



Child and Family Services Reviews

Minnesota Statewide Assessment

June 10, 2016



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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Introduction

The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs), authorized by the 1994 Amendments to the Social Security Act (SSA), are administered by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The goals of the CFSR are to:

- Ensure substantial conformity with title IV-B and IV-E child welfare requirements using a framework focused on assessing seven safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and seven systemic factors;
- Determine what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and
- Assist states in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes.

The CFSR Process

The CFSR is a two-phase process, as described in 45 CFR 1355.33. The first phase is a statewide assessment conducted by staff of the state child welfare agency, representatives selected by the agency who were consulted in the development of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), and other individuals deemed appropriate and agreed upon by the state child welfare agency and the Children's Bureau.

The second phase of the review process is an onsite review. The onsite review process includes case record reviews, case-related interviews for the purpose of determining outcome performance, and, as necessary, stakeholder interviews that further inform the assessment of systemic factors. The onsite review instrument and instructions are used to rate cases, and the stakeholder interview guide is used to conduct stakeholder interviews.

Information from both the statewide assessment and the onsite review is used to determine whether the state is in substantial conformity with the seven outcomes and seven systemic factors. States found to be out of substantial conformity are required to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the identified areas out of substantial conformity. States participate in subsequent reviews at intervals related to their achievement of substantial conformity. (For more information about the CFSRs, see the *Child and Family Services Reviews* at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb.>)

Integration of the CFSP/APSR and CFSR Statewide Assessment

The CFSR process is intended to be coordinated with other federal child welfare requirements, such as the planning and monitoring of the CFSP. We are encouraging states to consider the statewide assessment as an update to their performance assessment in the state's most recent CFSP and/or Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) rather than a separate assessment process and reporting document. Most of the content for the statewide assessment overlaps with the CFSP/APSR and the same expectations for collaboration with external partners and stakeholders exist across all planning processes. States can use the statewide assessment process to re-engage these partners and stakeholders in preparation for the CFSR.

The Statewide Assessment Instrument

The statewide assessment instrument is a documentation tool for states to use in capturing the most recent assessment information before their scheduled CFSR. Each section, as outlined below, is designed to enable states to gather and document information that is critical to analyzing their capacity and performance during the statewide assessment phase of the CFSR process.

- Section I of the statewide assessment instrument requests general information about the state agency and requires a list of the stakeholders that were involved in developing the statewide assessment.
- Section II contains data profiles for the safety and permanency outcomes. These include the data indicators, which are used, in part, to determine substantial conformity. The data profiles are developed by the Children's Bureau based on the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), or on an alternate source of safety data submitted by the state.
- Section III requires an assessment of the seven outcome areas based on the most current information on the state's performance in these areas. The state will include an analysis and explanation of the state's performance in meeting the national standards as presented in section II. States are encouraged to refer to their most recent CFSP or APSR in completing this section.
- Section IV requires an assessment for each of the seven systemic factors. States develop these responses by analyzing data, to the extent that the data are available to the state, and using external stakeholders' and partners' input. States are encouraged to refer to their most recent CFSP or APSR in completing this section.

We encourage the state to use this document "as is" to complete the assessment, but the state may use another format as long as the state provides all required content. The statewide assessment instrument is available electronically on the Children's Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/round3-cfsr-statewide-assessment>.

Completing the Statewide Assessment

The statewide assessment must be completed in collaboration with state representatives who are not staff of the state child welfare agency (external partners or stakeholders), pursuant to 45 CFR 1355.33 (b). Those individuals should represent the sources of consultation required of the state in developing its title IV-B state plan and may include, for example, Tribal representatives; court personnel; youth; staff of other state and social service agencies serving children and families; and birth, foster, and adoptive parents or representatives of foster/adoptive parent associations. States must include a list of the names and affiliations of external representatives participating in the statewide assessment in section I of this instrument.

We encourage states to use the same team of people who participate in the development of the CFSP to respond to the statewide assessment. We also encourage states to use this same team of people in developing the PIP. Members of the team who have the skills should be considered to serve as case reviewers during the onsite review.

How the Statewide Assessment Is Used

Information about the state child welfare agency compiled and analyzed through the statewide assessment process may be used to support the CFSR process in a range of ways. The statewide assessment is used to:

- Provide an overview of the state child welfare agency's performance for the onsite review team;
- Facilitate identification of issues that need additional clarification before or during the onsite review;
- Serve as a key source of information for rating the CFSR systemic factors; and
- Enable states and their stakeholders to identify early in the CFSR process the areas potentially needing improvement and to begin developing their PIP approach.

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13)

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 240 hours for the initial review and 120 hours for subsequent reviews. This estimate includes the time for reviewing instructions, completing the assessment, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Statewide Assessment Instrument

Section I: General Information

Name of State Agency: Minnesota Department of Human Services

CFSR Review Period

CFSR Sample Period: October 1, 2015 – April 30, 2016

Period of AFCARS Data: *Insert Period of AFCARS Data*

Period of NCANDS Data: *Insert Period of NCANDS Data*

(Or other approved source; please specify if alternative data source is used):

NA

Case Review Period Under Review (PUR): October 1, 2015 – August 11, 2016

State Agency Contact Person for the Statewide Assessment

Name: Lori Munsterman

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Statewide Assessment Participants

Provide the names and affiliations of the individuals who participated in the statewide assessment process; please also note their roles in the process.

State Response:

The following individuals provided administrative data and/or other information included for the Statewide Assessment, and/or reviewed drafts and provided input into item narratives.

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- **Child Safety and Permanency Division staff**
 - Jamie Sorenson, Director
 - Karen Kandik, Contracted Statewide Assessment Lead
 - Marvin Davis, Deputy Director
 - Kris Johnson, Manager, Indian Child Welfare and SSIS Training
 - Edward McBrayer, Manager, Adolescent Services
 - Maxie Rockymore, Manager, Family Support and Placement Services
 - Carol Wilcox, Manager (former), Child Safety and Prevention
 - Tracy Crudo, Supervisor, Child Welfare Training System
 - Kathleen Hiniker, Supervisor, Adoption
 - Kelly Knutson, Supervisor, Quality Assurance
 - Alexandra Mentes, Supervisor, Research and Evaluation
 - Ami Nafzger, Supervisor, SSIS Policy/Program
 - Mical Peterson, Supervisor, Adoption
 - Steve Vondeharr, Supervisor (former), Adolescent Services
 - Connie Abbott-Foster, Program Consultant, Child Welfare Training System
 - Jennifer Adamson, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Kami Alvarez, Program Consultant, Child Welfare Training System
 - Debra Anthony, Program Consultant (former), Quality Assurance
 - Andrea Bartels, Program Consultant, Child Welfare Training System
 - Deborah Beske-Brown, Agency Policy Specialist, Foster Care
 - Janet Bowman, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Ruth Clinard, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Theresa Davis, State Prog. Adm. Principal, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Mary Doyle, Program Consultant, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Jennifer Droneck, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Lori Ellingson, Management Analyst, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Kristine Frick, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Devon Gilchrist, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Crystal Graves, Program Consultant, Adoption
 - Ryan Hartneck, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Ashley Holmes, Program Consultant, Foster Care
 - Steve Johnson, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Susan Jorstad, State Prog. Adm. Principal, Child Welfare Training System

- Laura Kennedy, Program Consultant, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Marissa Kirby-Stofferahn, Program Consultant, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Nikki Kovan, Research Analyst Specialist Sr., Research and Evaluation
 - Susan Krinkie, Program Consultant, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Kim Lemcke, Program Consultant, Adolescent Services
 - Jody McElroy, Agency Policy Specialist, Adoption
 - Joanne Mooney, State Prog. Adm. Principal, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Tamara Moore, Program Consultant, Adolescent Services
 - Heidi Ombisa Skallet, Agency Policy Specialist, Adoption
 - Jacalyn Pederson, Program Consultant, Child Safety and Prevention
 - Jon Pederson, Research Analyst Specialist Sr., Research and Evaluation
 - Gregory Rafn, Research Analyst Specialist Sr., Research and Evaluation
 - Kimberly Shepherd, Program Consultant, Child Welfare Training System
 - Cynthia Shypulski, Research Analyst Specialist Sr., Research and Evaluation
 - Ruth Swanson, Editor
 - Jean Thompson, Program Consultant, Administrative Team
 - Tarita Tyson, Agency Policy Specialist, Foster Care
 - Hassan Ugas, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
 - Nick Vogel, Program Consultant, Adolescent Services
 - Jill Von Holtum, Program Consultant, Adolescent Services
 - Wendy Woessner, Program Consultant, Quality Assurance
- **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division staff**
 - Julie Jacobson, State Planner
- **Background Studies Division staff**
 - Jennifer Henthorne, Manager, Research Unit
 - Charissa Jones, Manager, Research Unit
- **Children and Family Services Management Operations Division staff**
 - Ralph McQuarter, Director
- **Children's Mental Health Division staff**
 - Ann Boerth, Program Consultant, Infrastructure Development
 - LaRone Greer, Program Consultant, Infrastructure Development
 - Jelaine Johnson, Program Consultant, Resource Development Team
 - Kristin Lofgren, Program Consultant, Infrastructure Development
 - Catherine Wright, Program Consultant, Health Care/Medical Team
- **Child Support Division staff**
 - Kristen Brolsma, Supervisor, Child Support Operations
- **Disability Services Division staff**
 - Heidi Hamilton, Legislative Lead

- **Housing and Support Services Division staff**
 - Erin Sullivan Sutton, Director

- **Licensing Division staff**
 - Mary Kelsey, Manager, Family Systems
 - Cory Jelinek, State Prog. Admin. Principal, Family Systems
 - Mary Larsen, Licensing Consultant, Family Systems

- **MN.IT at DHS staff**
 - Jean Swanson-Broberg, Supervisor
 - Diana Jaeger, Information Technology Specialist

Minnesota Judicial Branch

- **State Court Administrator's Office**
 - Judy Nord, Staff Attorney and Children's Justice Initiative Manager

Many additional stakeholders provided input into the Statewide Assessment through their participation in:

- Minnesota Child and Family Service Review (MnCFSR) stakeholder interviews
- The Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children
- Work groups established to implement task force recommendations
- Other meetings with department staff.

Section II: Safety and Permanency Data

Data Profile deleted in its entirety.

Section III: Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes and Performance on National Standards

Instructions

Refer to the section in the state's most recent Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) or Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) that provides assessment information on state performance on each of the seven child and family outcomes. Review the information with the statewide assessment team and determine if more recent data are available that can be used to provide an updated assessment of each outcome. If more recent data are not available, simply refer to the most recent CFSP or APSR document by indicating the document name/date and relevant page numbers where the information can be found for each outcome. Analyze and explain the state's performance on the national standards in the context of the outcomes.

A. Safety

Safety Outcomes 1 and 2

Safety outcomes include: (A) children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect; and (B) children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

- For each of the two safety outcomes, include the most recent available data demonstrating the state's performance. Data must include state performance on the two federal safety indicators, relevant case record review data, and key available data from the state information system (such as data on timeliness of investigation).
- Based on these data and input from stakeholders, Tribes, and courts, include a brief assessment of strengths and concerns regarding Safety Outcomes 1 and 2, including an analysis of the state's performance on the national standards for the safety indicators.

State Response:

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

- **Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

Minnesota has a three-track system for responding to reports of alleged child maltreatment. Reports of alleged maltreatment occurring in licensed facilities are responded to with a Facility Investigation. All other reports are responded to using a Family Investigation or a Family Assessment (Minnesota's differential response process). The initial face-to-face contact with an alleged child victim (or first attempt to conduct face-to-face contact with a child) is considered initiation of the assessment/investigation.

Local agencies are required to have face-to-face contact with alleged child victims and their primary caregivers immediately (within 24 hours) if a report includes allegations of sexual abuse or substantial child endangerment.¹ For reports not alleging sexual abuse and/or substantial child endangerment, local agencies are required to have face-to-face contact with an alleged child victim and their primary caregiver within five calendar days of receipt of a report. The initial contact must be sufficient to complete a safety assessment and ensure the immediate safety of a child.

A Family Investigation response is required for all reports alleging sexual abuse or substantial child endangerment. For all other reports, an agency may conduct a Family Assessment.

¹ Minn. Stat. 626.556, subd. 2(o), defines substantial child endangerment and includes::

Egregious harm; abandonment; neglect that substantially endangers the child's physical or mental health, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect; murder; manslaughter; assault; solicitation, inducement and promotion of prostitution; criminal sexual conduct; solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct; malicious punishment or neglect or endangerment of a child; use of a minor in sexual performance; and parental behavior, status, or condition which mandates that the county attorney file a termination of parental rights petition.

Data

Minnesota assesses practice through regular qualitative reviews patterned after the federal Child and Family Services Review, referred to as the Minnesota Child and Family Services Review (MnCFSR).

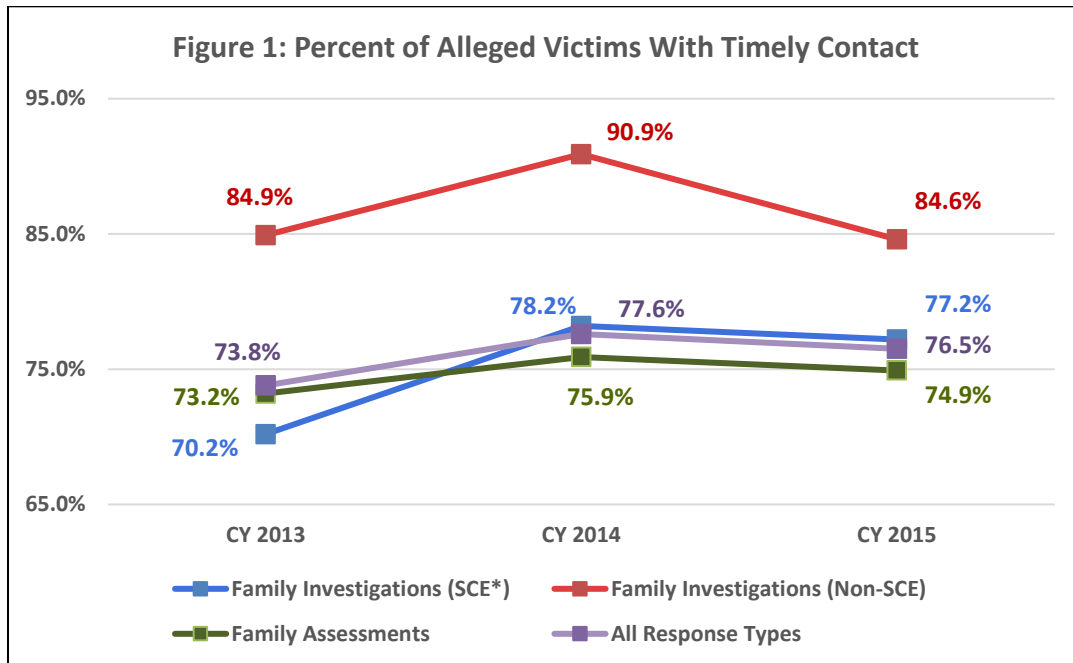
Throughout this document, results of MnCFSR case reviews are provided for 2013 through 2015. Following is a list of agencies/counties and tribes that participated in a MnCFSR in each of those years.

2013	2014	2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anoka County • Beltrami County • Cass County • Clay County • Cook County • Hennepin County • Itasca County • Kandiyohi County • Lake County • Mower County • Nicollet County • Nobles County • Ramsey County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becker County • Benton County • Blue Earth County • Carver County • Hennepin County • Leech Lake Band • Morrison County • Southwest Health and Human Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lincoln County - Lyon County - Murray County - Pipestone County - Redwood County - Rock County • Sherburne County • Stearns County • Wabasha County • White Earth Band 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlton County • Clearwater County • Dakota County • Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cottonwood County - Jackson County • Fillmore County • Hubbard County • Isanti County • LeSueur County • Olmsted County • Pope County • Rice County • Wadena County • Washington County • Winona County • Wright County

The following table includes the results of MnCFSR case ratings for reviews completed in 2013 through 2015 on Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.

-	Strength	ANI	Cases N/A
CY 2013	65.6% N = 82	37.4% N = 49	N = 44
CY2014	83.8% N = 62	16.2% N = 12	N = 67
CY 2015	83% N = 68	17% N = 14	N = 55

Performance on the timeliness of initiating investigations is also monitored and reported via the Child Welfare Data Dashboard. The Dashboard is intended to provide information to county and tribal decision makers, as well as the public, on key measures regarding the status of children served by Minnesota’s child welfare system. The Research and Evaluation Unit within the Child Safety and Permanency Division utilizes data from Minnesota’s Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), the Social Service Information System (SSIS), to report performance on these measures. Figure 1 includes statewide performance on timely contact with alleged child victims in response to screened-in maltreatment reports. (Source: Child Welfare Data Dashboard)



*SCE = Substantial child endangerment.

Timely contact is defined as within 24 hours for Family Investigations (SCE), and within five calendar days for Family Investigations (non-SCE) and Family Assessments.

The number of alleged child victims has steadily increased, as indicated in the table below. (Source: Child Welfare Data Dashboard)

	Total Alleged Victims	Family Inv. – SCE	Family Inv. – Non-SCE	Family Assessment
CY 2013	26,724	4,170	2,365	20,189
CY 2014	27,444	3,329	2,330	20,858
CY 2015	33,552	6,166	4,081	23,305

Assessment of strengths and concerns regarding Safety Outcome 1

- Performance on the timeliness of initiating investigations and assessments has been a measure that the department and local agencies have monitored for a number of years; performance over the past three years continues to indicate that this is an area needing improvement.

- Based on findings of MnCFSR case reviews and stakeholder interviews, the following factors contribute to timely contact with children:
 - Timely screening of maltreatment reports.
 - Timely assignment of reports to assessing/investigating workers.
 - Collaborative working relationships with local law enforcement agencies.
- Factors commonly identified as barriers to timely contact with children include:
 - Inability to locate a child.
 - Inaccurate or outdated addresses received from reporters.
 - Law enforcement requests to delay contact with a child due to a pending criminal investigations.
 - Parents denying access to a child.
- Loss of federal and state funding has stressed the capacity of many local agencies to maintain sufficient staff to comply with all requirements of the social service programs they manage, including child protection services and response timelines. In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated an additional \$52 million to county agencies for the 2015 – 2016 biennium, specifically for the purpose of increasing child protection staffing and/or provision of child protection services. The majority of county agencies utilized this funding to hire staff in the last half of 2015 and early 2016. However, local agencies are also seeing a significant increase in the number of reports and alleged victims.

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

- **Item 2: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care**
- **Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management**

Data

A. MnCFSR Findings

The following tables include the results of MnCFSR case ratings for reviews completed in 2013 through 2015 on Safety Outcome 2 (S2) and related items.

Table S2 – 2013

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
S2	-	-	-	59% N = 104	30% N = 53	10% N = 18	N = 0
Item 2 (Item 3 in 2013) ²	88% N = 132	12% N = 18	N = 25	-	-	-	-
Item 3 (Item 4 in 2013)	65% N = 113	35% N = 62	N = 0	-	-	-	-

Table S2 – 2014

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
S2	-	-	-	74% N = 104	21% N = 30	5% N = 7	N = 0
Item 2 (Item 3 in 2014)	95% N = 88	5% N = 5	N = 48	-	-	-	-
Item 3 (Item 4 in 2014)	76% N = 107	24% N = 34	N = 0	-	-	-	-

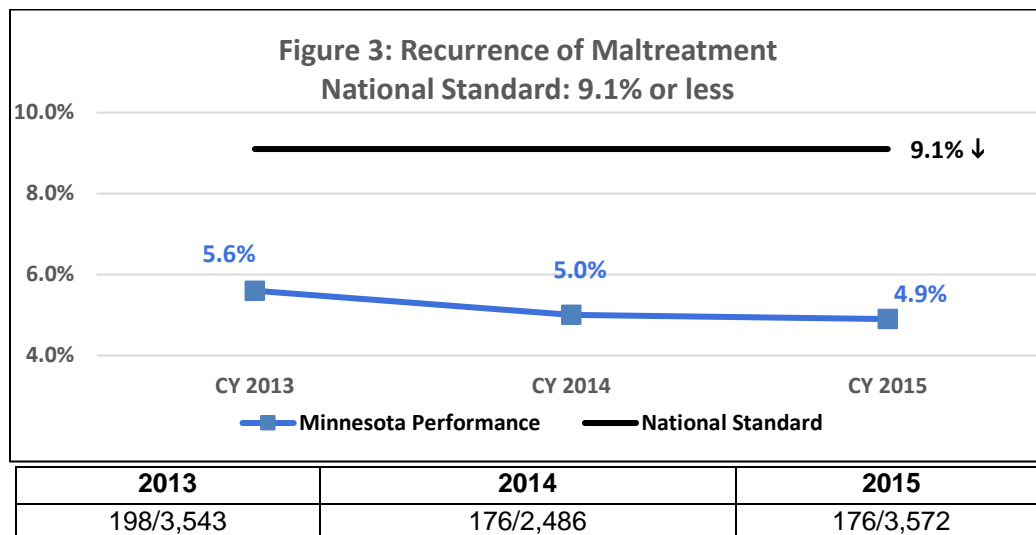
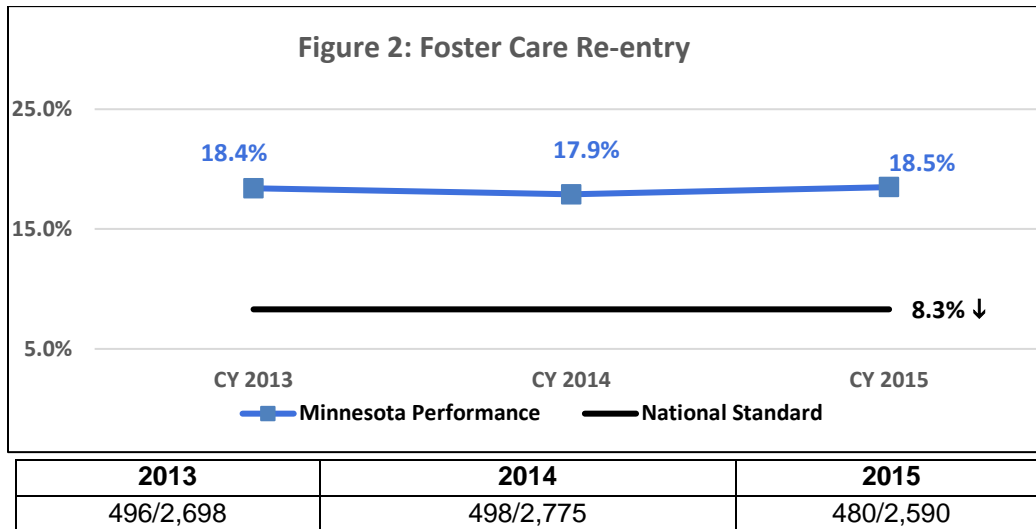
Table S2 – 2015

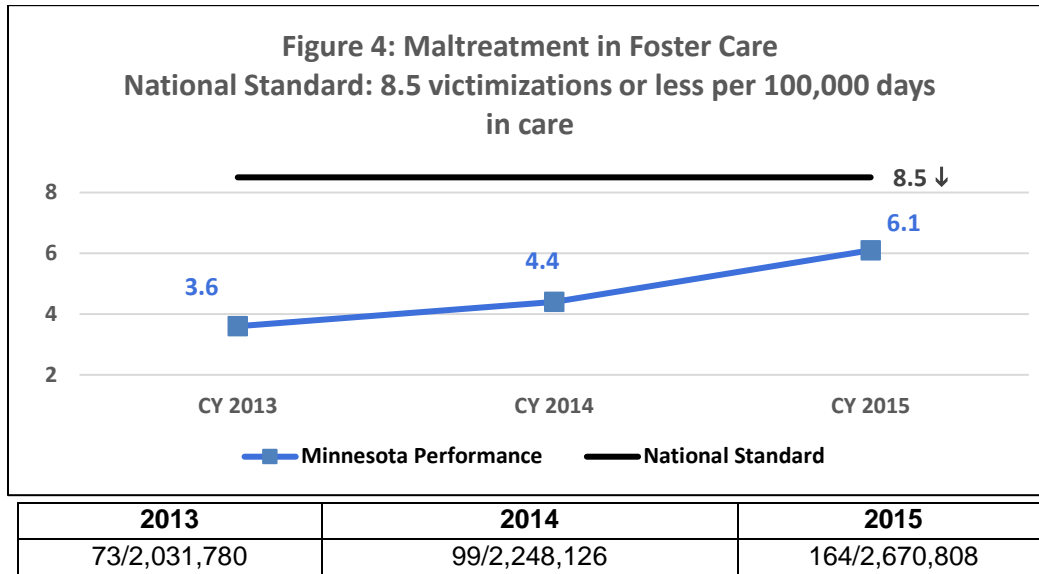
-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
S2	-	-	-	79% N = 108	15% N = 20	7% N = 9	N = 0
Item 2	100% N = 85	0% N = 0	N = 52	-	-	-	-
Item 3	79% N = 108	21% N = 29	N = 0	-	-	-	-

² In 2015, changes were made to the On-site Review Instrument, including removal of some items. This resulted in renumbering of items. Where applicable, the previous item number is referenced throughout the MnCFSR findings tables.

B. Performance on Federal Data Indicators

The following charts provide data on Minnesota’s performance on federal data indicators. This data was generated by the Research and Evaluation Unit at the department. Note that this data, and all performance data on federal data indicators included in this document, reflects observed performance with no risk adjustments applied.





Assessment of strengths and concerns related to Safety Outcome 2

Item 2: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care

- MnCF SR case review findings on Item 2, shown in Tables S2.1 through S2.3, reflect consistently strong practice to maintain children in their homes and prevent placement and/or re-entry. Agencies are focused on family preservation and keeping children with their families, when possible.
- As indicated in Figure 2 above, the rate of foster care re-entry has been a consistent challenge in Minnesota. Prior to 2015, the On-site Case Review Instrument included an item specific to foster care re-entry. This provided the opportunity to evaluate agencies' efforts to prevent re-entry on a case-by-case basis. MnCF SR case review ratings reflected stronger performance than indicated in Figure 2 above. In 2013, 83.3 percent of cases reviewed were rated as a strength on the item that evaluated efforts to prevent re-entry; in 2014, 96.2 percent of cases were rated as a strength.
- A challenge related to foster care re-entry is related to data entry. Child welfare placements, including child protection and children's mental health, are entered into the SACWIS system. Juvenile justice placements are also entered if a local agency has a Title IV-E agreement with its local corrections department; a local agency's level of influence related to juvenile justice placements is limited.

Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management

- MnCF SR case review findings on Item 3 indicate room for improvement. Common factors that contribute to ratings of needing improvement include:
 - Infrequent or inconsistent caseworker visits with children at home and/or in foster care
 - Safety plans do not adequately address identified safety issues

- Not formally assessing or investigating new reports of maltreatment, i.e., new reports are assigned to ongoing caseworkers to address rather than initiating a new investigation or assessment.
- A significant challenge for local agencies is limited guidance from the state agency on providing post-assessment or investigation services. This is an area of focus for the department.
- As indicated in Figures 3 and 4 above, Minnesota met the national standard for both maltreatment recurrence and maltreatment in foster care in each of the previous three years.

B. Permanency

Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2

Permanency outcomes include: (A) children have permanency and stability in their living situations; and (B) the continuity of family relationships is preserved for children.

- For each of the two permanency outcomes, include the most recent available data demonstrating the state's performance. Data must include state performance on the four federal permanency indicators and relevant available case record review data.
- Based on these data and input from stakeholders, Tribes, and courts, include a brief assessment of strengths and concerns regarding Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2, including an analysis of the state's performance on the national standards for the permanency indicators.

State Response:

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

- **Item 4: Stability of foster care placements**
- **Item 5: Permanency goal for child**
- **Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption or other planned permanent living arrangement**

Data

A. MnCFSR Findings

The following tables provide the results of MnCFSR case ratings on Permanency Outcome 1 (P1) and applicable item(s) from 2013 through 2015.

Table P1 – 2013

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
-	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
P1	-	-	-	60% N = 45	36% N = 27	4% N = 3	N = 0
Item 4 (Item 6 in 2013)	68% N = 51	32% N = 24	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 5 (Item 7 in 2013)	85% N = 64	15% N = 11	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 6 ³ (Item 8 in 2013)	74% N = 37	26% N = 13	N = 25	-	-	-	-
Item 6 (Item 9 in 2013)	55% N = 11	45% N = 9	N = 55	-	-	-	-
Item 6 (Item 10 in 2013)	83% N = 5	17% N = 1	N = 69	-	-	-	-

Table P1 – 2014

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
-	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
P1	-	-	-	69% N = 66	28% N = 27	3% N = 3	N = 0
Item 4 (Item 6 in 2014)	77% N = 74	23% N = 22	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 5 (Item 7 in 2014)	91% N = 87	9% N = 9	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 6 (Item 8 in 2014)	82% N = 49	18% N = 11	N = 36	-	-	-	-
Item 6 (Item 9 in 2014)	66% N = 19	34% N = 10	N = 67	-	-	-	-
Item 6 (Item 10 in 2014)	56% N = 5	44% N = 4	N = 87	-	-	-	-

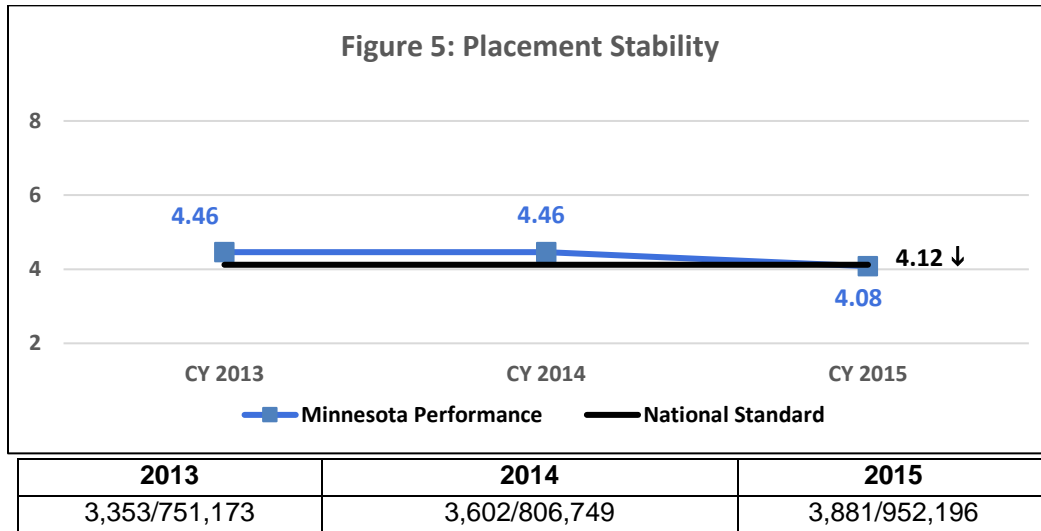
³Prior to 2015, Item 6 was separated into three items, items 8, 9 and 10. Item 6 is listed in Tables P1 – 2013 and P1 – 2014 three times to include individual item ratings for Items 8, 9 and 10 in 2013 and 2014.

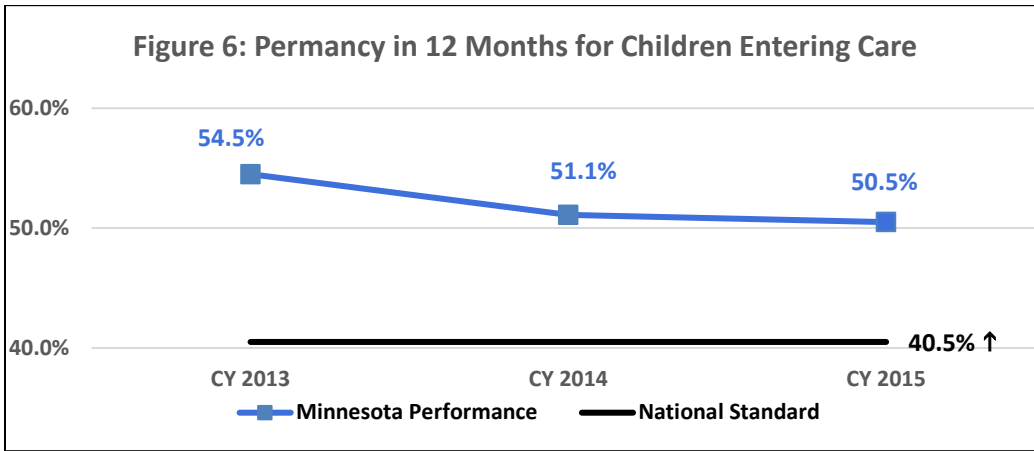
Table P1 – 2015

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
P1	-	-	-	67% N = 62	32% N = 30	1% N = 1	N = 0
Item 4	90% N = 84	10% N = 9	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 5	91% N = 81	9% N = 8	N = 4	-	-	-	-
Item 6	76% N = 71	24% N = 22	N = 0	-	-	-	-

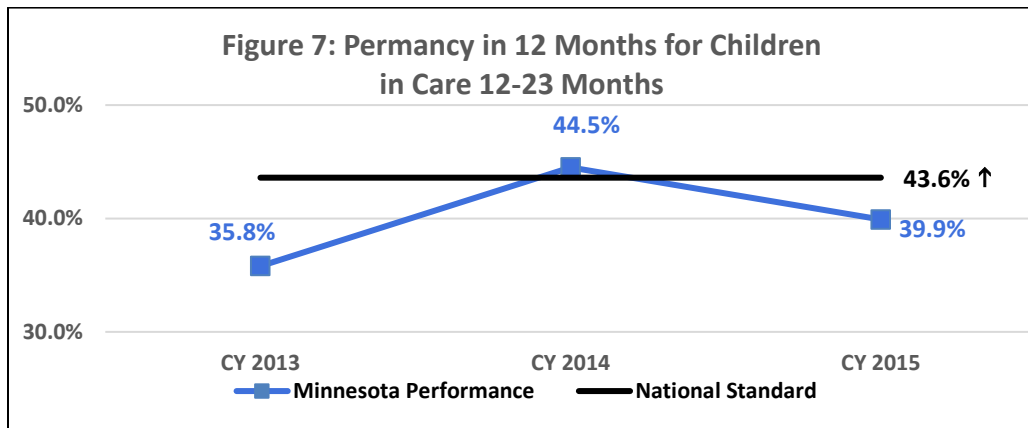
B. Performance on Federal Data Indicators

The following graphs include statewide observed performance on federal data indicators related to placement stability and timely achievement of permanency for calendar years 2013 – 2015.

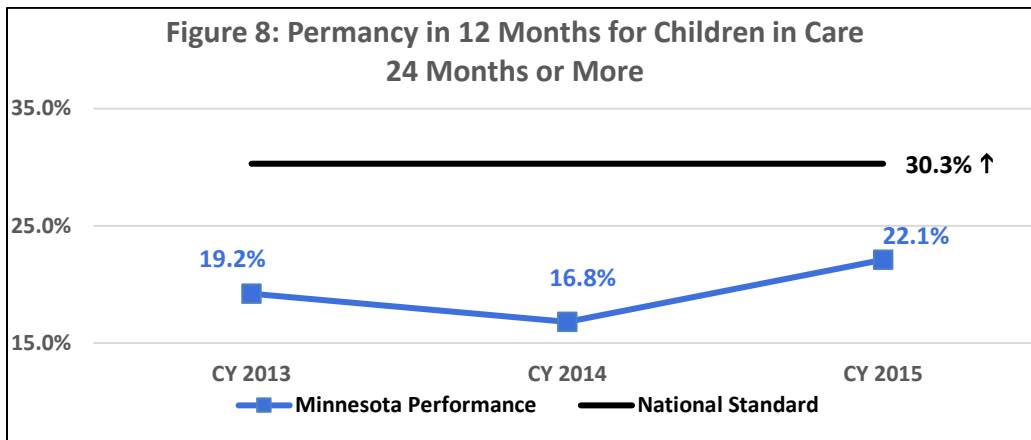




2013	2014	2015
2,870/5,264	2,736/5,358	2,968/5,876



2013	2014	2015
354/990	504/1,132	505,1,265



2013	2014	2015
190/1,003	181/1,107	265/1,208

Assessment of strengths and concerns

Item 4: Placement stability

- Data from MnCF SR reviews and performance on federal data indicators related to placement stability indicate overall progress. From 2013 – 2015, Minnesota went from not meeting to meeting the national standard for stability. Similarly during that same period, there was an increase of strength ratings in MnCF SR case reviews. Strength ratings on foster care stability increased from 68 percent of cases reviewed in 2013 to 90 percent of cases in 2015.
- In MnCF SRs, commonly cited practices that contributed to strength ratings included experienced foster care parents who had a good relationship with the agency and frequent, quality caseworker visits. Reviews also identified numerous instances in which moves were planned and directly related to children moving to a relative's home.
- Barriers to placement stability identified through MnCF SRs included changes in placement due to foster parent request versus child needs, and use of shelter care homes or facilities as initial placement settings.

Item 5: Establishing permanency goals for children in placement

- Establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner for children in out-of-home care has been a consistent strength. Data entry around case goals has also been strong as indicated through the AFCARS data entry requirements during that same time period.
- Specific practices mentioned as strengths in the local case reviews were:
 - Clear documentation of the reasons for goals that focused on strengths and needs of parents and children.
 - Timely filing of permanency petitions.
 - Use of Family Group Decision Making to inform goal setting.
 - Immediate development of concurrent goals upon placement.

Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption or other planned permanent living arrangement

- As indicated in MnCF SR findings and performance on federal data indicators, Minnesota has consistently performed well on achieving permanency within 12 months for children entering placement.
- Because Minnesota ensures that a relatively high number of children who enter care in any year achieve permanency within 12 months, it has relatively fewer children who are in care for longer than 12 months. For the children who are in care for 12 – 23 months at the start of the year, Minnesota has had mixed performance during the last three years in ensuring those children achieved permanency within 12 months. However, there has been an overall positive trend showing small improvements on this measure.
- Minnesota's performance with respect to achieving timely permanency for children who have been in care for 24 months or more is an area in need of improvement.
- MnCF SR case reviews and stakeholder interviews identified the following practices that contributed to timely achievement of permanency:
 - Early identification of and placement with relatives.

- Use of trial home visits.
- Concurrent permanency planning.
- Regular court reviews.
- Common barriers noted to timely achievement of permanency in MnCFSR reviews included:
 - Consecutive versus concurrent permanency planning.
 - Delays in court hearings, including delaying juvenile court proceedings until criminal proceedings were concluded.
 - Multiple jurisdictions involved in adoptions.

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

- **Item 7: Placement with siblings**
- **Item 8: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care**
- **Item 9: Preserving connections**
- **Item 10: Relative placement**
- **Item 11: Relationship of child in care with parents**

Data

A. MnCFSR Findings

The following tables include the results of MnCFSR case ratings for reviews completed in 2013 through 2015.

Table P2 – 2013

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
P2	-	-	-	68% N = 51	31% N = 23	1% N = 1	N = 0
Item 7 (Item 12 in 2013)	95% N = 35	5% N = 2	N = 38	-	-	-	-
Item 8 (Item 13 in 2013)	61% N = 43	39% N = 27	N = 5	-	-	-	-
Item 9 (Item 14 in 2013)	71% N = 53	29% N = 22	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 10 (Item 15 in 2013)	65% N = 33	35% N = 18	N = 24	-	-	-	-
Item 11 (Item 16 in 2013)	78% N = 49	22% N = 14	N = 12	-	-	-	-

Table P2 – 2014

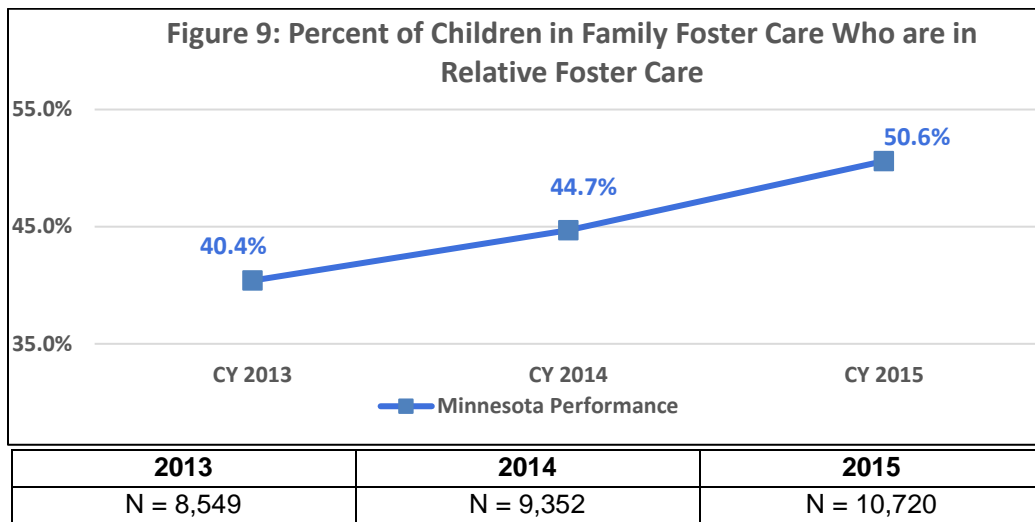
-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
P2	-	-	-	73% N = 70	25% N = 24	2% N = 2	N = 0
Item 7 (Item 12 in 2014)	96% N = 50	4% N = 2	N = 44	-	-	-	-
Item 8 (Item 13 in 2014)	67% N = 58	33% N = 28	N = 10	-	-	-	-
Item 9 (Item 14 in 2014)	82% N = 79	18% N = 17	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 10 (Item 15 in 2014)	86% N = 66	14% N = 11	N = 19	-	-	-	-
Item 11 (Item 16 in 2014)	75% N = 63	25% N = 21	N = 12	-	-	-	-

Table P2 – 2015

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
P2	-	-	-	87% N = 81	13% N = 12	0% N = 0	N = 0
Item 7	100%	0% N = 0	N = 50	-	-	-	-
Item 8	80% N = 64	20% N = 16	N = 13	-	-	-	-
Item 9	90% N = 83	10% N = 9	N = 1	-	-	-	-
Item 10	91% N = 60	9% N = 6	N = 27	-	-	-	-
Item 11	85% N = 66	15% N = 12	N = 15	-	-	-	-

B. Other relevant data

Performance on the use of relative care among children who are in family foster care settings is monitored and reported via the Child Welfare Data Dashboard. The following graph provides information on statewide performance on this measure over the last three years.



Assessment of strengths and concerns

Item 7: Placement with siblings

- Efforts to place siblings together is a consistent strength across Minnesota.
- MnCF SR results indicate that common reasons for sibling separation are placement with relatives when children have different fathers, and separation due to the need for one or more children in a family to access specialized treatment.

- An occasional challenge to placing siblings together is locating foster homes able and willing to care for large sibling groups.

Item 8: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

- Consistent improvement on agency efforts to ensure visits with parents and siblings in foster care has been noted through the MnCFSR. Positive practices noted through the MnCFSR process (including case reviews and stakeholder interviews) are:
 - Developing clear visitation plans.
 - Providing supports to parents to participate in visitation, e.g. transportation to and from visits.
 - Facilitating visitation in a location that is conducive to interaction between the parents and child, e.g. community locations versus a visitation room in a local agency when safe to do so.
 - Requiring supervised visits only when necessary to ensure child safety.
 - Utilizing relatives or kin to facilitate and/or supervise visits when possible.
- Factors that have contributed to ratings of needing improvement include:
 - Delays in initial parent/child visits immediately following placement.
 - Fewer efforts to facilitate visits with fathers versus mothers.
 - “Proof” of parental sobriety for a specified period of time required before visits could occur without specific attention to child safety in an individualized manner.
 - Residential setting programs requiring children to ‘earn” visits.
- In cases in which siblings were placed in different foster homes, a common barrier to frequent, quality sibling visitation was agencies abdicating the responsibility for ensuring visits occurred to others, e.g., foster parents.

Item 9: Preserving connections

- MnCFSR results indicated improving performance in agencies’ efforts to preserve important connections for children. Agency staff make efforts to identify and maintain important connections and relationships.
- Prior to 2015, Minnesota made an adjustment to this item; the department included whether a local agency had conducted sufficient inquiry to determine whether a child may be a member of, or eligible for membership in, a federally recognized Indian tribe as a criteria for the overall item rating. The federal review instrument does not include this specific question in the criteria for rating. The increase in strength ratings is partially attributable to Minnesota using the On-site Review Instrument (OSRI) without adjustments in 2015.

Item 10: Relative placement

- As indicated in tables P2.1 through P2.3 and Figure 9 above, there is continued improvement in relative placement practices across Minnesota. The percentage of children spending time in relative foster care has consistently increased over the past three years.
- A common factor resulting in ratings of needing improvement on this item in the MnCFSR process is insufficient efforts to identify both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement options for a child. Practices are, overall, more consistent with maternal relatives.

Item 11: Relationship of child in care with parents

- MnCF SR findings reflect improvements in this area. Factors that contributed to strength ratings included:
 - Involving parents in medical, school and other activities
 - Encouraging communication between parents and foster parents
 - Arranging services designed to improve parent/child relationships, e.g., in-home family therapy, while a child was in placement.
- Inconsistent efforts to engage parents, particularly fathers, in activities to promote and maintain relationships with a child in out-of-home placement was the most common reason cited for ratings of needing improvement.

C. Well-Being

Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3

Well-being outcomes include: (A) families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs; (B) children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs; and (C) children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

- For each of the three well-being outcomes, include the most recent available data demonstrating the state’s performance. Data must include relevant available case record review data and relevant data from the state information system (such as information on caseworker visits with parents and children).
- Based on these data and input from stakeholders, Tribes, and courts, include a brief assessment of strengths and concerns regarding Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.

State Response:

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

- **Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents**
- **Item 13: Child and family involvement in case planning**
- **Item 14: Caseworker visits with child**
- **Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents**

Data

A. MnCFSR Findings

The following tables provide the results of MnCFSR case ratings on Well-being Outcome 1 (WB1) and applicable items from 2013 through 2015.

Table WB1 – 2013

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB1	-	-	-	50% N = 56	42% N = 48	8% N = 9	N = 0
Item 12 (Item 17 in 2013)	58% N = 65	42% N = 48	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 13 (Item 18 in 2013)	74% N = 80	26% N = 29	N = 4	-	-	-	-
Item 14 (Item 19 in 2013)	74% N = 84	26% N = 29	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 15 (Item 20 in 2013)	68% N = 70	32% N = 33	N = 10	-	-	-	-

Table WB1 – 2014

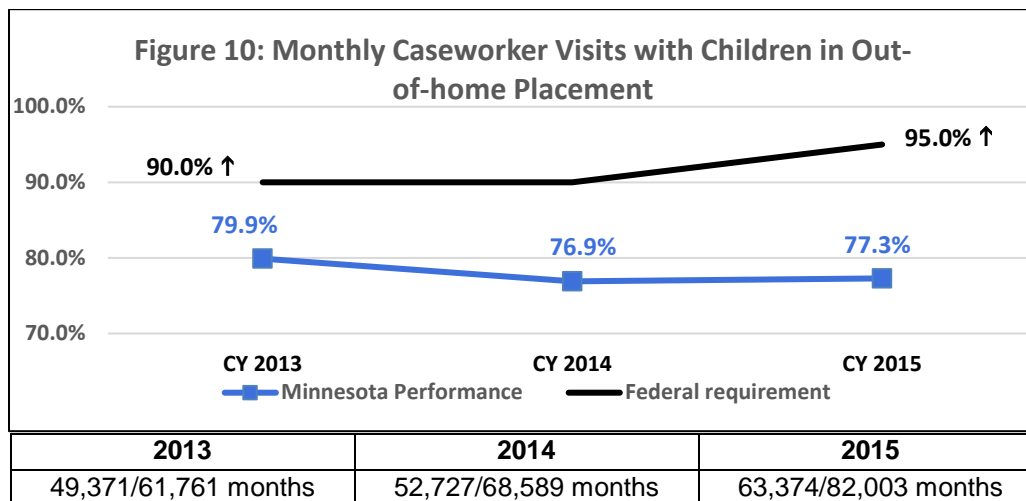
-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
-	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB1	-	-	-	65% N = 92	26% N = 37	9% N = 12	N = 0
Item 12 (Item 17 in 2014)	69% N = 97	31% N = 44	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 13 (Item 18 in 2014)	72% N = 99	28% N = 39	N = 3	-	-	-	-
Item 14 (Item 19 in 2014)	82% N = 116	18% N = 25	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 15 (Item 20 in 2014)	66% N = 86	34% N = 45	N = 10	-	-	-	-

Table WB1 – 2015

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
-	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB1	-	-	-	64% N = 88	30% N = 41	6% N = 8	N = 0
Item 12	71% N = 97	29% N = 40	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 12A	95% N = 130	5% N = 7	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 12B	73% N = 91	27% N = 33	N = 13	-	-	-	-
Item 12C	97% N = 70	3% N = 2	N = 65	-	-	-	-
Item 13	75% N = 98	25% N = 32	N = 7	-	-	-	-
Item 14	80% N = 110	20% N = 27	N = 0	-	-	-	-
Item 15	70% N = 86	30% N = 36	N = 15	-	-	-	-

B. Other relevant data

Performance on the frequency of caseworker visits with children in out-of-home placement is monitored and reported via the Child Welfare Data Dashboard. The following graph provides information on statewide performance on this measure over the last three years.



Assessment of strengths and concerns

Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents

- Assessing needs and providing services to children, parents and foster parents is, overall, an area needing improvement. Ratings from MnCFSR case reviews have improved over time; however, ratings continue to indicate challenges.
- Ratings on the sections of this item that are specific to children and foster parents (12A and 12C) are consistently higher than the section specific to assessing needs and providing services to parents (12B). Agencies generally demonstrate concerted efforts to ensure a clear understanding of children’s needs and arrange for services to address those needs.
- The most common reason for ratings of area needing improvement on Item 12 is insufficient agency efforts to assess and address non-resident parents’ (almost exclusively fathers’) needs. Other, less common factors that contribute to ratings of needing improvement include:
 - While addressing presenting needs, lack of attention to underlying needs.
 - Focus on needs of one child in a family and lack of attention to all children’s needs.
 - Needed services not provided due to lack of a funding source.

Item 13: Child and family involvement in case planning

- Performance, as noted in the MnCFSRs, has remained relatively consistent over the past three years. Practices noted that contribute to strength ratings include:
 - Use of FGDM, or other case planning conferences, to engage family members in the case planning process.
 - Frequent caseworker visits with parents and children to build relationships and discuss needs and progress.
 - Use of various strategies, tools and techniques to engage children.
- When cases were rated as needing improvement, it was most commonly due to lack of engagement of one parent (typically fathers).

Item 14: Caseworker visits with child

- Frequent, quality caseworker visits with children is an area of continued challenge for Minnesota, as demonstrated through MnCFSR results, as well as broader performance data that is reflected in Figure 10.
- Information from MnCFSR case reviews reflects some positive practices, including:
 - Caseworker visits that occur at least monthly, and more frequently at critical points in a case.
 - Caseworkers adjusting their approach to visits depending on the age, abilities and interests of a child.
 - Caseworkers spending individual time with children.
- Barriers to stronger performance include:
 - Children placed outside of their county of residence.
 - Regular visits with some, but not all children in a family (specific to in-home cases).
 - Caseload sizes/workload for caseworkers.
- In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated additional funding for child protection staffing and services. Ten percent of the annual appropriation is withheld and only distributed if a local agency meets certain performance standards, one of which is monthly visits with children in out-of-home placement and those receiving child protection case management services while residing in their homes. In 2015, only monthly visits with children in out-of-home placement was a consideration; monthly visits with children in-home is added as a consideration for receipt of the additional funding. While this additional funding has been beneficial, there has also been a significant increase in the number of child protection reports, as well as an increase in the number of children entering out-of-home placement.

Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents

- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents is an ongoing need across Minnesota. MnCFSR findings reflect fairly consistent performance; however, findings also reflect the need for improvement. As identified in earlier items, the most common factor cited in ratings of needing improvement is inconsistent and inadequate efforts to visit with fathers.

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

- **Item 16: Educational needs of the child**

Data

A. MnCFSR Findings

Table WB2 – 2013

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
-	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB2	-	-	-	96% N = 77	4% N = 3	0% N = 0	N = 33
Item 16 (Item 21 in 2013)	96% N = 77	4% N = 3	N = 33	-	-	-	-

Table WB2 – 2014

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
-	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB2	-	-	-	95% N = 87	0% N = 0	5% N = 5	N = 49
Item 16 (Item 21 in 2014)	95% N = 87	5% N = 5	N = 49	-	-	-	-

Table WB2 – 2015

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
-	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB2	-	-	-	97% N = 95	1% N = 1	2% N = 2	N = 39
Item 16	97% N = 95	3% N = 3	N = 39	-	-	-	-

Assessment of strengths and concerns

Item 16: Educational needs of the child

- According to MnCFSR results, assuring that children’s educational needs are assessed and addressed is an ongoing strength in Minnesota. Agency caseworkers are attentive to the educational needs of children they serve. They make efforts to keep children in the same school district when in out-of-home placement, and/or help to ensure that records are transmitted when a child transfers schools.

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

- Item 17: Physical health of the child
- Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of the child

Data

A. MnCF SR Findings

Table WB3 – 2013

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB3	-	-	-	70% N = 79	14% N = 16	16% N = 18	N = 0
Item 17 (Item 22 in 2013)	89% N = 74	11% N = 9	N = 30	-	-	-	-
Item 18 (Item 23 in 2013)	74% N = 82	26% N = 29	N = 2	-	-	-	-

Table WB3 – 2014

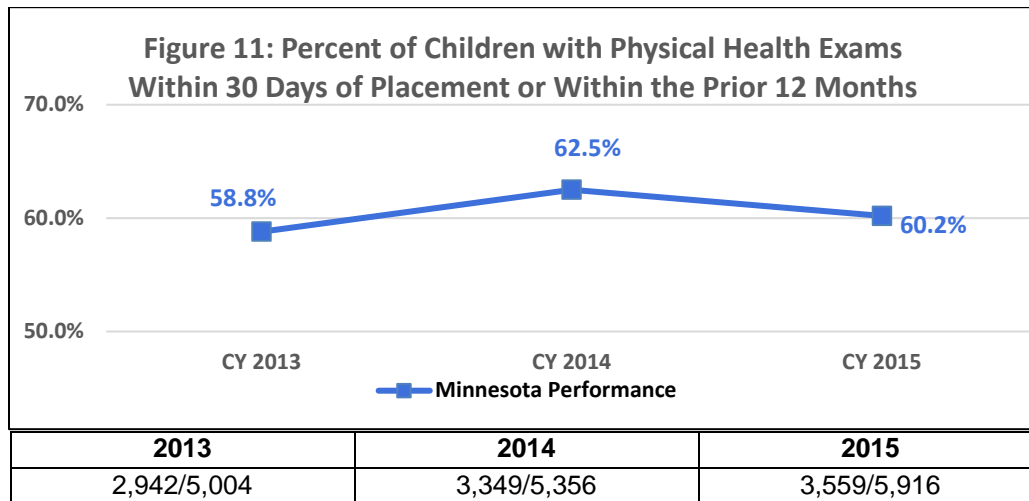
-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB3	-	-	-	72% N = 101	16% N = 23	12% N = 17	N = 0
Item 17 (Item 22 in 2014)	93% N = 100	7% N = 8	N = 33	-	-	-	-
Item 18 (Item 23 in 2014)	74% N = 102	26% N = 35	N = 4	-	-	-	-

Table WB3 – 2015

-	Item Ratings			Outcome Rating			
	Strength	ANI	NA	Sub. Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	NA
WB3	-	-	-	95% N = 125	3% N = 4	2% N = 2	N = 6
Item 17	97% N = 98	3% N = 3	N = 36	-	-	-	-
Item 18	97% N = 115	3% N = 3	N = 19	-	-	-	-

B. Other relevant data

The following data is provided through the Child Welfare Data Dashboard, and includes performance on ensuring that children receive a physical health exam within 30 days of entering placement or within the 12 months immediately preceding placement.



Assessment of strengths and concerns

Item 17: Physical health of the child

- MnCF SR findings indicate continuous improvements in this area. Summaries from case reviews indicate that caseworkers routinely rely on foster parents to ensure initial and ongoing medical and dental health needs are assessed and addressed for children in out-of-home placement. Caseworkers also routinely gather medical records and maintain those records in a child’s file. Stakeholders commonly report that it is a challenge to locate dental providers who accept Medicaid Assistance, which presents a barrier to meeting the dental health needs of children in care.
- Broader performance data, included in Figure 11, is less complimentary. It indicates that approximately 60 percent of children entering out-of-home placement in each of the last three years have received physical health exams upon entry or within the preceding 12 months. However, there are some known issues with this data. Entering a date of a physical health exam is not a required field in Minnesota’s SACWIS system; so data is believed to be incomplete. The department is exploring the possibility of accessing data from health care claims, which should result in a more accurate picture of performance on this particular measure.

Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of the child

- MnCF SR findings indicate significant improvement from 2013 to 2015 regarding assessing and addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of children. The increase in strength ratings is due, at least in part, to changes in how the item is rated. Caseworkers are required to complete children’s mental health screening tools on children receiving child protection services, children in out-of-home placement, and other specific child populations. Exemptions to the requirement for a screening include, but are not limited to:
 - Child is under the care of a mental health professional.
 - Child is receiving children’s mental health case management services.
 - A screening was completed within the previous 180 days.

- Prior to 2015, rating this item in the MnCF SR included consideration of whether the screening was completed as required. Since 2015, completion of a screening is not a consideration in the overall rating.
- MnCF SR findings indicate ongoing assessment of mental health needs, both through formal, clinical evaluations and through other, less formal means. Caseworkers are attentive to the mental/behavioral health needs of children and arrange for services to address identified needs.
- Systemic issues that present challenges to meeting the mental health needs of children include a lack of locally available child psychiatric services. However, Minnesota developed and implemented Psychiatric Consultation Services that offers a phone line for health care professionals to help determine the most appropriate medication for children and youth struggling with mental illness.

Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factors

Instructions

The statewide assessment information for systemic factors is used in determining ratings for substantial conformity. Therefore, it is imperative that the statewide assessment team ensures that information in this section speaks to how well each systemic factor requirement functions across the state. To complete the assessment for each systemic factor, state agencies should:

1. Review the *CFSR Procedures Manual* (available on the Children's Bureau Web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/cfsr-procedures-manual>), which elaborates on key concepts and provides examples of data that are relevant to the assessment of systemic factor requirements.
2. Respond to each assessment question using the requested data and/or information for each systemic factor item. Relevant data can be qualitative and/or quantitative. Refer to the section in the state's most recent Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) or Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) that provides assessment information on state performance for each of the seven systemic factors. Review the information with the statewide assessment team and determine if more recent data is available that can be used to provide an updated assessment of each item. If more recent data are not available, refer to the most recent CFSP or APSR document by indicating the document name/date and relevant page numbers where the information can be found for each systemic factor item.
3. Emphasize how well the data and/or information characterizes the statewide functioning of the systemic factor requirement. In other words, describe the strengths and limitations in using the data and/or information to characterize how well the systemic factor item functions statewide (e.g., strengths/limitations of data quality and/or methods used to collect/analyze data).
4. Include the sources of data and/or information used to respond to each item-specific assessment question.
5. Indicate appropriate time frames to ground the systemic factor data and/or information. The systemic factor data and/or information should be current or the most recent (e.g., within the last year).

The systemic factor items begin with #19 instead of #1 because items #1 through 18 are outcome-related items covered in the onsite review instrument used during the onsite review. Items related to the systemic factors are items #19 through 36.

A. Statewide Information System

Item 19: Statewide Information System

How well is the statewide information system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show the statewide information system requirements are being met statewide.

State Response:

Definitions

- Minnesota operates the Social Service Information System (SSIS). SSIS is SACWIS compliant and fully reports to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).
- SSIS has been in operation statewide since 1999, and was reviewed by the federal team for SACWIS requirements in 2011.
- SSIS is a case management system designed to provide child welfare social workers with efficient processes to document all client demographic data; case/workgroup activity, including contacts and case notes; case plans and letters; and track timelines and financial responsibility for children and families on their caseload.
- Casework is documented in SSIS in “cases” and “workgroups”
 - A “case” in SSIS is considered as its own file drawer. There is one case (or file *drawer*) per household; it typically contains family information and is labeled under the female head of household (followed by male, then oldest child, if there is no female head of household).
 - A “workgroup” is considered a file folder in the drawer for services being provided to clients within that household; a “case” can have many workgroups. A workgroup (file *folder*) contains at least one client assigned to one caseworker who is receiving services in at least one program area. It has individual client information.
 - Example: A family new to child protection is going to receive services from the county. A SSIS *case* is opened under the mother’s name and family demographic data entered. A child protection *workgroup* is opened with all family members listed individually who are going to be receiving services. One child is later found to need children’s mental health services; workgroup two is opened just for that child—but is listed under the case. Now there are two workgroups—or file folders—in the case (file drawer). Anytime a new service is added for a person in a family, a new workgroup can be opened in the case.
- Agencies are encouraged to open new workgroups within a current open or pre-existing closed case, if one is available. This provides access to historical data pertinent to its work. However, counties may choose to open a new case and workgroup for each new service a person in a family receives.

Policy

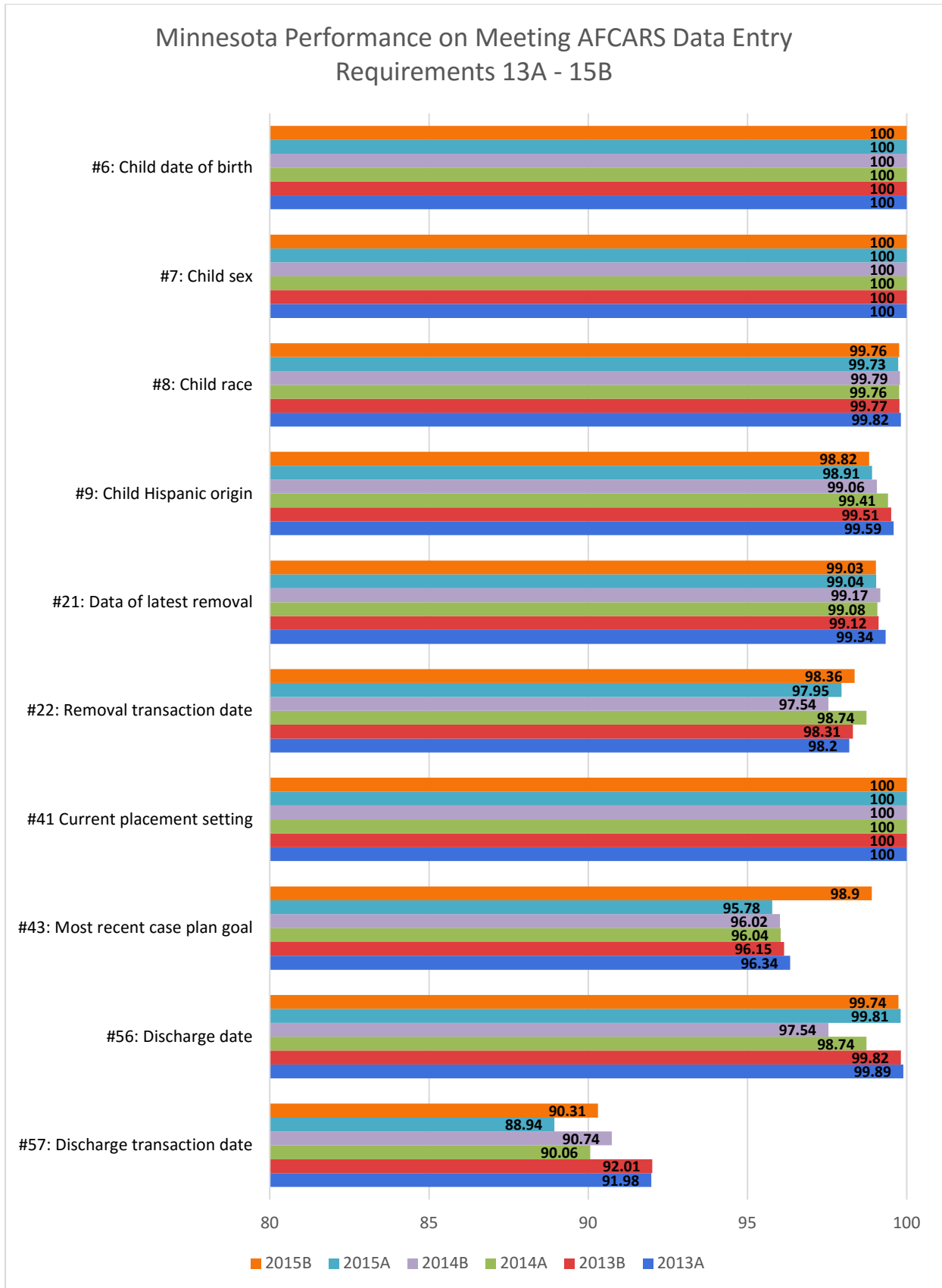
- SSIS incorporates federal and state statutes through a combination of enforced requirements for data entry at appropriate points in a case, and a combination of alerts and reminders for completion of various requirements. All significant events in the life of a case are documented within SSIS, including screening, intake, case management, placement, court involvement, case plans, Title IV-E eligibility and case closure.
- Demographic characteristics, address/location, and goals for out-of-home placement are required data entry fields in SSIS.

Practice

- SSIS offers new worker training throughout the year. The training focuses on using the system efficiently while completing all assessment and case management requirements. Training emphasizes routine use of SSIS to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements, full documentation of important events and case progress, and creation of a reliable source of information for reporting needs.
- As new versions of SSIS are released, training is provided to county and tribal social workers and mentors to support the transition process.
- Computer-based training addressing basic SSIS user needs is also available to local agency personnel.
- A myriad of reports are available to supervisory and management staff to review case-level practice and monitor agency performance on key child welfare measures, e.g., timeliness of response to reports of child maltreatment and monthly caseworker visits with children in out-of-home placement.
- MN.IT is Minnesota's central information and technology organization. MN.IT employs data integrity specialists to ensure data integrity in SSIS and other state data systems. MN.IT compiles and distributes data discrepancy reports to local agencies twice a year. These reports identify errors or potential errors in data entry, as well as information that is required, but has not been entered into the system. Local agencies are responsible for reviewing potential errors and correcting identified errors.

Data

- The following chart includes Minnesota's performance on select AFCARS reporting elements obtained from the AFCAR Foster Care Data Compliance Summary Reports for 13A through 15B. It demonstrates Minnesota's high rate of compliance on data entry specific to the following elements.
 - Rate of entry of date of birth and sex is consistently at 100 percent.
 - For all of the elements included, Minnesota was over the 90 percent threshold in each of the reporting periods, except "transaction discharge date" in one reporting period.
 - In November 2015, the department issued a bulletin that addressed the issue of timely case documentation in SSIS.



B. Case Review System

Item 20: Written Case Plan

How well is the case review system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that shows each child has a written case plan as required that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 260C.212, subd. 1(a), and Rule 37, Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure, establish requirements for an out-of-home placement plan to be prepared within 30 days of a child's placement in out-of-home care.
- Minn. Stat. 260C.212, subd. 1(b) and Rule 37, Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure, require that an out-of-home placement plan be prepared by the local social services agency jointly with the parent(s) or guardian of a child, and in consultation with the child, when appropriate, and the child's:
 - Guardian ad litem
 - Tribe, if the child is American Indian
 - Foster parent or representative of the foster care facility.
- Minn. Stat. 260C.203 requires the out-of-home placement plan to be updated every six months.
- For children who receive child protection services while residing in their homes, including those who are subjects of a Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) petition, Minn. Stat. 626.556, subd. 10m(a), and Minn. Admin. Rule 9560.0228, subp. 2, require a written plan for services within 30 days of the determination that child protective services are needed.
- Minn. Rule 9560.0228, subp. 2, establishes requirements for child protective service plans while children are living at home, including that children and families are involved in development of plans.
- For children who receive children's mental health case management services while residing in their home, Minn. Stat. 245.4881, subd. 4(a), requires development of an Individual Family Community Support Plan (IFSCP) that incorporates a child's individual treatment plan within 30 days of determining eligibility for case management services. A child's case manager is required to involve the child, their family, advocates, service providers, and significant others in all phases of development and implementation of the IFSCP.
- Minn. Rule 9525.0024 requires development of an Individual Service Plan (ISP) for children receiving developmental disabilities case management services. The ISP must include a person's preferences for services as stated by the person, or a person's legal representative.

Practice

- The out-of-home placement plan template in SSIS includes all statutory and Title IV-E required case plan elements, including Independent Living Skills plans. Templates are updated when federal regulations or state statutes change. The out-of-home placement plan and independent living skills plan templates are included below.

[Note: Please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services for the OHPP Template and ILS Plan Template.]

- The department issues bulletins that provide instruction to agency caseworkers regarding case plan requirements and/or amendments.
- Caseworkers meet with parents and children individually or as part of family meetings to develop case plans. To facilitate discussion, caseworkers may prepare drafts or outlines of case plans based on previous conversations with family members in advance and later incorporate additional family input. Drafts are based on a workers' previous conversations with families, and screenings or tools (e.g., Structured Decision Making tools) completed.
- Local agencies utilize Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and/or case planning conferences as a means for engaging parents and other family members in case plan development.
- SSIS generates an alert to the assigned caseworker if a child has been in placement for 21 days and no placement plan has been created in the system. The alert will not be satisfied until an out-of-home placement plan has been created. Additional alerts to review an out-of-home placement plan are generated 60 days after the most recent out-of-home placement plan was opened.
- Supervisors monitor timely completion of case plans by reviewing SSIS reports, including "Active Placements without Active Out-of-Home Placement Plans."

Data

- Minnesota Child and Family Service Reviews (MnCFSRs) include evaluation of family engagement in case plan development (Item 13, Item 18 in 2013 and 2014).
- Results of ratings for Item 13 are included in the table below.

Family Engagement in Case Planning – MnCFSR Case Ratings

	In-home Cases	In-home Cases	Placement Cases	Placement Cases	Total Cases	Total Cases
	Strength	ANI	Strength	ANI	Strength	ANI
2013	73.7%	26.3%	73.2%	26.8%	73.4%	26.6%
	28	10	52	19	80	29
2014	66.7%	33.3%	74.2%	25.8%	71.7%	28.3%
	30	15	69	24	99	39
2015	63.6%	36.4%	81.4%	18.6%	75.4%	24.6%
	28	16	70	16	98	32
TOTALS	67.7%	32.3%	76.4%	23.6%	73.5%	26.5%
	86	41	191	59	277	100

- 2013
 - MnCFSRs were conducted in 12 county agencies
 - Of the 129 cases applicable for Item 13 (Item 18 in 2013), 73.4 percent were rated as a strength.
- 2014
 - A total of 12 MnCFSRs were conducted; 10 in county agencies and two with the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative tribes
 - Of the 138 cases applicable for Item 13 (Item 18 in 2014), 71.7 percent were rated as a strength.
- 2015
 - MnCFSRs were conducted in 15 county agencies
 - Of the 130 cases applicable for Item 13, 75.4 percent were rated as a strength.

Item 21: Periodic Reviews

How well is the case review system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show a periodic review occurs as required for each child no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

State Response:

Policy

- A. Children in out-of-home placement pursuant to Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) petition and court order
- Minn. Stat. 260C.202 and Rule 41.06, Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure, require that if a court orders a child placed in foster care, the court shall review a child's placement at least every 90 days to determine whether continued out-of-home placement is necessary and appropriate, or whether a child should be returned home. Reviews under this section are not required if the court has returned a child home, ordered a child permanently placed away from their parent, or terminated parental rights.
 - Minn. Stat. 260C.607 and Rule 42, Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure, outline requirements for periodic reviews of children whose parental rights have been terminated and who are under guardianship of the commissioner. Court review of a social service agency's reasonable efforts to finalize adoption is required at least every 90 days until a child has been adopted.
 - Minn. Stat. 260C.607, subd. 8, authorizes reviews to occur more frequently than every 90 days whenever a more frequent review would assist in finalizing adoption.
 - Subd. 8 also authorizes court reviews to occur less frequently than every 90 days when appropriate; however, also indicates that in no event shall the court's review be less frequent than every six months.
 - Minn. Stat. 260C.203 requires that, unless the court is conducting reviews required under section 260C.202, "there shall be an administrative review of the out-of-home placement plan of each child placed in foster care no later than 180 days after the initial placement of the child in foster care and at least every six months thereafter if the child is not returned to the home of the parent or parents within that time."

Local social services agencies are required to use a panel of appropriate persons, at least one of whom is not responsible for case management of, or the delivery of services to, either a child or their parents and must be open to participation by the parent or guardian and the child, as appropriate.
- B. Children in out-of-home placement pursuant to voluntary placement agreement (VPA)

- Minn. Stat. 260C.227 and Rule 44.02 require that, if a child enters out-of-home placement pursuant to a VPA between the local agency and a child's parent(s), and the child has not been returned home within 90 days of initial placement in foster care, an agency is required to return the child home or file a petition with the court.
 - The court may approve continuation of a placement on a voluntary basis for an additional 90 days. If a child is not returned home within that 90 days, the local agency must proceed on the petition alleging a child is in need of protection or services, or the petition for termination of parental rights or other permanent placement.
 - If a child is not returned home by day 180 of entry into placement, periodic reviews every 90 days are required, as outlined above, for children in placement pursuant to a court order.
- C. Children in out-of-home placement pursuant to a VPA to access specialized treatment
 - Minn. Stat. 260D.06 and Rule 43, Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedures, require that when a child is in voluntary foster care to access specialized treatment due to emotional disturbance or developmental disability or related condition, the local agency must seek judicial review of a child's voluntary placement within 165 days of a placement. The agency is required to file a "report to the court." After receiving the required report, the court has jurisdiction to determine whether voluntary placement is in a child's best interest, and must do so within 10 days of receipt of the report.
 - Regular periodic court reviews do not occur for a child who continues in care on a voluntary basis; however, Minn. Stat. 260D.05 requires local agencies conduct an administrative review prior to filing a "report to the court," and every six months thereafter for as long as a child remains in care.
- D. Children in placement due to a juvenile delinquency petition
 - Minn. Rules of Juvenile Delinquency require court to review all delinquency disposition orders, except commitments to the commissioner of corrections at least every six months.
- E. Children not in out-of-home placement; however, under court-ordered protective supervision
 - Rule 4.03, subd. 1(i), requires a court review of a disposition of protective supervision at least every six months from the date of the disposition.

Practice

- Courts are holding regular periodic review hearings in accordance with statutory and rule requirements. After the court finds a child in need of protection or services, a CHIPS review hearing is scheduled at least every 90 days until permanency is achieved. In some jurisdictions, reviews occur more frequently.
- Caseworkers and guardians ad litem submit reports to the court prior to every review hearing, updating all parties on progress towards achieving case plan goals. Templates for caseworker court reports are included in SSIS.
- Judges refer to the "Minnesota Judges Juvenile Protection Benchbook" for guidance on high-quality judicial process for 90 day dispositional review hearings.

Data

- As shown in the table below, the AFCARS Compliance Report consistently indicates that Minnesota conducts periodic reviews in a timely manner.

Reporting period	Percent of periodic reviews that were held in a timely manner
15B	95.58%
15A	94.74%
14B	95.10%
14A	94.26%
13B	94.43%
13A	95.73%

Item 22: Permanency Hearings

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show a permanency hearing as required for each child in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

State Response:

Policy

- A. Children in out-of-home placement pursuant to Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) petition and court order
- Minn. Stat. 260C.204(a) and Juvenile Protection Rule 42 require that a permanency progress review hearing be held no later than six months after a child's placement to review progress on the case plan and the agency's reasonable or active efforts.
 - Minn. Stat. 260C.505(a) requires that a permanency or termination of parental rights petition be filed at or prior to the time a child has been in foster care or in the care of a noncustodial or nonresident parent for 11 months.
 - Minn. Stat. 260C.503, subd. 1 and Juvenile Protection Rules 42.01, provide that in all cases where a child is in foster care or in the care of a noncustodial or nonresident parent, "the court shall commence proceedings to determine the permanent status of a child by holding the admit-deny hearing" no later than 12 months after a child is placed in foster care or in the care of a noncustodial or nonresident parent.
 - Minn. Stat. 260C.503, subd. 3 (b)(2), specifies that the length of all prior time periods when a child was placed in foster care within the previous five years be included when calculating whether a child has been in care for 12 months. Under this section, the court may extend the total time a child may continue in care for an additional six months before making a permanency determination, if determined that it is in the best interest of a child and there are compelling reasons.
- B. Children in out-of-home placement pursuant to a VPA to access specialized treatment
- Minn. Stat. 260D.07 requires that the court hold a permanency review hearing for a child who continues in care for 13 months pursuant to a court-approved VPA (as described in Item 21 above), or has been in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.
 - Minn. Stat. 260D.08 requires that, if the court finds compelling reasons to continue a voluntary placement, it must review an agency's efforts to finalize a permanency plan every 12 months thereafter.

Practice

- Since the Children’s Justice Initiative (CJI) was implemented in 2001, the Minnesota Judicial Branch and the Minnesota Department of Human Services have collaborated and worked closely with local juvenile courts, social services agencies, county attorneys, public defenders, court administrators, guardians ad litem, tribes, and other key stakeholders in each of Minnesota’s 87 counties to improve processing of child protection cases and the outcomes for abused and neglected children. The mission of the Children’s Justice Initiative is to ensure that in a fair and timely manner abused and neglected children involved in the juvenile protection court system have safe, stable, permanent families. The efforts of CJI have resulted in improved timely permanency for children and youth in out-of-home home placement.
- In accordance with Rule 6, Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure, judges issue scheduling orders early in court proceedings that establish deadlines or specific dates for any event deemed necessary or appropriate, including timelines for commencement of permanency proceedings.
- Judges refer to the “Minnesota Judges Juvenile Protection Benchbook” for guidance on timelines and high-quality judicial process for permanency hearings.
- Parents are advised about permanency timelines by caseworkers and the courts as soon as children enter foster care. Parents are required to watch “In the Best Interests of the Child,” a video developed by the CJI containing information regarding permanency timelines.
- SSIS includes alerts and reminders that automatically notify caseworkers in advance of a required activity related to permanency.

Data

The following data was obtained from the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS). It includes the median days from the date a current CHIPS petition was filed to the date of the first Admit/Deny hearing on a current permanency petition. It demonstrates strong performance in holding timely initial permanency hearings, well within the required 12-month time frame.

-	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015
Number of children	1,276	1,191	1,406
Median days to first permanency hearing	241	270	286

The next table includes additional data obtained from MNCIS. It includes information regarding the median days in foster care prior to an order for reunification, transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative, termination of jurisdiction or court dismissal. It is further demonstration of strong performance in timely permanency hearings.

Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factors

-	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015
Number of children	1,502	1,835	2,017
Median days to permanent placement	315	327	334

Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information showing that filing of TPR proceedings occurs in accordance with the law.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 260C.505(a) and Juvenile Protection Rule 42 require a permanency petition or termination of parental rights petition be filed at or prior to the time a child has been in foster care, or in the care of a noncustodial or nonresident parent, for 11 months.
- Minn. Stat. 260C.301, subd. 1 (b)(5)(i), specifies that the juvenile court may terminate all rights of a parent to a child when reasonable efforts under the direction of the court have failed to correct the conditions leading to a child's placement. It is presumed that reasonable efforts have failed upon a showing that "a child has resided out of the parental home under court order for a cumulative period of 12 months within the preceding 22 months."
- Minn. Stat. 260C.301, subd. 4, and Juvenile Protection Rule 42, require the county attorney to file a termination of parent rights petition or a petition to transfer permanent legal and physical custody to a relative for children who have been in out-of-home care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.
- Minn. Stat. 260C.503, subd. 2 outlines circumstances in which the responsible social service agency must ask the county attorney to immediately file a TPR petition, including: a child was subject to egregious harm or a child is the sibling of a child who was subjected to egregious harm.
- Minn. Stat. 260C.301 through 260C.317 specify the process for voluntary and involuntary termination of parental rights proceedings, consistent with federal law.
- Minn. Stat. 260D.07 requires that the court hold a permanency review hearing for a child who continues in care for 13 months pursuant to a court-approved VPA (as described in Item 21 above), or has been in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. An agency must either return the child home, seek judicial approval for continuation of the voluntary foster care arrangement or file a petition for termination of parental rights.

Practice

- Parents are advised about permanency timelines by caseworkers and the courts as soon as children enter foster care including the potential outcome if reunification is not achieved within timelines.
- Judges refer to the "Judges Juvenile Protection Benchbook" for guidance on high-quality judicial process related to termination of parental rights or other permanent placement proceedings.

- Local agencies have the capacity to track the length of time children have been in care, including those in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.
- Statewide implementation of the Children’s Justice Initiative (described in the previous item) supports ongoing improvement in juvenile court procedures and timely filing of termination of parental rights petitions, as required.

Data

The following data was obtained from the MNCIS. It includes the median days from the date a current CHIPS petition was filed to the date a current termination of parental rights (TPR) or alternative permanency petition was filed. This data demonstrates that Minnesota consistently files TPR and/or other permanency petitions within the required timeline of 335 days.

-	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015
Number of children	1,002	1,097	1,328
Median days to filing of TPR or alternative permanency petition	239	264	265

The following table includes data obtained from MNCIS that includes the median number of days a child is in foster care prior to the date that a child came under guardianship of the commissioner of Human Services (i.e., the date a TPR was ordered and a child became legally free for adoption). This data demonstrates that Minnesota consistently meets the requirement that children who become legally free for adoption do so within 485 days of placement.

-	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015
Number of children	586	561	739
Median days to becoming legally free for adoption	312	343	345

Minnesota routinely conducts quality assurance reviews patterned after the Child and Family Service Reviews (referred to as MnCFSRs). The following data was obtained from completed case review instruments and response to the following question: If a child had been in foster care for at least 15 of the most recent 22 months, or met other ASFA criteria for TPR, did the agency file or join a TPR petition before the period under review, or in a timely manner during the period under review?

-	CY2013	CY2014	CY2015
Total number of applicable cases	28	25	18
Petition filed timely?	82% (23/28)	68.0% (17/25)	66.7% (12/18)

Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

How well is the case review system functioning statewide 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care (1) are receiving notification of any review or hearing held with respect to the child and (2) have a right to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 260C.152, subd. 5 requires that foster parents of a child and any pre-adoptive parent or relative providing care for a child must be provided notice of and a right to be heard in any review or hearing to be held with respect to a child. The statute also extends this right to any other relative of a child.

Practice

- Agency caseworkers are responsible for providing foster parent information (e.g., names and addresses) to court administration when children are placed in foster care, or when a child moves from one placement setting to another. There is a standard form in SSIS that caseworkers use for this purpose.
- Court administration is responsible for providing the required notice described above to foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers. The notice is either mailed to required recipient(s), or notice for the next hearing is given directly to required recipient(s) immediately following a court hearing.
- In addition to providing foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers with information regarding dates and times of hearings for children in their care, court administration provides the “Advisory of Party and Participant Rights,” which informs recipients of their rights, included below.

[Note: Please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services for the “Advisory of Party and Participant Rights.”]

Data

In 2013, 2014 and part of 2015, all foster parents licensed by an agency that was participating in a MnCFSR were surveyed as a routine part of the MnCFSR process. The survey included the following two questions specific to notice of hearings and reviews:

- “You receive written notice of court hearing regarding the children in your care,
- When you attend court hearings, the judge informs you of your right to be heard.”

The following table includes the number and percentage of foster parents who responded “always” or “sometimes” to the identified questions.

-	CY2013	CY2014	CY2015
Received written notice	63% (84/133)	58% (120/207)	65% (83/127)
Informed of right to be heard	29% (39/133)	38% (78/207)	28% (36/127)

Due to known limitations with the survey and resulting data, e.g., small sample size in comparison to number of licensed foster parents statewide, the department is in the process of developing a survey to be distributed statewide to all licensed foster parents on an annual basis. The results of this survey will provide more robust data for identifying and addressing foster parent needs.

C. Quality Assurance System

Item 25: Quality Assurance System

How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information showing that the specified quality assurance requirements are occurring statewide.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 256.01 outlines the powers and duties of the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services and includes the authority to:
 - Monitor performance of county agencies in the operation and administration of human services,
 - Develop a quality control or other monitoring program to review county performance,
 - Require county agency participation in training and technical assistance programs to promote compliance with statutes, rules, federal laws, regulations and policies governing human services.
- Minn. Stat. 256.01 and Minn. Admin. Rule 9560.0232 define and outline the state's child fatality/near fatality review process.
- Minn. Stat. 402A establishes a performance management system for essential human services that includes establishing initial performance measures and thresholds.
- Minn. Stat. 626.556, subd. 16, requires the department to conduct quality assurance reviews of local agency screening practices and decisions.

Practice

The state employs a variety of quality assurance processes as part of an overall continuous quality improvement system. These processes are utilized across the state in all county agencies and two American Indian Initiative tribes.

A. Minnesota Child and Family Service Review (MnCFSRs). MnCFSRs are patterned after the federal CFSP process. The department's quality assurance staff utilize the On-site Case Review Instrument (OSRI) to conduct reviews of both in-home and placement cases. Case reviews are conducted by department quality assurance staff and/or trained peer reviewers. The case review occurs on-site in the local agency, and includes a review of paper and electronic case records, and interviews with key case participants.

In addition to case reviews, department staff conduct interviews with local stakeholders, including agency caseworkers, court personnel and others. Local agencies complete a self assessment in preparation for a MnCF SR, including an examination of systemic factors and analysis of relevant child welfare data.

The review process results in identification of strengths and needs of the service delivery system, and local agencies develop program improvement plans to improve areas identified as needing improvement. Results of individual MnCF SRs are provided to the local agency and posted on the department's website.

B. Targeted reviews of screened out reports of child maltreatment. Since September 2014, the department has been conducting reviews of randomly selected screened out maltreatment reports from across the state. Every month, approximately five percent of screened out reports from each local agency are reviewed by department staff to ensure consistent application of screening guidelines, thorough and appropriate screening decisions and correction documentation and maintenance of reports. Questions regarding individual screening decisions result in discussions with local agency staff to obtain additional information and the need for additional action.

Three quality assurance staff positions were added in fall 2015 specifically for conducting reviews of screened out reports. Processes for regular reporting of review results are currently being established.

C. Child fatality/near fatality reviews. Local agencies are required to establish multi-disciplinary child mortality review panels and complete a mortality review in the event of a child's death in situations listed below. Results of local mortality reviews are provided to the department and subsequently reviewed by the state multidisciplinary Mortality Review Panel.

- The death was caused by maltreatment.
- The manner of death was due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or was other than by natural causes.
- A child was a member of a family receiving social services from a local agency at the time of, or during the year prior to, a child's death, or was a member of a family that was the subject of a child protection assessment or investigation.
- A death occurred in a facility licensed by the department and the manner of death was other than natural causes.

In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature enacted legislation that requires the department to establish a team to review child fatalities and near fatalities due to child maltreatment, and those that occur in licensed facilities that are not due to natural causes. The review process must focus on critical elements of a case and a child and family's involvement with the local social services agency. Legislation also requires a program improvement plan process to address identified practice issues, training and/or technical assistance needs of local agencies. Three quality assurance staff positions were added in fall 2015 to fulfill additional

fatality/near fatality case review requirements. This process will be implemented effective July 1, 2016.

In addition to specific quality assurance processes described above, the department's research and evaluation staff collect and disseminate performance data on a regular basis.

- Performance on key child welfare indicators, including federal data indicators, is posted on the [Child Welfare Data Dashboard](#), a public website.
- Data is published annually in Minnesota's Child Welfare Reports, available at: <http://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/services/child-protection/resources/index.jsp>
- Research and evaluation staff compile and publish topic-specific policy and/or research briefs to promote understanding of key performance or practice issues.

Results of the described processes and reports are used by the department and local agencies to identify strengths and needs at an individual case and systemic level. Results of review processes are discussed at monthly department section meetings attended by quality assurance, research and evaluation, and training staff, and used for planning future activities in each of those areas.

Data

A. MnCFSR Reviews

The following table includes the number of MnCFSRs conducted each year. (See table on page 9 for a list of individual agencies/counties reviewed.)

2013	2014	2015
• 13 agencies (13 counties)	• 12 agencies (17 counties and/or tribes)	• 15 agencies (16 counties and/or tribes)

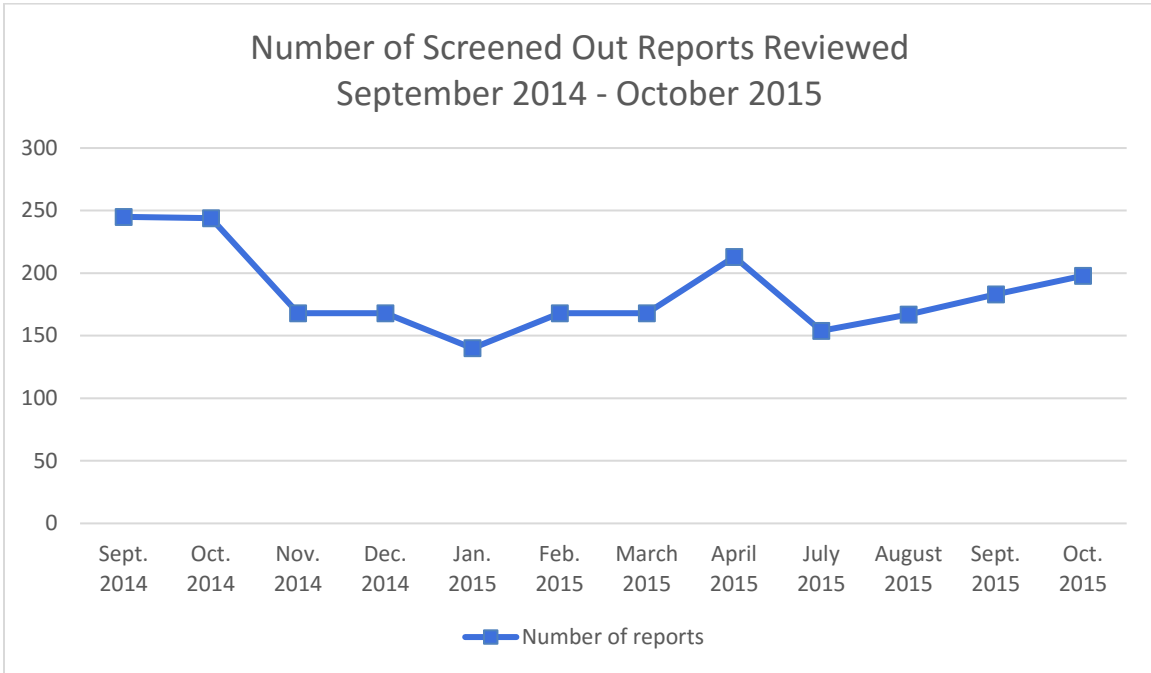
The following table includes the number of cases reviewed each year.

Case Type	2013	2014	2015
In-home	38	45	44
Placement	75	96	93
Total	113	141	137
Safety Only*	62	NA	NA

*In 2013, the department conducted a targeted review in Hennepin County that included only a review of Safety Outcomes 1 and 2.

B. Reviews of screened out reports of maltreatment

The following chart provides information on the number of screened out maltreatment reports that have been reviewed.



In the early phases of the review process, attempts were made to ensure at least one screened out report from each county was reviewed every month; however, there were months when that did not occur. Effective Jan. 1, 2016, reports from every agency (counties and American Indian Initiative tribes) are reviewed monthly.

D. Staff and Provider Training

Item 26: Initial Staff Training

How well is the staff and provider training system 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?

Staff, for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted/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.

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show:

- staff receive training pursuant to the established curriculum and time frames for the provision of initial training; and
- how well the initial training addresses basic skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties.

State Response:

Introduction to the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System (MCWTS)

- MCWTS is a comprehensive, competency-based system providing culturally responsive, family-centered training for county and tribal staff (including contracted staff); foster, adoptive and kinship providers; economic support staff; county directors, supervisors and managers; guardians ad litem and community providers. It is funded by a combination of federal Title IV-E, state and county resources.
- Trainings offered through the MCWTS incorporate the outcomes, values, principles and skills outlined in the [Minnesota Child Welfare Practice Model](#).
- Training is provided by MCWTS staff as well as contracted trainers. Contracted trainers are public and private agency professionals who are experienced, have current knowledge in their subject area, and are required to complete courses on culture and diversity and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 626.559 requires that any individual who seeks employment as a child protection worker must complete competency-based Foundation training during their first six months of employment as a child protection worker.
- The same statute further requires local social services agencies to maintain a record of training completed by each employee having responsibility for performing child protection duties.
- Minn. Session Laws 2015, Chapter 71, article 1, section 123 requires the department to establish requirements for competency-based initial training and continuing education for child protection supervisors.

- Minn. Stat. 245.4871 and Minn. Rule 9520.0912 require that children’s mental health case managers with less than 2,000 hours experience in the delivery of mental health services to children with emotional disturbance must participate in 40 hours of training approved by the department before providing case management services.

Practice

- The state provides training to county, tribal and contracted staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP through the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System.
- Child welfare Foundation training is provided at various locations throughout the state using a blended learning cohort model.
- Foundation training is also provided to BSW and MSW Title IV-E child welfare students through the State-University partnership. This allows students to complete the required training as a part of their education, and makes it possible for local agencies to hire staff who have already completed required training.
- Foundation training is updated regularly to reflect changes in federal requirements, state statutes, juvenile court rules, best practice, department initiatives, quality assurance findings and the Tribal/State Agreement.
- Course content for Foundation training is included in the following document:

[Note: Please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services for Child Welfare Foundation Training.]

- In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated an additional \$52 million to county agencies to increase child protection staffing capacity and/or increase service array and availability in the 2015-2016 biennium. Temporary adjustments were made to Foundation training in fall 2015 to increase capacity of the system to accommodate additional child protection staff. The department engaged local agency staff to assist in identifying the most appropriate modifications, while continuing to ensure the delivery of high-quality training to new workers.
- The Child Welfare Training System offers a series titled “Leadership Core.” This series is not specific to children’s services leaders; however, many local agency supervisors, managers and directors have completed the series. The course content is included in the following document:

[Note: Please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services for Leadership Core Training Agenda.]

- Children’s mental health case management training is offered three to four times per year by the department’s Children’s Mental Health Division. The training is focused on developing skills that encompass the children’s mental health case process from an outcome-based perspective; partnering with children and families to empower a child’s family; helping case managers understand the roles and responsibilities of families and community service providers; teaching collaborative methods for assessing a child’s needs and identifying resources; and providing information about advocacy and the wraparound process.

Governor’s Task Force on the Protection of Children

- The final recommendations from the Governor’s Task Force on the Protection of Children, issued on March 31, 2015, included multiple recommendations related to training of child protection workers. One of the recommendations is to develop and implement a child protection training academy. A work group was convened to assist with implementation of this recommendation and development of a framework for a training academy. While the work group has completed its work, the department continues to move forward on full implementation of this recommendation in collaboration with local agencies and the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota. Specifics of current planning are included where applicable.

Data

A. Caseworkers

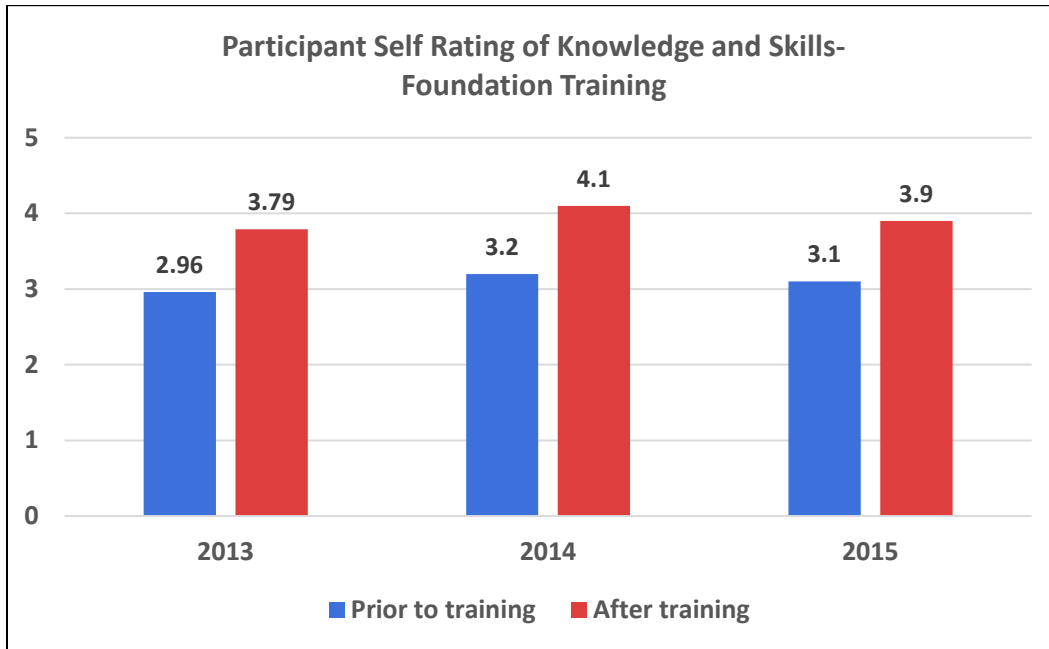
The following table identifies the number of caseworkers who participated in child welfare Foundation training in the past three years. (Participants attend a series of trainings, and may be counted more than once.)

	CY2013	CY2014	CY2015
-			
Agency caseworker participants	305	290	973
BSW student participants	NA	34	36
MSW student participants	NA	16	33

Note: Due to data being tracked by fiscal year versus calendar year prior to 2015, there is missing data for 2013 and 2014.

There is currently no mechanism for the department to track the hiring of new staff or whether newly hired staff complete Foundation training within the statutorily required time frames. The department is exploring the ability and capacity for including staff demographics and characteristics in SSIS, which would enable analysis of Minnesota’s child welfare workforce and track completion of required training.

Data is collected from staff who complete Foundation training through a training evaluation. Participants are asked to rate their level of understanding (on a scale of 1 to 5) of the knowledge and skills needed to do their job, both before and after completion of training. The following chart outlines participant responses to the evaluation questions.



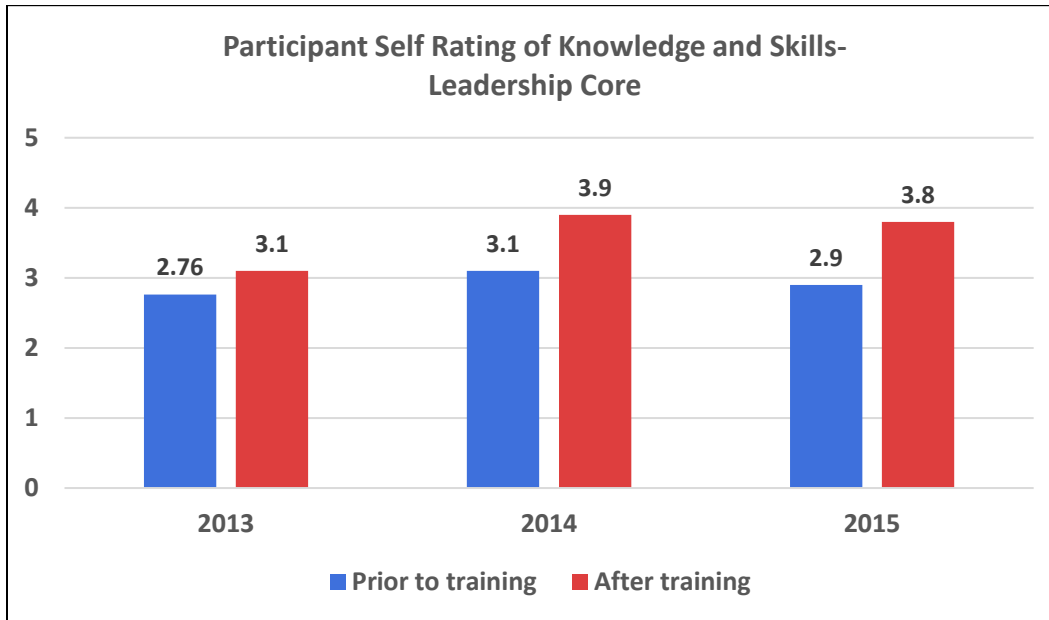
B. Supervisors

The following table identifies the number of individuals who participated in Leadership Core in the past three years. (Participants attend a series of trainings, and may be counted more than once.)

-	CY2013	CY2014	CY2015
Agency caseworker participants	383	365	268
Number of classes offered	25	27	23

Note: Due to data being tracked by fiscal year versus calendar year prior to 2015, there is missing data for 2013 and 2014.

Data is collected from staff who complete Leadership Core through a training evaluation. Participants are asked to rate their level of understanding (on a scale of 1 to 5) of the knowledge and skills needed to do their job, both before and after completion of training. The following chart outlines participant responses to the evaluation questions.



Planning for the Child Protection Training Academy includes the use of pre- and post-testing to better gauge the effectiveness of training. Additionally, the task force recommendation suggests a process for certification upon successful completion of training. Criteria for certification of new child protection workers are currently being considered and include, but are not limited to:

- Completion of training (including Web-based, classroom and simulation formats)
- Structured on-the-job training activities
- Successful demonstration of applicable competencies
- Agency verification of successful completion of all certification requirements.

These activities will result in the ability to more effectively gauge how well initial training addresses basic skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties.

Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?

Staff, for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted/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, for purposes of assessing this item, also include direct supervisors of all contracted/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.

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show:

- that staff receive training pursuant to the established annual/bi-annual hour/continuing education requirement and time frames for the provision of ongoing training; and
- how well the ongoing training addresses skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 626.5591, subd. 2, requires the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services to develop competency-based advanced training for child protection workers.
- Minn. Stat. 626.559, subd. 1, requires that all child protection workers or social services staff having responsibility for child protection duties complete 15 hours of continuing education or in-service training each year relevant to providing child protective services. The statute further requires local social services agencies to maintain a record of training completed by each employee having responsibility for performance of child protective duties.
- Minnesota Session Laws 2015, chapter 71, article 1, section 123 requires the department to establish requirements for competency-based initial training and continuing education for child protection supervisors.
- Minn. Stat. 256.487 and Minn. Rules 9520.0912, subp. 5, require a mental health case manager with 2,000 hours of supervised experience to complete at least 30 hours of training every two years. The training must be approved by the case management provider and related to the needs, characteristics and services available to clients in the caseload assigned to the case manager.

Practice

- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System develops and delivers “Child Welfare Direct Practice” training to county, tribal and contracted staff, supervisors, managers and directors across Minnesota; however, local agency workers are not required to access their required training through the Child Welfare Training System.
- Direct practice training curricula is updated regularly to reflect changes in statute, juvenile court rules, best practice guidance, department initiatives and revisions to the Tribal/State Agreement.
- Quality assurance review findings are utilized to identify training needs for local agencies, as well as the need for development of additional trainings and/or refinements to current curricula.
- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System offers a series entitled “Strengthening Child Welfare Supervision.” It is designed to equip child welfare supervisors with the skills and tools to improve outcomes for children and families, improve worker retention and job satisfaction, and become more consistent and effective as a supervisor.

Governor’s Task Force on the Protection of Children

- As mentioned earlier, the task force made various recommendations related to training of child welfare staff. Efforts are currently underway to develop a Child Protection Training Academy that will encompass ongoing training needs for child welfare workers and local agency staff.
- Work is also occurring to develop supervisor competencies, as well as design and develop supervisor training and professional development opportunities as a part of the training academy.

Data

The following table identifies the number of caseworkers who participated in child welfare Direct Practice trainings in the past three years. (Participants may attend more than one training; the same participant may be counted more than once.)

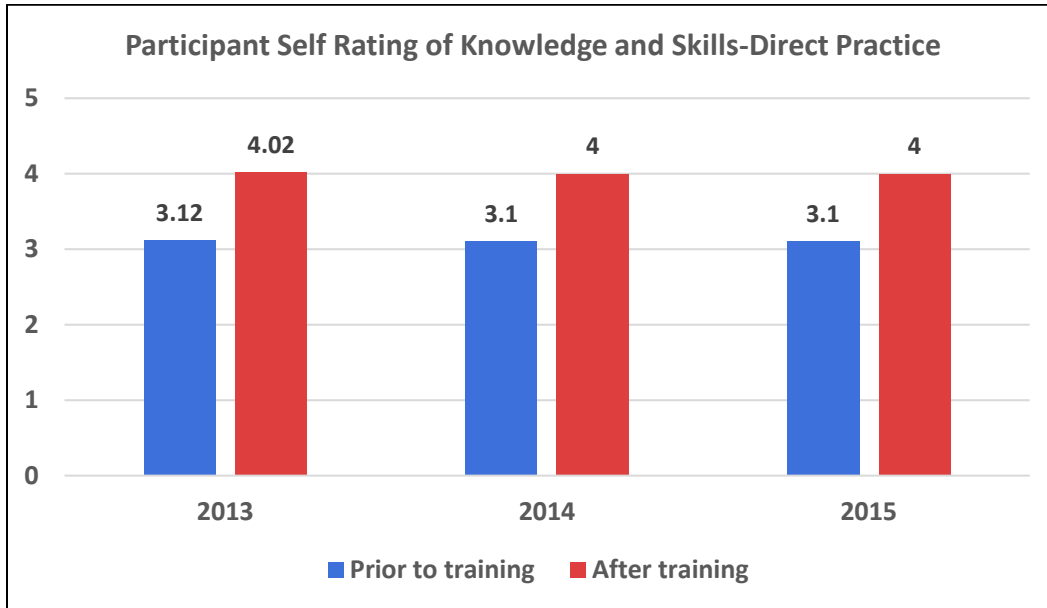
-	CY2013	CY2014	CY2015
Agency caseworker participants	820	1,291	1,899
Number of classes offered	Not Available	60	91

Note: Due to data being tracked by fiscal year versus calendar year prior to 2015, there is missing data for 2013 and 2014.

There is currently no mechanism for the department to monitor individual staff completion of the required number of continuing education hours. Enhancing the ability to monitor this information on a statewide level is being considered in development of a training academy. Completion of required training is monitored at the local agency level.

Information is collected from staff who complete Direct Practice training through a training evaluation. Participants are asked to rate their level of understanding (on a scale of 1 to 5) of

the knowledge and skills needed to do their job, both before and after completion of the training. The following chart outlines participant responses to the evaluation questions.



While it is positive that participants who completed the training identified an increase in the knowledge and skills needed to do their job, the usefulness of this data is limited. Scores are aggregated across all Direct Practice courses, and are not a true measure of increased knowledge and skills. Planning for the Child Protection Training Academy includes the use of pre- and post- testing to better gauge the effectiveness of training and professional development activities.

Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information with respect to the above-referenced current and prospective caregivers and staff of state licensed or approved facilities, that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E, that show:

- that they receive training pursuant to the established annual/bi-annual hourly/continuing education requirement and time frames for the provision of initial and ongoing training.
- how well the initial and ongoing training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Rule 2960.3070, subp. 1, requires nonrelative foster parents to complete a minimum of six hours of orientation before accepting a foster child for placement. This same orientation is required for relatives who will be licensed as a child's parent within 30 days following the initial placement.
- Minn. Rule 2960.3070, subp. 2, requires that each foster parent complete a minimum of 12 hours of training per year. The rule provides a nonexclusive list of training topic areas.
- Minn. Rules 2960.0100 and 2960.0150 include training requirements for all group residential license holders and staff, excluding those for persons with developmental disabilities or those licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health. The license holder must provide and document training.
- Minn. Stat. 245A.18 requires child foster care and other programs licensed by the department that serve a child or children under 9 years of age complete child passenger restraint systems training at orientation and then every five years. Training programs must be approved by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.
- Minn. Stat. 245A.144 requires that child foster care providers complete training on reducing the risk of Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome (SUID) and Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) prior to caring for an infant, and every five years thereafter. Training must be approved by the licensing agency.
- Minn. Stat. 245A.155 requires that child foster care providers caring for an individual who relies on medical monitoring equipment to sustain life or monitor a medical condition in respite care or foster care to receive training on operating life-sustaining equipment.

- Minn. Stat. 245A.175 requires all foster care applicants to complete two hours of children's mental health training prior to being licensed.
- Minn. Stat. 245D.09, subs. 3, 4, 4a and 5, delineate the required orientation and annual training for staff providing direct support to clients in licensed facilities that care for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Public Private Adoption Initiative (PPAI) contracts require licensed private adoption agencies to provide prospective adoptive parents of children under state guardianship 20 hours of pre-service training. Training topic areas are defined within contracts and include issues related to adopting children with special needs.

Practice

- County, tribal and private agency staff work with foster care license applicants to complete the required application, orientation and mandatory training. The local agency submits a request to the department's Licensing Division to grant foster parents a license. A license will not be issued until training has been documented as completed.
- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System offers orientation/pre-service and advanced trainings for foster and adoptive parents upon request, available to county, tribal and private agency relative and non-relative foster and adoptive parents.
- Some training that is universal to all foster homes (e.g., requirements regarding smoke free foster homes) are done through Virtual Presence Communication (VPC), recorded and sent to local agencies on a DVD for use in training foster and adoptive parents.
- Local agency staff identify training needs of local providers and request needed training. Providers are not required to access training through the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System, and regularly access required training from other sources.
- Local agencies are responsible for monitoring completion of required training and maintaining training records of foster and adoptive parents. Residential facilities are responsible for monitoring and maintaining training records of staff.
- If ongoing training requirements are not met, local agencies can choose to issue a corrective action or variance to providers. Those records are maintained at the local agency level. If a provider does not complete the required training following a corrective action, the agency submits the information to the department, which may result in suspension of a license.
- The Minnesota Child Welfare Training System is currently conducting a pilot project using a blended pre-service curriculum product by Foster Care College that incorporates both in-person and online learning for foster care providers. Following completion and evaluation of the pilot, additional planning regarding continued and/or expanded use of this curricula and model will be explored.

Commissioner's Child Foster Care Work Group

- In 2015, the commissioner of the Department of Human Services convened the Child Foster Care Work Group to address concerns in the foster care system. Experts from a wide variety of fields were appointed to the work group, which released its final report and recommendations in January 2016. Recommendations were made related to training of local agency staff, foster care applicants and licensed providers. Those recommendations are currently being reviewed for implementation.

Data

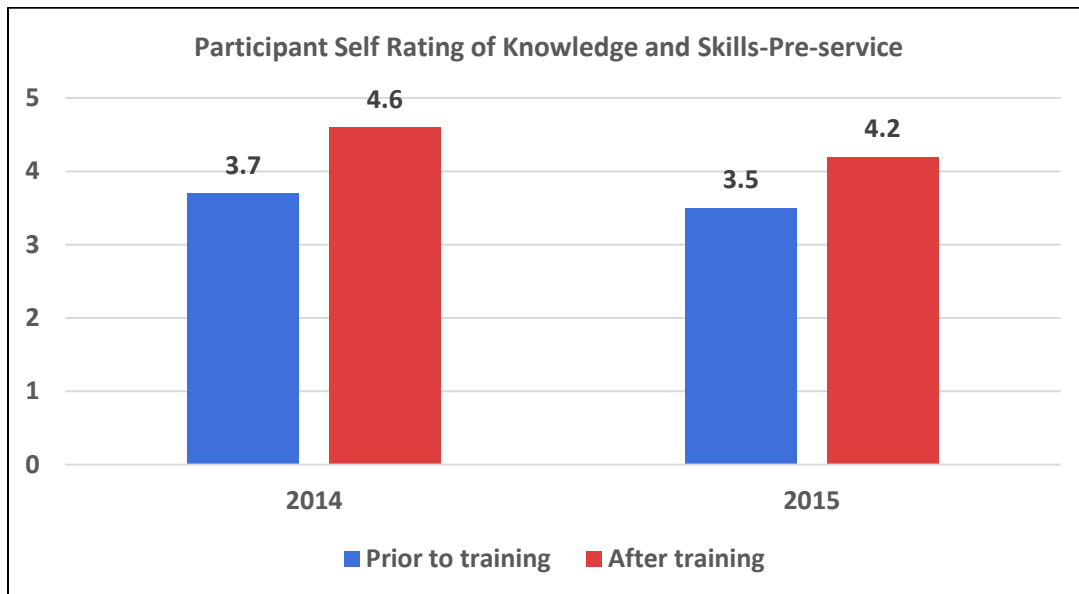
The following table identifies the number of Minnesota Child Welfare Training System foster/adoptive parent pre-service trainings and participants for the past two years. (Participants may attend more than one training; the same participant may be counted more than once.)

-	CY2014	CY2015
Foster/adoptive parent participants	930	2,956
Number of classes offered	93	229

Note: Due to data being tracked by fiscal year versus calendar year prior to 2015, there is missing data for 2014.

As indicated above, there is no mechanism for the department to monitor individual providers' completion of required pre-service training. Licensing activities happen at the local level, and local agencies maintain records of training. Additionally, providers are not required to access needed training through the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System.

Information is collected from foster and adoptive providers who complete Pre-service training through a training evaluation. Participants are asked to rate their level of understanding (on a scale of 1 to 5) of the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their duties regarding foster and adopted children. The following chart outlines participant responses to the evaluation questions.



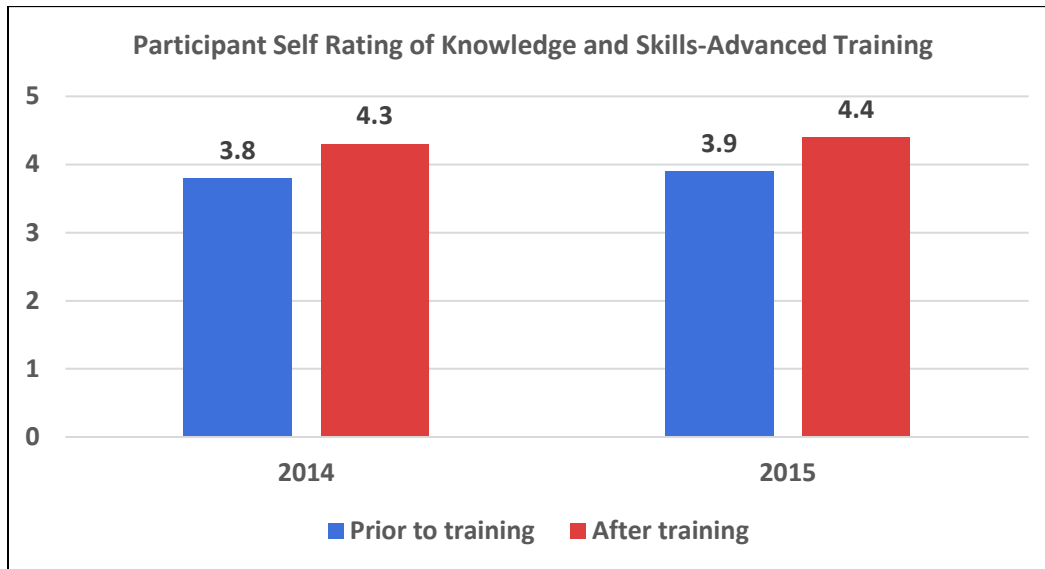
The following table identifies the number of Minnesota Child Welfare Training System foster/adoptive parent advanced trainings and participants for the past two years. (Participants may attend more than one training; the same participant may be counted more than once.)

-	CY2014	CY2015
Foster/adoptive parent participants	308	766
Number of classes offered	22	64

Note: Due to data being tracked by fiscal year versus calendar year prior to 2015, there is missing data for 2014.

A review of the department's child foster care licensing actions from July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015, indicated that no providers had denied or revoked licenses due to failure to complete required training.

Information is collected from foster and adoptive providers who complete advanced training through a training evaluation. Participants are asked to rate their level of understanding (on a scale of 1 to 5) of the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their duties regarding foster and adopted children. The following chart outlines participant responses to the evaluation questions.



E. Service Array and Resource Development

Item 29: Array of Services

How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP?

- Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs;
- Services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment;
- Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable; and
- Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show:

- The state has all the above-referenced services in each political jurisdiction covered by the CFSP;
- Any gaps in the above-referenced array of services in terms of accessibility of such services across all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP.

State Response:

Overview

Minnesota is a state supervised, county administered service delivery system, with 87 counties (81 local social service agencies) and two American Indian Initiative tribes. Local social service agencies provide and contract for services to meet the needs of children and families served within their respective jurisdiction.

The state supervised, county administered structure of service delivery offers many benefits, including the ability for local jurisdictions to develop a service array that is tailored to meet the needs of children and families served. One of the challenges is significant reliance on local tax levy dollars to fund child welfare services; local county funding covers about half of all child welfare expenditures. This can result in inequitable availability and accessibility of needed services in all areas of Minnesota, from urban to remote rural areas.

Practice

A list of specific services is included in the Data section for this item. In addition to the services included there, the department requires specific screening or other tools be completed to aid in identification of strengths, needs and appropriate services, including:

- Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tools are required in all child protection assessment and/or investigation cases, and throughout the provision of child protection case management services, as follows:
 - Safety Assessment
 - Risk Assessment/Re-assessment

- Family Strengths and Needs Assessment
- Reunification Assessment (optional).
- Children’s mental health screening for certain populations of children.
- The Minnesota Assessment of Parenting Children and Youth (MAPCY) is required for all children placed in family foster care and determines a supplemental difficulty of care amount by rating the needs of a child related to the extra care, attention and impact on a foster family.
- The department is currently piloting a trauma pre-screen tool with a small number of local agencies.
- For children and adults with any type of disability or need for long-term services and supports, a single assessment – MnCHOICES – is completed to determine individual needs and develop a support plan to meet identified needs.

The department issues various grants to support development and expansion of locally available mental health services.

- Early childhood mental health grants have been issued to many communities to create comprehensive mental health systems and services to meet the needs of young children, age birth to 5, and their families. See a [map of early childhood mental health grants](#).
- The department supports school-linked mental health services [throughout Minnesota](#) to:
 - Increase accessibility for children and youth who are uninsured or underinsured.
 - Improve clinical and functional outcomes for children and youth with a mental health diagnosis.
 - Improve identification of mental health issues for children and youth.

The AMBIT Network, University of Minnesota, partners with a variety of nonprofit, government, and community agencies to make high quality care more accessible for traumatized children and families. AMBIT provides training and support in Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). See a [map of Minnesota counties](#) that have providers trained in TF-CBT.

In addition to the services listed in the tables below, the following services are available statewide:

- Program-specific case management services.
- Child-specific recruitment. Through the Public Private Adoption Initiative (PPAI), the department contracts with five private adoption agencies to provide recruitment services for adoptive families and resources for children age 12 and over.

Data

A. Expenditure Reports

The following tables identify the number and percent of local county agencies that had expenditures for specific services in the last three years; the services may have been provided by agency staff or purchased from another agency/individual. Local agencies provide other services in addition to those included in the table. (Source: Social Services

Expenditure and Grant Reconciliation Report, Financial Operations Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services.)

Many of the listed services may also be funded through private insurance or Medicaid, which is not reflected in the tables.

Note that the tables include an indication of the purpose of each specific service; services may have multiple purposes, such as:

- **Assess:** Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs.
- **Address safety needs:** Services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment.
- **Placement prevention:** Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents, when reasonable.
- **Achieve Permanency:** Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency

2013

Children's Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Child protection investigation	100%	X	X	-	-
Family Assessment response	100%	X	X	-	-
Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) assessment	72.8%	X	X	X	-
Child welfare assessment	97.5%	X	X	X	-
Concurrent planning (CPP) assessment	33.3%	X	X	-	X
Transportation	90.1%	-	X	X	X
Housing services	38.3%	-	X	X	X
Adolescent life skills training	95.1%	X	-	-	X
Independent living skills	13.6%	X	-	-	X
Individual counseling	24.7%	X	X	X	X
Group counseling	18.5%	X	X	X	X
Family-based crisis services	49.4%	X	X	X	X
Family-based counseling services	74.1%	X	X	X	X
Family-based life management skills	65.4%	X	X	X	X
Services for concurrent permanency planning	53.1%	X	-	-	X
Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)	82.7%	X	X	X	X
PSOP services	95.1%	X	X	X	-
Respite care	87.7%	-	X	X	X

Chemical Dependency Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Rule 25 assessment	98.8%	X	-	X	-
Outpatient treatment	9.9%	-	X	X	-
Consolidated chemical dependency treatment fund (CCDTF)	98.8%	-	X	X	-

Mental Health Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Client outreach (Family Community Support Services)	35.8%	X	-	X	-
Child outpatient diagnostic assessment	63.0%	X	-	-	-
Adult outpatient diagnostic assessment	75.3%	X	-	-	-
Transportation	88.9%	X	X	X	X
Children's mental health crisis services	43.2%	X	X	X	-

Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factors

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Child mental health behavioral aide services	24.7%	X	X	X	-
Adult outpatient psychotherapy	85.2%	X	X	X	X
Child outpatient psychotherapy	67.9%	X	X	X	X
Adult outpatient medication management	66.7%	X	X	X	X
Child outpatient medication management	33.3%	X	X	X	X
Family-based services	75.3%	X	X	X	X
Child day treatment	45.7%	X	X	X	X
Child respite care	-	-	X	X	X

Developmental Disabilities Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
In-home family support services	14.8%	X	X	X	X
Respite care	74.1%	-	X	X	X

2014

Children's Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Child protection investigation	100%	X	X	-	-
Family Assessment response	100%	X	X	-	-
Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) assessment	72.8%	X	X	X	-
Child welfare assessment	100%	X	X	X	-
Concurrent planning (CPP) assessment	33.3%	X	X	-	X
Transportation	86.4%	-	X	X	X
Housing services	34.6%	-	X	X	X
Adolescent life skills training	93.8%	X	-	-	X
Independent living skills	11.1%	X	-	-	X
Individual counseling	23.5%	X	X	X	X
Group counseling	17.3%	X	X	X	X
Family-based crisis services	45.7%	X	X	X	X
Family-based counseling services	64.2%	X	X	X	X
Family-based life management skills	61.7%	X	X	X	X
Services for concurrent permanency planning	46.9%	X	-	-	X

Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factors

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)	85.2%	X	X	X	X
PSOP services	95.1%	X	X	X	-
Respite care	87.7%	-	X	X	X

Chemical Dependency Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Rule 25 assessment	97.5%	X	-	X	-
Outpatient treatment	9.9%	-	X	X	-
Consolidated chemical dependency treatment fund (CCDTF)	98.8%	-	X	X	-

Mental Health Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Client outreach (Family Community Support Services)	40.7%	X	-	X	-
Child outpatient diagnostic assessment	67.9%	X	-	-	-
Adult outpatient diagnostic assessment	74.1%	X	-	-	-
Transportation	90.1%	X	X	X	X
Children's mental health crisis services	44.4%	X	X	X	-
Child mental health behavioral aide services	22.2%	X	X	X	-
Adult outpatient psychotherapy	86.4%	X	X	X	X
Child outpatient psychotherapy	66.7%	X	X	X	X
Adult outpatient medication management	69.1%	X	X	X	X
Child outpatient medication management	28.4%	X	X	X	X
Family-based services	72.8%	X	X	X	X
Child day treatment	42.0%	X	X	X	X
Child respite care	76.5%	-	X	X	X

Developmental Disabilities Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
In-home family support services	12.3%	X	X	X	X
Respite care	65.4%	-	X	X	X

2015

Children's Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Child protection investigation	100%	X	X	-	-
Family Assessment response	100%	X	X	-	-
Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) assessment	79.0%	X	X	X	-
Child welfare assessment	97.5%	X	X	X	-
Concurrent planning (CPP) assessment	43.2%	X	X	-	X
Transportation	95.1%	-	X	X	X
Housing services	33.3%	-	X	X	X
Adolescent life skills training	93.8%	X	-	-	X
Independent living skills	11.1%	X	-	-	X
Individual counseling	27.2%	X	X	X	X
Group counseling	12.3%	X	X	X	X
Family-based crisis services	53.1%	X	X	X	X
Family-based counseling services	67.9%	X	X	X	X
Family-based life management skills	66.7%	X	X	X	X
Services for concurrent permanency planning	51.9%	X	-	-	X
Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)	81.5%	X	X	X	X
PSOP services	97.5%	X	X	X	-
Respite care	91.4%	-	X	X	X

Chemical Dependency Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Rule 25 assessment	98.8%	X	-	X	-
Outpatient treatment	6.2%	-	X	X	-
Consolidated chemical dependency treatment fund (CCDTF)	98.8%	-	X	X	-

Mental Health Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Client outreach (Family Community Support Services)	46.9%	X	-	X	-
Child outpatient diagnostic assessment	61.7%	X	-	-	-
Adult outpatient diagnostic assessment	67.9%	X	-	-	-

Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factors

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
Transportation	92.6%	X	X	X	X
Children's mental health crisis services	45.7%	X	X	X	-
Child mental health behavioral aide services	30.9%	X	X	X	-
Adult outpatient psychotherapy	82.7%	X	X	X	X
Child outpatient psychotherapy	60.5%	X	X	X	X
Adult outpatient medication management	71.6%	X	X	X	X
Child outpatient medication management	30.9%	X	X	X	X
Family-based services	62.7%	X	X	X	X
Child day treatment	25.9%	X	X	X	X
Child respite care	85.2%	-	X	X	X

Developmental Disabilities Program Services

Service	Percent of local agencies with expenditures for the service	Assess	Address Safety Needs	Placement Prevention	Achieve Permanency
In-home family support services	4.9%	X	X	X	X
Respite care	33.3%	-	X	X	X

B. MnCF SR Data

In 2013, 2014 and part of 2015, all foster parents licensed by an agency that was participating in a MnCF SR were surveyed as a routine part of the MnCF SR process. The survey included the following question specific to the availability of services:

- “Services to meet children’s needs are available in your community.”

The following table includes the number and percentage of foster parents who responded “always” or “sometimes” to the identified questions.

-	CY2013	CY2014	CY2015
Services available in community	78% (103/133)	49% (102/207)	82.9% (102/123)

Due to known limitations with the survey and resulting data, e.g., small sample size in comparison to number of licensed foster parents statewide, the department is in the process of developing a survey to be distributed statewide to all licensed foster parents on an annual basis. The results of this survey will provide more robust data for identifying and addressing foster parent needs.

Local agencies complete self assessments and department quality assurance staff conduct stakeholder interviews as a part of the MnCF SR process. Both of these sources provide information regarding the array of services available. The following were the most commonly identified gaps in service array and accessibility in MnCF SRs conducted in 2013 through 2015:

- Child and adult psychiatric services.
- Visitation resources, including lack of individuals to supervise visits and informal places to hold visits.
- Chemical dependency treatment, both outpatient and inpatient.
- Culturally specific services.
- Home-based therapy or paraprofessional providers.
- Transportation.
- Dental services for children on Medicaid.
- Housing, especially when family members have a criminal history or past eviction
- FGDM resources. Agencies that received grant money for FGDM noted it was effective in engaging family members in planning. When grant money was no longer available, or local dollars were not available to support FGDM, agencies noted an increase in placements and more difficulty in achieving permanency.

Item 30: Individualizing Services

How well is the service array and resource development system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show whether the services in item 29 are individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Services that are developmentally and/or culturally appropriate (including linguistically competent), responsive to disability and special needs, or accessed through flexible funding are examples of how the unique needs of children and families are met by the agency.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 260C.212, subd. 1, establishes case planning requirements for children in out-of-home placement. Completion of an out-of-home placement plan is required within 30 days of placement.
- Minn. Rule 9560.0228, subp. 2, outlines requirements for developing a written protective service plan within 30 days of opening a case.
- Minn. Stat. 260C.212 and Minn. Rule 9560.022 explicitly require involvement of children and families in the initial development of case plans and in ongoing evaluation of progress toward meeting case plan goals.
- Minn. Stat. 245.4881, subd. 4, establishes case planning requirements for children receiving mental health case management services. It requires involvement of children, families and others in development and implementation of a plan.
- Minn. Stat. 20C.303 (f) requires agencies to develop a personalized transition plan, as directed by a youth, for those being discharged from foster care at age 18 or older.

Practice

The department and local agencies are focused on ensuring services are developmentally and culturally appropriate and responsive to the unique needs of children and families. When cases are open for in-home services, or children are placed in foster care, caseworkers develop case plans that identify individualized goals and describe the social or other supportive services or resources required to achieve identified goals.

In addition to services described in other sections of this document, e.g., Item 29s and 31, following are examples of key programs and efforts to ensure services are available to meet the unique needs of children and families.

A. American Indian Child Welfare Initiative

The American Indian Child Welfare Initiative is a significant child welfare reform effort in Minnesota. This program is a collaboration among tribal, county and state governments with the shared goal of improving child welfare outcomes for American Indian children, and reducing the disproportionate number of American Indian children in the state's child welfare system.

Since 2008, child welfare services for American Indian children and their families living on the Leech Lake and White Earth reservations were transformed from a county-based delivery system to a tribal delivery system. Annually, more than 3,000 individuals receive child abuse prevention, family preservation, child protection, foster care, foster care licensing, children's mental health screening, reunification and customary adoption services.

In 2016, the Minnesota Legislature approved an appropriation for planning related to the expansion of the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative. Those efforts will be further reported on in future Annual Progress and Service Reports.

B. Disparities Grants

In 2016, the department awarded grants to eight tribes, counties and community agencies to reduce disparities in the state's child welfare system. Funds for the grants were appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature in the 2015 legislative session to develop, implement and evaluate activities to address disparities and disproportionality in the child welfare system by:

- Identifying and addressing structural factors that contribute to inequities in outcomes
- Identifying and implementing strategies to reduce disparities in treatment and outcomes
- Using cultural values, beliefs and practices of families, communities and tribes for case planning, service design and decision-making processes
- Using placement and reunification strategies to maintain and support relationships and connections between parents, siblings, children, kin, significant others and tribes
- Supporting families in the context of their communities and tribes to safely divert them from the child welfare system, whenever possible.

Those who received three-year grants are:

- EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services for providing culturally appropriate support and education for African American and American Indian parents involved in the child protection system through a supervised visitation model. Goals include helping families heal from trauma, intergenerational child abuse and neglect, learning and applying healthy parenting skills, addressing mental health issues that impact the parent-child relationship, and reducing the number of children who re-enter foster care due to unresolved family issues. EVOLVE has strong partnerships with Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota and Washington counties.
- Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Law Center for expanding and fully implementing its ICWA Family Advocacy Center, a multidisciplinary program for American Indian

- families impacted by the child welfare system in Minnesota; the goal is to provide comprehensive legal advocacy, social work advocacy, parent mentoring, and intensive family support to empower Indian families to overcome the underlying problems they face that put their children at risk for out-of-home placement; intensive interventions and legal advocacy are intended to help Indian families stay together, and, for those who have already been separated, find the services they need to be reunited.
- Lower Sioux Community and Southwest Health and Human Services for a collaborative approach to decrease the disproportionate number of out-of-home placements of American Indian children in the child protection system by strengthening the partnership between the tribe and county to ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act, increasing the knowledge and understanding of factors that contribute to child welfare disparities and resiliency among American Indian communities, within families and across sectors, and improving positive maternal behaviors and choices by implementing an indigenous and evidence-based family intervention program to support young and at-risk American Indian mothers and their families.
 - Minneapolis American Indian Center for implementation of the Bright Beginnings Recovery Support Project, which targets Native American women who are pregnant or who have recently delivered, who have a history of substance abuse, and previous experience with the child protection system. The goal of the project is to develop a system of support to help these women address their substance abuse problems, maintain recovery and keep their families intact.
 - Minnesota Communities Caring for Children for expanding its Parent Mentor Network, a program that matches parents with an open child protection case with a parent mentor to help them navigate the child welfare system. The primary goal is to reduce disparities experienced by children of color, particularly those who are African-American, American Indian, or children of two or more races by providing support that meets the unique needs of parents and families. The project improves child welfare outcomes by strengthening parent engagement, valuing parents' ideas and experiences, including parents' perspectives throughout the process.
 - Olmsted County Community Services for enhancing Project HOPE (Hope, Opportunity, Pride and Empowerment) and PACE (Parents and Children Excel) programs to assist families before conditions deteriorate to the point they require more intensive intervention. The project will focus on increasing access to early education services, and identifying and serving families early who run the greatest risk of negative educational outcomes.
 - Washington County Community Services for assessment of factors that affect and influence disproportionality in the Washington County child welfare delivery system, using a disproportionality diagnostic tool, the administration and scoring of the Intercultural Development Inventory to create an individual and system-focused training program to increase cultural competence in its Children's Division employees, and culturally specific services targeted to reduce placement of children of color via Family Wise High Fidelity Wraparound.

- White Earth Indian Child Welfare for hiring a cultural placement coordinator, a re-entry prevention coordinator, and a family skills worker to bring a holistic healing approach to working with Native American families. The cultural placement coordinator will oversee the foster care re-entry prevention and family skills work, and guide other program workers to prevention- and intervention-focused work while implementing Ojibwe cultural and way-of-life values and skills to the native population served.

C. Indian Child Welfare Grants

Tribal social service agencies and other organizations, located on and off tribal lands, are eligible to apply for American Indian child welfare grants. These grants support tribal child welfare programs, out-of-home placement prevention, family reunification, and legal defense services for American Indian children and families.

Examples of eligible American Indian child welfare services provided through these grants include:

- Family-based services
- Development of foster and adoptive placement resources
- Court advocacy
- Transportation services for children and parents to prevent placement or reunite family
- Teenage pregnancy prevention services
- Family and community involvement strategies to combat child abuse and neglect
- Coordinated child welfare and mental health services for families
- Innovative approaches to assist American Indian youth to establish better self-image, decrease isolation and decrease the rate of suicide.

D. Drug Courts

Drug courts represent a shift in the way courts are handling certain offenders and working with key stakeholders in the justice system. In this approach, the court works closely with prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, social workers, and other justice system partners to develop a strategy that will pressure an offender into completing a treatment program and abstaining from repeating the behaviors that brought them to court.

Drug court strategies include extended probation, frequent appearances before a judge, frequent meetings with probation officers, staggered sentencing that breaks up jail time into segments and allows the participant to "earn" reductions in jail time with good behavior, and regular alcohol and other drug testing.

Research shows that this approach has proven more effective than traditional court strategies at reducing repeat offenses. This is especially true for certain offenders, such as those having a high recidivism potential. Drug courts result in more defendants turning their lives around and becoming healthy, law-abiding citizens. Research also shows that when

these strategies are implemented correctly, they improve public safety and save taxpayer dollars.

The following courts fall under the drug court umbrella: Adult drug courts, DWI courts, family dependency treatment court, juvenile drug court, mental health court, and veterans court. There are currently 51 operational drug courts in Minnesota.

E. Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth

The Minnesota Legislature passed the Safe Harbor law in 2011, which established that minors who have experienced sexual exploitation should be treated as victims rather than criminals. The Safe Harbor law also appropriated funding to provide an array of services to youth victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.

This work is a collaborative effort among the Minnesota Department of Health, which includes a statewide director, regional navigators and funding for supportive services; the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, which provides training on the new approach and best practices for working with victims of sex trafficking; and the Minnesota Department of Human Services, which funds shelter, housing and outreach programs for sexually exploited youth.

Safe Harbor Shelter and Housing program funds are used to provide outreach, emergency shelter, transitional and supportive housing, and specialized foster care specific to the needs of youth victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. It includes on-site support services, appropriate security, assistance from survivors of sex trafficking, and collaboration with law enforcement and juvenile justice systems.

F. Healthy Transition and Homeless Prevention program

In addition to the Safe Harbor Shelter and Housing program described above, the Healthy Transition and Homeless Prevention program aims to help youth, ages 16 to 21, transition from foster care to adulthood and prevent homelessness. Nonprofit agencies provide youth with assistance in areas ranging from obtaining vital documents, locating affordable housing, completing education programs, obtaining health care coverage and other services.

Data

The following table includes MnCFSR case rating results from 2013 – 2015 for Item 13 (formerly Item 18): Child and family involvement in case planning.

	Strength	Area Needing Improvement	Not Applicable
2013	74% N= 80	26% N = 29	N = 4
2014	72% N = 00	28% N = 39	N = 3
2015	75% N = 98	25% N = 32	N = 7

F. Agency Responsiveness to the Community

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

How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show that in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and 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.

State Response:

Policy

- The Minnesota Department of Human Services develops and implements the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) according to federal regulations requiring broad involvement and consultation with a range of public and private nonprofit agencies and community-based organizations, parents and others.
- The Tribal/State Agreement outlines policies and procedures agreed to by both the tribes and the state and specifies the roles and duties of each in the implementation of child welfare services to American Indian children and families.
- Minn. Stat. 256M.01 to 256M.80, the Vulnerable Children and Adults Act, requires county agencies to have a service plan approved by the department's commissioner to receive funds. Plans must include a statement of the needs of vulnerable children and adults and strategies a county agency will pursue to achieve performance targets. The plan must be updated as needed to reflect current county policy and procedures, and requires that agencies solicit comments from the public on the contents of the plan.
- Minn. Stat. 626.558 establishes requirements for county Multi-disciplinary Child Protection Teams; describing their membership and duty to provide public/professional education, develop resources for prevention, intervention and treatment, provide case consultation, and develop outreach services for sexually exploited youth and youth who are at risk of sexual exploitation.

- Minn. Stat. 256E.20 to 256E.26, the Children’s Trust Fund for the Prevention of Child Abuse Act, provides for establishment of local Child Abuse Prevention Councils which require the membership of child abuse/neglect professionals, community stakeholders and parents.
- Minn. Stat. 256.01, subd. 15, authorizes establishment of Citizen Review Panels to examine the policies and procedures of state and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which agencies are effectively discharging child protection responsibilities. There are currently panels in Chisago, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington and Winona Counties. Each panel provides an annual report to the department, which includes system recommendations.

Practice

As a state supervised, county administered system, the department views collaboration with stakeholders as fundamental to ensuring a well-functioning system. Collaboration occurs on an ongoing basis in a variety of ways, including department participation in regularly scheduled meetings with stakeholders, as well as on an ad hoc basis. Following are examples of ongoing collaboration that result in stakeholder input into the CFSP, APSRs and other department activities.

- Department staff attend monthly Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) meetings, including Children’s Social Services and other MACSSA committee meetings. They routinely use these meetings as a means for sharing information with, and soliciting input from, county agency administrators.
- Department staff attend quarterly ICWA Advisory Council meetings to consult with tribal leaders. The council is comprised of representatives of tribal governments for those tribes with a reservation, as well as American Indian representatives from large urban areas in Minnesota. In addition, the department has Title IV-E agreements with four of the federally recognized tribes within Minnesota.
- The Children’s Justice Initiative (CJI), Minnesota’s court improvement project, is a collaboration between the department and Minnesota’s Judicial Branch. A statewide CJI Advisory Committee is co-chaired by the department’s commissioner and Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. The committee sets priorities and directs activities throughout the year for local CJI teams, which are required in every county, and assists in identification of priorities for children served by the child welfare system and courts.
- Since 2008, the Children’s Trust Fund in the department’s Child Safety and Permanency Division has worked in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota to promote and support the parent voice in the child welfare system through policy, program and practice enhancement. A Parent Leadership Team, comprised of volunteer parent consultants from across Minnesota, meets monthly with department staff to provide input into new initiatives and to update the department on regional activities.
- The department sponsors eight Youth Leadership Councils throughout the state. The councils are comprised of youth who were or are currently in foster care. In addition to participating in joint quarterly meetings with department staff to advise the department on state policies affecting children in foster care, youth council members act as mentors to other youth, provide information and input to legislators, and provide consultation to focus groups or at other department meetings.

- The department staffs a multi-disciplinary Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force whose mission is to review and assess how the Minnesota child protection and criminal justice systems handle child maltreatment cases and make recommendations for improvement.
- Information is routinely gathered from stakeholders during the MnCF SR quality assurance process. As mentioned earlier, department staff routinely conduct interviews with stakeholders as part of that process.

Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children

In September 2014, following the tragic death of a child known to the child protection system, Governor Mark Dayton established the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children to advise the governor and legislature on system and practice improvements in the child protection system at all levels of government within Minnesota. The 27-member task force included representation from various professions and disciplines, geographical parts of the state and cultural backgrounds.

During its six-month tenure, the task force reviewed Minnesota laws, rules, policies and procedures, and received testimony from representatives of numerous public and private agencies/organizations, as well as private citizens regarding Minnesota's child protection system. In March 2015, the task force issued its final report and recommendations, which included 93 recommendations organized in the following areas:

- Screening maltreatment reports
- Family Assessment (Differential Response)
- Racial equity and disparity reduction
- Training
- Oversight of practice
- Adequacy of resources
- System transparency.

Subsequent to the final report and recommendations being issued, the department convened various work groups (seven work groups to date) to focus on implementation of the recommendations. Each work group includes and/or has included representatives from a variety of public and private social service agencies, as well as parent leaders, community provider organizations, law enforcement and others. The Recommendations Implementation Work Group oversees activities and outputs of each of the other work groups. A Legislative Task Force on Child Protection was also created by the 2015 Legislature to review efforts being made to implement task force recommendations, and identify other areas within the child welfare system to be addressed by the legislature.

The recommendations and resulting activities of the Governor's Task Force continue to result in ongoing collaboration with stakeholders to identify goals and objectives for the child welfare system, which are reflected in the CFSP and APSRs.

Commissioner's Child Foster Care Work Group

As mentioned earlier, in 2015, the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services convened the Child Foster Care Work Group to address concerns in the foster care system. Experts from a wide variety of fields were appointed to the work group, which released its final report and recommendations in January 2016. Recommendations from the Foster Care Work Group are currently being reviewed for implementation.

Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

State Response:

Policy

- As required, the department coordinates services under the CFSP with services or benefits of other federal and federally assisted programs serving the same population.
- Minn. Stat. 256M.01 to 256M.80, the Vulnerable Children and Adults Act, was enacted in 2011. The Act establishes a consolidated fund, comprised of both state and federal Title XX funds. To receive funds, counties must have a service plan approved by the commissioner that includes a statement of the needs of vulnerable children and adults, and strategies a county will pursue to achieve performance targets.

Practice

Services described in Items Practices outlined in Items 29, 30 and 31 demonstrate the department's efforts to ensure services provided under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs.

Following are additional efforts of coordination:

A. Heading Home

The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness includes commissioners from 11 state agencies: Corrections, Education, Employment and Economic Development, Health, Higher Education, Human Rights, Human Services, Housing, Public Safety, Transportation and Veteran's Affairs. The attached document highlights this partnership. Heading Home has resulted in a coordinated public-private partnership to end homelessness in Minnesota.

[Note: Please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services for "Heading Home."]

B. Help Me Grow

Help Me Grow is an interagency initiative of the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and includes partnerships with all local service agencies. The program provides resources for families to understand developmental milestones and learn if there are concerns. This helps families take the lead in seeking additional support or referring their child for a comprehensive, confidential screening or evaluation at no cost. Child protection agencies are required to refer all children ages birth to 3 who are determined victims of maltreatment to Help Me Grow for a developmental assessment.

C. Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System

Since 2014, the Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services have had a data sharing agreement for the Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS). The ECLDS was created to enhance the state's ability to answer broad and meaningful questions regarding outcomes for Minnesota's young children, and building on the progress to develop robust student-level data over time that can track student outcomes in college and career.

The two major goals of ECLDS are:

- Create a linkable data repository to identify, organize and analyze early learning data.
- Create data analytic tools for early childhood research and evaluation to provide timely and relevant information and practice.

The data sharing agreement is currently being amended to allow sharing of data from the SSIS, e.g., child maltreatment and foster care data, further enhancing the ability to track student outcomes and factors that contribute to achievement of outcomes.

G. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Item 33: Standards Applied Equally

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show the state's standards are applied equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 245A.01 to 245A.22, the Human Services Licensing Act, defines standards for placement facility licensure, provisions for relatives to immediately care for related children in need of out-of-home placement, foster care licensing application procedures, due process procedures to deny a license, issue correction orders and conduct hearings.
- Minn. Rule 2960 defines licensing standards for residential facilities and foster care homes licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Mental and chemical health treatment, non-secure correctional facilities, and family foster homes (including treatment foster homes) are all covered under this chapter.
- Minn. Rules 9543.0010 to 9543.0150 promote uniform enforcement of rules governing licensure of child foster care programs, and establish minimum standards for performing licensing functions.
- Minn. Stat. 245D defines requirements for facilities and community residential settings serving persons with developmental disabilities.

Practice

- The department's Licensing Division enforces standards adopted to protect the health, safety, rights and well-being of children in programs required to be licensed.
- The department's Licensing Division directly licenses all residential child caring facilities. The Minnesota Department of Corrections licenses correctional facilities. Both departments conduct periodic onsite reviews and monitor plans for corrective action, when needed.
- Under the authority of the department, every county in Minnesota, and tribes who have a Title IV-E agreement with the state, have the responsibility to license, support and monitor foster care homes in accordance with Minn. statutes and rules. Private foster care agencies throughout the state are also authorized by the department as foster care licensing agencies. Tribes without a Title IV-E agreement with the department establish their own standards for licensing foster or adoptive homes on or near the reservations.

Local agencies are delegated responsibility by the commissioner of the department to perform the following licensing functions:

- Accept and process license applications
- Conduct inspections, studies and evaluations of programs
- Recommend approval or denial of applications for licensure
- Process variance requests
- Monitor compliance with applicable licensing rules
- Investigate allegations of license violations
- Investigate unlicensed programs
- Issue correction orders
- Recommend forfeiture orders and negative licensing actions
- Enforce orders of the commissioner
- Represent the commissioner in contested case proceedings.

Private licensing agencies are also authorized by the commissioner to perform the above functions, with the exception of investigating unlicensed programs.

- Local agencies are required to accept and process applications for licensure from anyone who wishes to apply. Upon submission of a completed application to a local agency, an applicant is contacted by the local agency licensing worker or private foster care staff to complete a home study assessment, required orientation, training required by statute, and a fingerprint-based background study. If there are no disqualifications to licensure, an applicant is recommended for licensure by the department's Licensing Division. Upon licensure, a home can receive placements of children.
- A child who needs an emergency placement may be placed with an unlicensed relative provided that:
 - The local agency completes an initial inspection of a home to ensure the health and safety of a child; whenever possible, this inspection should occur before placement, but no later than three days after a placement;
 - The relative is provided a foster care application,
 - No one in the household has a disqualifier identified as a result of a background check.

A child must be removed from an emergency relative placement if it is determined that the relative has failed to cooperate with completing the licensing process or does not meet required standards.

- Minnesota statutes and rules allow for granting variances to license requirements as follows:
 - Variances that affect the health or safety of a person in a licensed program can only be granted by the department's Licensing Division. Variances that do not affect the health or safety of persons in a licensed facility can be granted by the local agency. A document identifying which variances can be granted by a local agency, and those that can only be issued by the department can be accessed at:
http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/licensing/documents/pub/dhs16_178847.pdf

- Variances for foster care capacity can be requested orally by the licensing agency to the commissioner. If the variance is granted, the local agency is required to submit information in writing.
- If a variance is granted, a foster or adoptive home is considered fully licensed, provided a home met other licensing criteria.
- Since 2003, the department has utilized the *Commissioner's Designated Format for Completion of an Adoption and Child Foster Care Study*, which merges the foster care and adoption home studies into one format.

Data

The department's Licensing Division conducts an onsite review (referred to as a Rule 13 review) of every county licensing agency every four years to review compliance with statutes and rules. Private foster care licensing agencies are reviewed every two years. The agency/county is provided with a written Rule 13 Certification Review Report upon completion of a review. If there are areas of noncompliance, the entity is given a corrective action for each area. The entity is then required to demonstrate compliance or submit a corrective action plan to the department for approval within 30 days of receipt of the Review Report. At this time, there is not a compilation of findings for the licensing entities that have been reviewed; review findings are not aggregated at the state level.

Data regarding variances is also not available. Information regarding variances granted at the local level are maintained at the local level and not routinely tracked. However, the department's Licensing Division staff note that no correction order has been issued to a county, tribe or private foster care agency for granting a variance that should not have been granted.

If a foster care applicant or provider has been disqualified from licensure, they have the right to request a reconsideration of that determination. If the disqualification is upheld through the reconsideration process, the applicant can appeal that determination. The following table includes information regarding post-appeal hearing decisions on disqualification from licensure. (Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services, Background Studies Division)

-	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Set aside*	18	24	31
Not set aside**	27	34	44
Not set aside with variances***	33	61	48

*Individual has been determined not to pose a risk of harm and, while still disqualified, the matter is "set aside" and the individual is able to be licensed or affiliated with a license. This can be rescinded if information is received indicating that the person poses a risk of harm.

**Individual cannot be licensed.

***Individual is determined to pose a risk of harm but department staff determines there are conditions under which the person may be licensed or affiliated with a license that minimizes the risk of harm to children receiving foster care. A time-limited variance with specific conditions may be granted; the license holder is responsible for assuring compliance.

Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show the state is complying 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.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 245C, the Minnesota Department of Human Services Background Studies Act, authorizes the department's Background Studies Division to conduct background studies related to child foster and residential facilities providing care to children. This chapter includes requirements for who is required to have a background study, the process for completing a background study, defines disqualifications from licensure, etc. Specific sections of the statute are highlighted below.
- Minn. Stat. 245C.03 defines individuals required to have a background study, including: person(s) applying for a license; other individuals living in the household of a licensed program/provider; current or prospective employees or contractors of an applicant who will have direct contact with persons being served; volunteers who will have direct contact with persons being served; individuals who may have unsupervised access to children receiving services from a program; and all managerial officials.
- Minn. Stat. 245C.33 requires a background study be completed before placement of a child for adoption.
- Minn. Stat. 245C.12 and 245C.34 govern background studies conducted by the department under contract with tribal organizations in connection with tribally licensed child foster care and adoptions.
- Minn. Stat. 245C.32 establishes the NETStudy 2.0 system for conducting background studies using scanned electronic fingerprints and photographs. The statute requires that the system meet all applicable standards and policies required by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), and the Office of MN.IT Services.

Practice

- The department's, Background Studies Division conducts background studies related to child foster care and adoption for all Minnesota counties, roughly 40 private child placing agencies, and four tribal organizations. The studies include adult applicants and household members age 13 and older.

- Local licensing agencies are required to collect applicant information needed for background studies and forward the information to the department for processing, including fingerprints of an applicant on a “hard card.”
- Background studies are completed by the department within three to five days unless the time is extended by factors such as needing to contact other states, or an applicant’s fingerprints being rejected by the FBI due to poor quality (rate of rejection is about 10 percent).
- If the background study results show an offense which is a prohibition to licensure, the applicant is disqualified. Applicants can seek a set aside to their disqualification on the basis that they don’t pose a risk of harm or the information used to make the disqualification is incorrect. If the department denies an applicant’s request for a set aside, the license holder may request a variance to allow an individual with a disqualification to be affiliated with a license. Permanent bar disqualifications may not be set aside regardless of when a disqualifying offense was committed, nor may a variance be granted.
- Applicants are required to undergo a new background study if they close their child foster care license (or withdraw their application prior to being licensed) and subsequently re-apply for a child foster care license. Additionally, if the Background Studies Division receives information from MNCIS, SSIS or word of mouth, it will review to determine if a new background study needs to be completed.
- Applicants cannot be licensed to provide care for children unless they complete a fingerprint background check and have no permanent bar to licensure.
- NETStudy 2.0 began its phase-in in December 2015, and is expected to be fully operational in July 2016. This process will match scanned electronic fingerprint images with state criminal records, versus the match occurring solely on names and dates of birth. The Minnesota Court Information System will automatically notify the department of new state criminal information on any individual who was previously studied, and will link to professional health and human service licensing information in other states.

Data

The following table includes information regarding the number of background studies completed for child foster care in the past three years. (Source: Department’s Background Studies Division.)

-	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Total studies completed	6,901	6,994	7,764
Number of disqualifications	336	314	365
Number of permanent bar offenses	29	36	45

The following table includes information regarding the number of background studies requested by county and private child placing agencies in connection with adoption, and tribal organizations in connection with adoptions or tribally licensed foster care. (Source: Department’s Background Studies Division.)

-	FY 2013	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2015
	Total Studies Completed	Studies with Bar Offenses	Total Studies Completed	Studies with Bar Offenses	Total Studies Completed	Studies with Bar Offenses
Adoption	4,839	8	5,033	11	3,586	9
Tribal adoption	39	0	37	0	17	0
Tribal foster care	191	1	316	2	371	4

Findings from Minnesota’s Title IV-E audit in April 2016 indicated that in the 80 cases audited, all licensing requirements had been met for the providers with whom children were placed during the period under review (PUR). Information is included in the table below.

-	Number of Cases
Lived only in a fully licensed foster home	69
Lived only in a fully licensed facility	4
Lived in both a fully licensed home & a fully licensed facility	7
Total children	80
Safety requirements met by the child’s foster care placement	80

In three of the cases reviewed, placement settings were not in compliance *prior* to the PUR. All were tribally licensed foster homes. Two of the three homes had licenses issued prior to the PUR, and did not meet federal safety requirements. However, there were no children placed in those homes until after all licensing requirements had been met. The third home was licensed but did not complete the fingerprint background study until after a child was placed in the home. All licensing requirements were met during the PUR.

Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show the state's 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.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 260C.215 requires child-placing agencies to diligently recruit foster families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children needing foster homes.
- Minn. Stat. 259.77 requires child-placing agencies to diligently recruit adoptive families from among a child's relatives and reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom adoptive homes are needed.
- Minn. Stat. 256.01, subd. 2 (h), authorizes the commissioner to contract with a licensed child-placing agency or a Minnesota tribal social service agency to provide adoption services for children under guardianship of the commissioner whose interests would be best served by adoptive placement.
- Minn. Stat. 259.75 requires the state to maintain an adoption exchange that contains a photograph and description of each child legally freed for adoption.
- The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 requires that foster care or adoption not be delayed or denied based on race.

Practice

- Minnesota prioritizes recruitment of relatives and kin as potential foster care and permanency homes for children in need of foster or adoptive placement.
- Recruitment is primarily done by each individual agency that licenses foster and adoptive homes-counties, tribes and private foster care agencies. Recruitment at the local level more adequately addresses the racial and ethnic make-up of children and families served by each county or tribe.
- Since 1998, the department has contracted with private adoption agencies with the primary objective of increasing adoptions of children under state guardianship. The program is known as the Public/Private Adoption Initiative (PPAI). There are currently five private agencies under contract with the department to provide these services. PPAI agencies are required to recruit potential adoptive families that reflect the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of children they serve. The department monitors recruitment efforts through quarterly reports submitted by each PPAI agency.

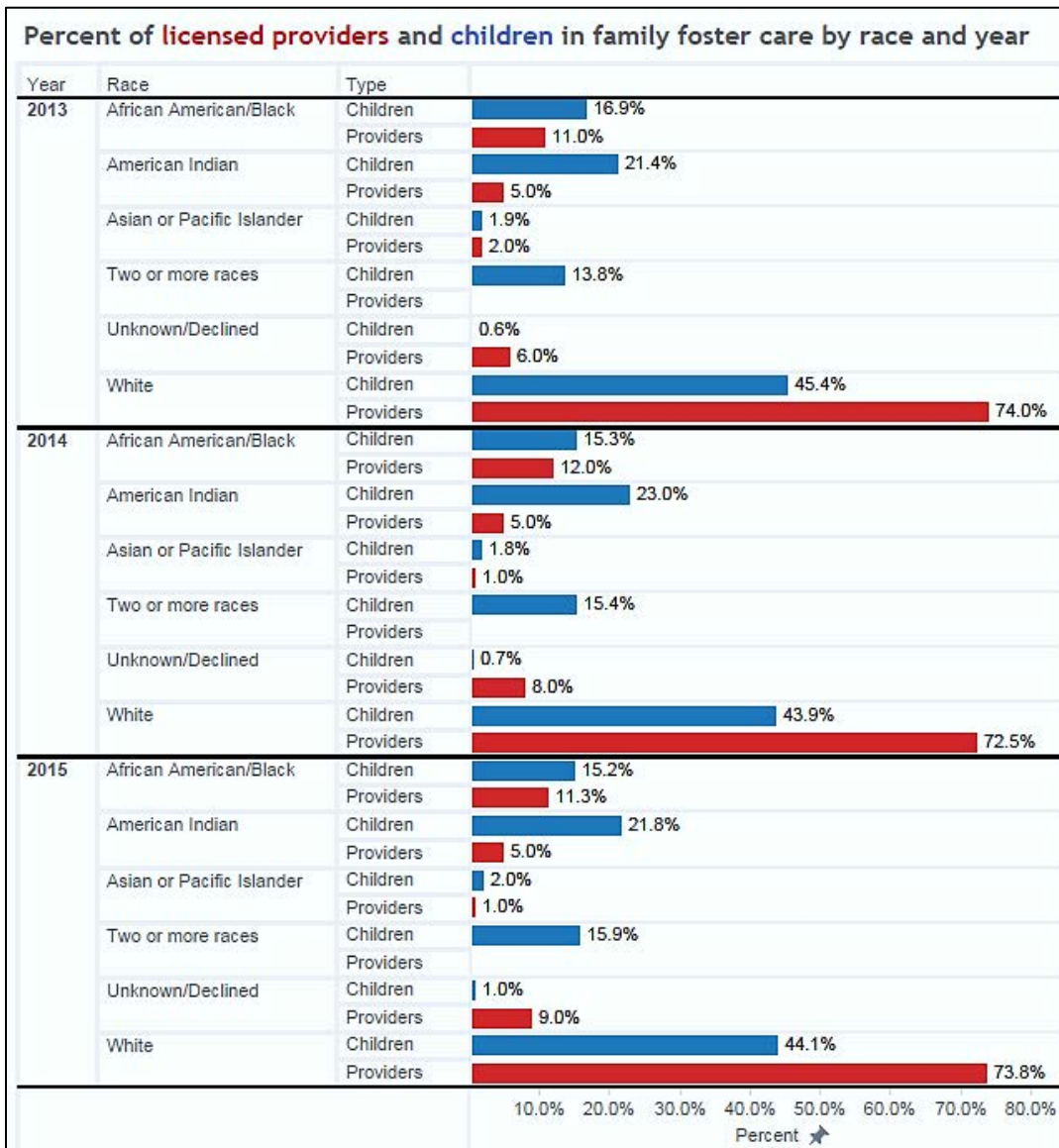
- To support recruitment of American Indian homes, the department provides a grant and co-sponsors a special parent recruitment with the First Nations Reparations Institute. In November each year, a gathering is held for American Indian children who have been adopted or are in need of homes. Recruitment materials are available at the event to encourage, promote and increase the awareness of the need for American Indian homes.
- Two tribal foster care agencies are licensed by the state to recruit resource families. Both of these agencies are in the Minneapolis/St Paul area, where the majority of American Indian children do not reside on a reservation. Tribes also recruit and license their own homes
- The department is a sponsor of the annual First Nations Powwow. Children available for adoption and children who have been adopted are invited to this day-long event, organized by American Indian tribes in Minnesota. Workshops and resource booths distribute information with a goal of being able to identify more potential foster and adoptive homes.
- The department, in collaboration with county and private agencies, also hosts the annual Celebrate Adoption: Circus of the Heart event. Families who have adopted or are interested in adoption enjoy activities while learning about the adoption process.
- The department contracts with MN ADOPT, a non-placing agency to promote and support successful adoptions for Minnesota children and families. MN ADOPT is dedicated to supporting and sustaining families who adopt Minnesota Waiting Children by providing online resources and referrals to therapeutic and crisis services, support groups, adoption information and comprehensive training opportunities. Information regarding Minnesota's Waiting Children is included on the exchange.

Commissioner's Child Foster Care Work Group

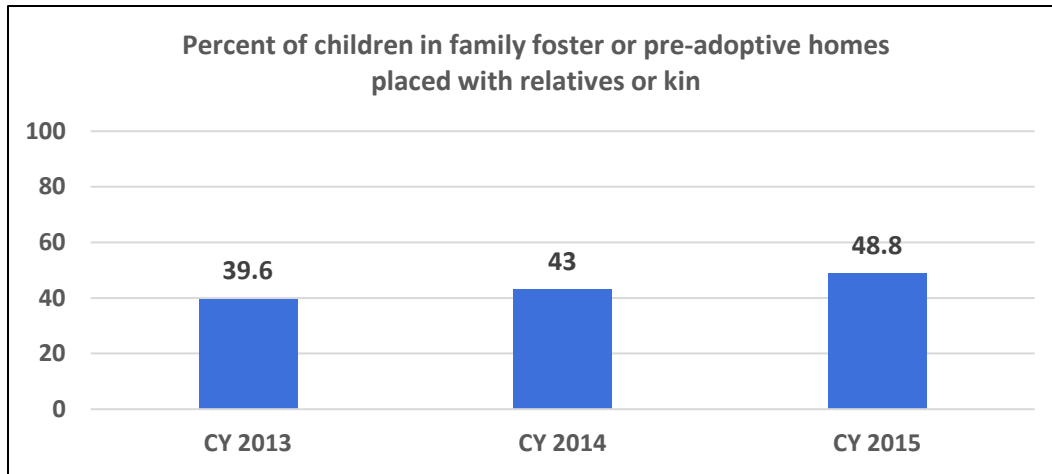
- The commissioner's Child Foster Care Work Group recommended that the state assume primary responsibility for foster care recruitment statewide. The specific recommendations are currently being reviewed for implementation.

Data

The following chart identifies the percent of children by race who had a placement in a family foster home in 2013 through 2015, in comparison to the race of licensed foster care providers.



The following chart shows, of all children who are placed in family foster care or pre-adoptive homes, the percentage placed with a relative or kin.



This data is reflective of the state's continued commitment to facilitate placement with relatives when possible, and that placements are reflective of children's ethnic and racial diversity.

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

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?

Please provide relevant quantitative/qualitative data or information that show the state's process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

Please include quantitative data that specify what percentage of all home studies received from another state to facilitate a permanent foster or adoptive care placement is completed within 60 days.

State Response:

Policy

- Minn. Stat. 257.05 requires consent of the commissioner to bring or send into the state any child for the purpose of placing a child or procuring a child's adoption.
- Minn. Stat. 257.06 requires consent from the commissioner for any person, except a parent or guardian, to take or send a child out-of-state for purposes of placing a child in foster care.
- Minn. Stat. 260.851 to 260.92 outline Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) requirements.

Practice

A. Cross-state Placements

- Local agencies submit ICPC requests to the department's ICPC Unit, and that unit forwards the request to the receiving state for completion of the home study and recommendation regarding suitability of a proposed placement.
- The department's ICPC Unit also receives requests for home studies and placements from sending states. Requests are reviewed for completeness and compliance within three days of receipt, and forwarded to the appropriate local agency that conducts a home study and makes a recommendation regarding suitability of a proposed placement. Upon receipt and review of a completed home study and recommendations from the local agency, the department's ICPC Unit approves or denies a placement and communicates the decision with the sending state.
- The department's ICPC and local agency staff are trained that a home study must be completed within 60 days. It is not uncommon for ICPC staff at the department to be given status updates by a local agency before or at 60 days; however, there is not a formal tracking mechanism for these updates.

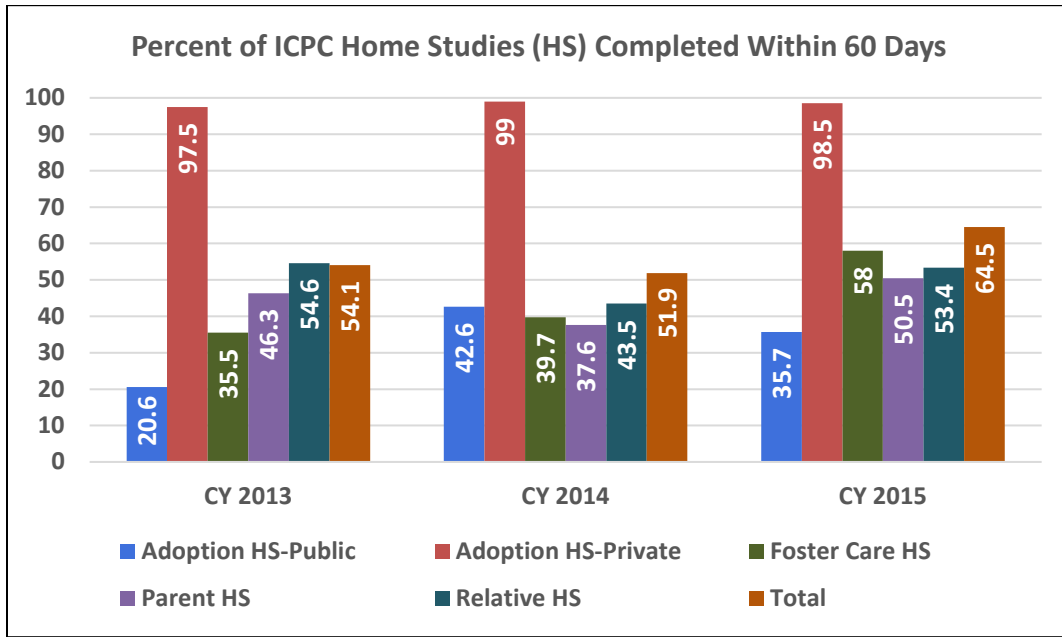
B. Cross-county Placements

- Minnesota counties make cross-county placements in addition to cross-state placements.
- When a sending county wishes to place a child in a non-relative licensed foster home licensed by and located in another county, the sending county must seek approval from the receiving county prior to making a placement.
- If a sending county wishes to place a child in a relative's home in another county, the following process is required:
 - The sending county must perform an initial inspection of a relative's home no later than three working days after a child is placed.
 - If a home is determined to be a safe option, the sending county must complete a Home Safety Checklist and an Emergency Relative Placement Foster Care Referral and send completed forms to the receiving county within 10 days of a child's placement.
 - The sending county is required to provide a relative with an emergency license application, which must be completed and provided to the receiving county or a private licensing agency within 10 days.
 - If the licensing process is not completed within 120 days of a child's placement, the sending county is determined to be unable to verify a child's safety and is required to consult on and address barriers to completing the license, or remove a child from the home.

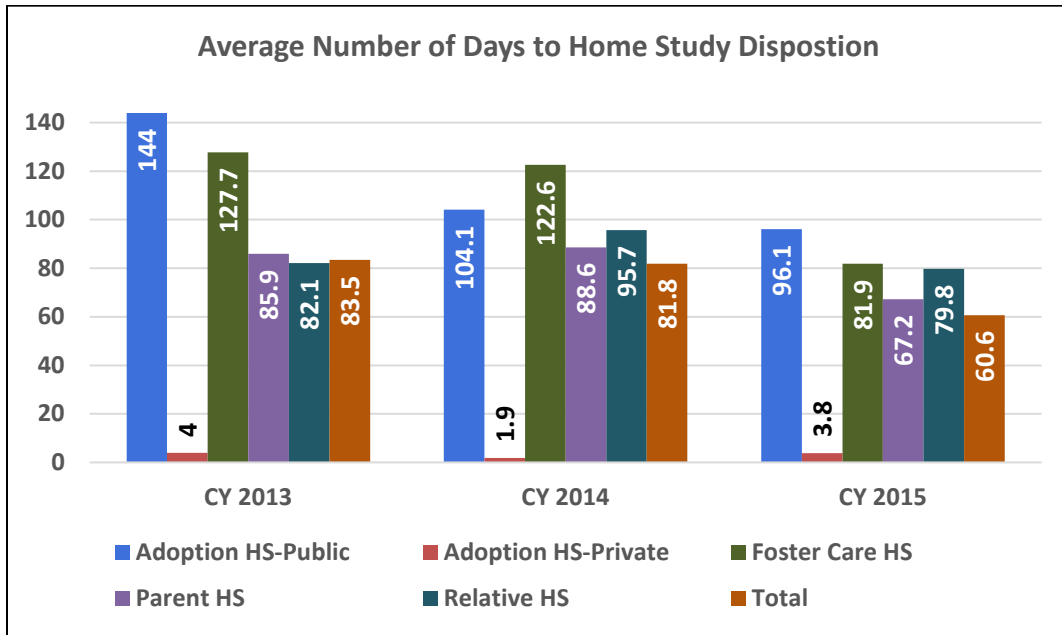
Data

There is currently no means for tracking cross-county placements.

The following chart includes information regarding the percentage of ICPC home studies completed within 60 days. (Source: Minn. ICPC Access Database.) (Note: The number of days to complete a home study is calculated from the date the ICPC request is forwarded to a county for processing, to the date that the department's ICPC Unit provides a final disposition decision.)



The following chart includes the average number of days to disposition of a home study request. (Source: Minn. ICPC Access Database.)



As indicated in the above two charts, the average number of days to home study disposition has decreased for all types of home studies over the past three years. However, completing home studies within 60 days is an ongoing challenge.

The delays in completing home studies within 60 days may be connected to the amount of time it takes for any individual county to license a foster home. License applicants must complete required orientation and training prior to a license being issued. If staff or training are not

available during the 60-day time period, licensing will be delayed. There is currently no means for tracking progress on individual cases; therefore, specific reasons for why cases extend beyond the 60-day period is not available.

The following chart includes information regarding the percentage of ICPC Regulation 7 Expedited Placement Decision home studies that were completed within 20 days. (Source: Minn. ICPC Access Database.)

