and information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated Iowa's statewide information system is not able to accurately and readily identify the location of children in foster care. Stakeholder interviews also highlighted the lack of policy expectations surrounding the timely documentation of placement changes for children in care.

Case Review System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

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State Systemic Factor Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. None of the 5 items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Case Review System Item Performance

Item 20. Written Case Plan

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data and information from the statewide assessment indicated that case plans for children in foster care are not consistently developed jointly with parents, and that practice is disparate between mothers and fathers. Stakeholders reported mixed experiences with the case planning process, noting that case plans are not developed or not updated timely. When case plans are developed, they are often created without parental knowledge or input.

Item 21. Periodic Reviews

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data provided in the statewide assessment indicated that timely periodic reviews most often occur via court hearings. Stakeholders interviewed noted that the two remaining periodic review processes, the Foster Care Review Board and the Administrative Reviews, do not occur consistently across the state and do not always include key participants. The state does not have data or a reliable tracking system to ensure that children in foster care receive periodic reviews as required.

Item 22. Permanency Hearings

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Stakeholders reported that initial permanency hearings are not occurring for many children in foster care in a timely manner, as they may be combined with other hearings, including contested TPR hearings, or be delayed beyond the 12-month initial

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requirement due to a variety of circumstances. Data and information in the statewide assessment indicated that subsequent permanency hearings appear to be occurring timely. Stakeholders, however, reported inconsistencies in how the different hearings are coded, which affects the quality of the data.

Item 23. Termination of Parental Rights

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Caseworkers initiate the process to file TPR petitions and the county attorneys typically file the petitions. Data and information provided in the statewide assessment showed that TPR petitions are not routinely filed across the state in a timely manner. The statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews identified some barriers to timely TPR filing, including high caseworker caseloads as well as limited resources in the county attorney offices.

Item 24. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data and information in the statewide assessment indicated that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care do not consistently receive notices for the various types of hearings held, including court hearings and Foster Care Board reviews. Stakeholders reported variation in notices, with relative caregivers being informed of the opportunity to be heard and asked to provide input at court hearings but foster and adoptive caregiver notices indicating only an opportunity to provide written information to the court and caregivers having no opportunity to provide input when attending a hearing.

Quality Assurance System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 25.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

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Quality Assurance System Item Performance

Item 25. Quality Assurance System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) is operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that elements of a quality assurance system exist in each jurisdiction of the state but that not all elements are functioning as required in all geographic areas. There is not a functional feedback loop to ensure that frontline staff and providers can identify strengths and needs, and it is unclear how program improvement measures are being evaluated across the state. Stakeholders reported that some frontline staff do not have access to relevant data reports. Others stated that while they do have access, the reports are underutilized statewide.

Staff and Provider Training

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Staff and Provider Training Item Performance

Item 26. Initial Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during stakeholder interviews showed that very few new staff complete the initial training curriculum within the required timeframes. Stakeholders said there can be significant waiting times for training that is offered on a set cyclical schedule. Stakeholders provided varied information regarding the effectiveness of

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initial training, with some indicating that the effectiveness is directly linked to the timeliness of training. For instance, the training is more effective if offered during the first few months of hire rather than waiting several months. Stakeholders said that formal classroom training meets the needs of new workers, but that support and education in non-classroom settings is also essential to learning the case manager responsibilities.

Item 27. Ongoing Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff⁷ that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that many of the staff across the state do not complete the required ongoing training hours within the state's established timeframes. Stakeholders also reported a lack of supervisor training to promote development of child welfare supervisory and management skills.

Item 28. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, no data were provided to determine the extent to which foster parents and staff of state-licensed facilities have completed the required training within the specified timeframes. Stakeholders reported that the training for state-licensed facilities and for foster and adoptive parents does not adequately prepare them for the increasingly high-need population of children entering foster care.

⁷ "Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.

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Service Array and Resource Development

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance

Item 29. Array of Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Statewide assessment information indicated, and stakeholders confirmed, that while many services exist within the service array, there are significant issues of accessibility to available services, especially in the more rural areas of the state. Stakeholders also identified barriers to services including a lack of transportation, distance, and waitlists for needed services such as mental health, substance abuse treatment, disability services, and housing.

Item 30. Individualizing Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data and information from the statewide assessment indicated variation in individualizing and tailoring services to the unique needs of children and families, including the provision of culturally competent services. Stakeholders reported that services may be more individualized in urban areas of the state than in rural areas, and that a lack of foster homes across all jurisdictions of the state affects the state's capacity to match available placements to the needs of the child. Stakeholders also noted that more children are entering care after adoption and spoke of a need for individualized post-adoption services across the state.

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Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Iowa is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Both of the items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance

Item 31. State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Strength for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state actively seeks input from stakeholders in leadership and upper management positions within the agency in the development of CFSP goals and annual updates. Stakeholder interviews also confirmed that the state has various processes in place to solicit and gather feedback from the legal and Tribal communities to develop CFSP goals and annual updates.

Item 32. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and gathered from stakeholder interviews included numerous examples to illustrate how the state coordinates services and benefits with other federal programs serving the same population. As examples, the state noted coordination and partnership activities with the child support and child care programs, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Medicaid, and the Iowa Department of Workforce Development.

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Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Iowa is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Three of the four items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Item Performance

Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and confirmed in stakeholder interviews included examples to illustrate that the state applies the same licensing standards to individuals who apply to foster or adopt children, and that an agreement exists with the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals to monitor the equal application of licensing standards in shelter and group care facilities.

Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews showed that criminal background checks occur according to federal policy before the licensure of a foster or adoptive home. Information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews also showed that criminal background checks are conducted on shelter and group care facility staff members.

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Item 35. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Strength for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment indicated, and stakeholder interviews confirmed, that there is a process in place to ensure diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive parents who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in all jurisdictions of the state.

Item 36. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- Iowa received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment. Iowa agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information from the statewide assessment showed that Iowa does not complete out-of-state home study requests within the required timeframes. Barriers to timely completion include difficulty connecting the home study worker with the placement resource to schedule the required visit, and failure of the placement resource to complete the necessary documentation. There is a process in place to ensure effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources, such as AdoptUSKids, to place children in permanent placements.

Appendix A

Summary of Iowa 2018 Child and Family Services Review Performance

I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcome Achievement: Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the state to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

Item Achievement: Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1 Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	71% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	71% Strength

SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 2 Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	51% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	86% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	51% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Iowa 2018 CFSR Performance

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	45% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	60% Strength

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2 The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	68% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	88% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	74% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	63% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	78% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	66% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Iowa 2018 CFSR Performance

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1 Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	38% Substantially Achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	45% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	66% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	44% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	49% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	51% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	25% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	84% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	84% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Iowa 2018 CFSR Performance

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	48% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	56% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children’s Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The Children’s Bureau determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the Children’s Bureau must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the Children’s Bureau must find that the item is functioning as required.

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of Iowa 2018 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Case Review System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 20 Written Case Plan	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21 Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 22 Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 23 Termination of Parental Rights	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 24 Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 26 Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of Iowa 2018 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28 Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Service Array and Resource Development	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 29 Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30 Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Iowa 2018 CFSR Performance

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 33 Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 34 Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 35 Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 36 State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators⁸

The state's performance is considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator and provides contextual information for considering the findings. This information is not used in conformity decisions. State performance may be statistically above, below, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the Children's Bureau did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.5%	Lower	14.1%	13.3%–15.0%	FY15–16
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	9.67	Lower	19.77	17.68–22.11	15A–15B, FY15–16

⁸ In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. Performance shown in this table reflects performance based on May 2017 revised syntax that is pending final verification.

Appendix A: Summary of Iowa 2018 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	42.7%	Higher	42.5%	40.9%–44.0%	14B–17A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	45.9%	Higher	69.2%	66.7%–71.7%	16B–17A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	31.8%	Higher	46.8%	43.7%–50.0%	16B–17A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.1%	Lower	9.5%	8.2%–11.1%	14B–17A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.44	Lower	3.15	3.02–3.29	16B–17A

* Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is derived from a multi-level statistical model and reflects the state's performance relative to states with similar children and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children and, for some indicators, the state's entry rate. It uses risk-adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a more fair comparison of state performance against national performance.

** 95% Confidence Interval is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state's RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

*** Data Period(s) Used for State Performance: Refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1–September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1–March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1–September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.

Appendix B Summary of CFSR Round 2 Iowa 2010 Key Findings

The Children’s Bureau conducted a CFSR in Iowa in 2010. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

Identifying Information and Review Dates

General Information
Children’s Bureau Region: 7
Date of Onsite Review: August 23–27, 2010
Period Under Review: April 1, 2009, through August 27, 2010
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: December 21, 2010
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: March 21, 2011
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: October 1, 2011

Highlights of Findings

Performance Measurements
A. The state met the national standards for three of the six standards.
B. The state achieved substantial conformity with none of the seven outcomes.
C. The state achieved substantial conformity with five of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: Iowa 2010 CFSR Key Findings

State's Conformance With the National Standards

Data Indicator or Composite	National Standard	State's Score	Meets or Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)	94.6 or higher	91.9	Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.71	Meets Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	115.9	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	141.6	Meets Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	132.6	Meets Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	94.0	Does Not Meet Standard

State's Conformance With the Outcomes

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Iowa 2010 CFSR Key Findings

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

State's Conformance With the Systemic Factors

Systemic Factor	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Statewide Information System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Case Review System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Quality Assurance System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Staff and Provider Training	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Service Array and Resource Development	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Achieved Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Iowa 2010 CFSR Key Findings

Key Findings by Item

Outcomes

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
2. Repeat Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
5. Foster Care Re-entries	Area Needing Improvement
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	Area Needing Improvement
7. Permanency Goal for Child	Area Needing Improvement
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives	Area Needing Improvement
9. Adoption	Area Needing Improvement
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	Area Needing Improvement
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	Strength
12. Placement With Siblings	Area Needing Improvement
13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
14. Preserving Connections	Area Needing Improvement
15. Relative Placement	Area Needing Improvement
16. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
17. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	Area Needing Improvement
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	Area Needing Improvement
19. Caseworker Visits With Child	Area Needing Improvement
20. Caseworker Visits With Parents	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: Iowa 2010 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
21. Educational Needs of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
22. Physical Health of the Child	Strength
23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Strength

Systemic Factors

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
24. Statewide Information System	Strength
25. Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
26. Periodic Reviews	Strength
27. Permanency Hearings	Strength
28. Termination of Parental Rights	Strength
29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Strength
30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Strength
31. Quality Assurance System	Area Needing Improvement
32. Initial Staff Training	Strength
33. Ongoing Staff Training	Area Needing Improvement
34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
35. Array of Services	Strength
36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement
37. Individualizing Services	Area Needing Improvement
38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength
39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength

Appendix B: Iowa 2010 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength
42. Standards Applied Equally	Strength
43. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Strength
44. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Area Needing Improvement
45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Strength