



# Child and Family Services Reviews

## Montana

## Final Report

## 2017



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

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# Final Report: Montana Child and Family Services Review

## INTRODUCTION

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

The findings for Montana are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Children and Family Services Division, and submitted to the Children's Bureau on July 25, 2017. The statewide assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
- The results of case reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home) conducted via a Traditional Review process at Billings, Kalispell, and Missoula, Montana, during the week of September 25, 2017
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
  - Attorneys for the agency
  - Assistant attorney general
  - Attorneys for children/youth
  - Attorneys for parents
  - Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
  - Child welfare agency senior manager
  - Child welfare agency administrator
  - Child welfare agency training staff
  - Child welfare agency caseworkers and supervisors
  - Continuous Quality Improvement staff
  - Foster and adoptive parents

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- Foster and adoptive parent licensing staff
- Critical incident manager
- Foster care review board
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) manager
- Information system staff
- Judges
- Parents
- Representatives from the courts and Court Improvement Program (CIP)
- Service providers
- State licensed/approved child care/facility staff
- Training staff
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency

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

### Background Information

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

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state’s substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the statewide assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity.

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

### I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

#### Montana 2017 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

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

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

#### Children's Bureau Comments on Montana Performance

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

The Protect Montana Kids Commission, created by the state's Governor, issued a report in 2016 stating that the "Montana child protection system is in a state of crisis." The report expressed significant concerns about a number of systemic issues related to an increasing number of children entering the state's foster care system. More recently, the Montana 2017 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) found that the state is not substantially achieving child safety, permanency, and child and family well-being outcomes, and identified many of the same systemic issues referenced in the Commission's report, such as high caseloads; staff turnover; insufficient caseworker and supervisor training; significant foster and adoptive parent recruitment, support, and retention challenges; and a lack of available and accessible resources—particularly with respect to substance abuse, mental health, and in-home/prevention services for children and parents. While the CFSR did identify examples of children and families who have received high-quality services and a number of promising initiatives that are underway in Montana, the review process also identified salient patterns of court-related casework practice, and an array of systemic issues that contribute to challenges in routinely achieving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families.

A key finding of the CFSR is that many children and parents do not routinely have adequate face-to-face contact with their caseworkers, particularly in foster care cases. This pattern of casework practice affects the ability of staff to assess child safety, achieve timely permanency for children, and effectively address the well-being needs of children and parents through appropriate case planning activities. In addition, maintaining adequate contact with foster parents, including relative caregivers, to assess and address their needs was also a significant pattern of concern based on the case reviews. Ensuring that foster and adoptive parents, including relative caregivers, are well-supported in their caregiver roles is critical and has significant implications for foster parent recruitment/retention and the stability of children in foster homes.

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While the review team did observe the effective use of the state's risk assessment model (Safety Assessment and Management System) and its Family Functioning Assessment tool in a number of cases reviewed, many risk/safety assessments were characterized as "incident-based" and did not assess the family circumstances and underlying factors that contributed to risk/safety concerns in the family holistically or at critical points in the case (e.g., case closure). For example, a comprehensive assessment of all the caregivers in the family, domestic violence, and/or the significance of a parent's substance abuse was not routinely completed, which had implications for addressing needs of children and families. And, while the CFSR team did observe that the educational needs of children were generally effectively met, the medical/dental and mental/behavioral health needs of children were not routinely met. Significant patterns of not contacting parents and children, as well as the quality of the risk/safety and well-being assessments, emerged as important concerns and were key factors affecting the state's performance on achieving CFSR outcomes.

On balance, both casework practice concerns and the lack of available resources and services (e.g., 3- to 6-month and longer waitlists for substance abuse/mental health services for parents) played a role in a salient pattern of challenges observed in effectively assessing and addressing the individualized needs of children and parents. In addition to the lack of sufficient services identified, a lack of housing, transportation, and other resources to support regular parent-child supervised visitation was also reported by stakeholders as a significant area of need that can delay permanency for children in foster care and achieving well-being outcomes for families and may prevent many children from exiting the foster care system when possible.

The CB is particularly concerned about the lack of in-home services available to families across the state. Montana, including its court systems, is encouraged to address the factors that have resulted in the current insufficient level of such family-based services, and their implications with respect to explaining, in part, the reason for an increasing number of children entering foster care. Based on stakeholder interviews and CB impressions, there are concerns about whether the state child welfare agency has the capacity to support staff in routinely assessing complex family dynamics and identifying circumstances when it may be possible to offer in-home services to families while, at the same time, ensuring the safety of children. Staff turnover rates, and the referenced concerns about adequate caseworker and supervisor training, may also be contributing to the state's challenges in providing high-quality in-home services based on comprehensive and ongoing holistic risk/safety assessments. Stakeholders indicated that much work is needed across the state to increase the provision of high-quality family-based child welfare services to families in need while ensuring the safety of children.

The court system and state child welfare agency are encouraged to address significant delays in achieving permanency for children in the Montana foster care system. In addition to the statewide data indicating challenges in achieving timely permanency for children in foster care, the CFSR team found specific casework and court-related practice issues of concern. Court continuances, appeals, and delays in permanency hearings and filings of termination of parental rights petitions contributed to delays in timely permanency. In addition, inappropriate permanency goals and staff questions about how to use concurrent planning effectively also contributed to delays in permanency for children.

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Montana has taken steps toward improving its statewide continuous quality improvement system. The state is encouraged to include in-home cases during ongoing case reviews and to continue to develop processes to implement and monitor programmatic and systemic initiatives based on appropriate sources of data and root-cause analysis methods. Many stakeholders noted that the state child welfare agency administration has recently started to engage its external partners in a meaningful way. The CB encourages this positive development underway to include parents, youth, and the courts.

## II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care and in-home services cases.

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

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

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

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Montana is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 82% of the 38 applicable cases reviewed.

#### ***Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance***

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

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

State policy requires that Priority One reports alleging abuse and/or neglect be initiated within 24 hours from the date and time the report is received; Priority Two reports alleging abuse and/or neglect be initiated within 72 hours from the date of the report; Priority Three reports alleging abuse and/or neglect be initiated within 10 days from the date the report is received; and Priority Four reports

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alleging abuse and/or neglect be initiated within 60 days from the date the report is received. Montana defines initiation of a report of child maltreatment as face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim.

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 82% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

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

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

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Montana is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 48% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 43% of the 40 foster care cases and 56% of the 25 in-home services cases.

#### ***Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance***

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

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 79% of the 33 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 89% of the 18 applicable foster care cases, and 67% of the 15 applicable in-home services cases.

##### **Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management**

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 48% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 43% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 56% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.



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

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

#### State Outcome Performance

Montana is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 23% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

#### Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance

##### Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 78% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

##### Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 60% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 33% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

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

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

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### State Outcome Performance

Montana is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 63% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

### *Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance*

#### Item 7. Placement With Siblings

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 81% of the 26 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

#### Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,<sup>1</sup> and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 51% of the 37 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 50% of the 16 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 66% of the 32 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 44% of the 18 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

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### Item 9. Preserving Connections

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 75% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 10. Relative Placement

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 76% of the 37 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father<sup>2</sup> or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 52% of the 31 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 55% of the 31 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 44% of the 18 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

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

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

### State Outcome Performance

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

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<sup>2</sup> For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

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The outcome was substantially achieved in 34% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 30% of the 40 foster care cases and 40% of the 25 in-home services cases.

### ***Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance***

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

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents,<sup>3</sup> and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 38% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 33% of the 40 foster care cases and 48% of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 62% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 60% of the 40 foster care cases and 64% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 41% of the 58 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 33% of the 33 applicable foster care cases and 52% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 60% of the 58 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.

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<sup>3</sup> For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

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- In 37% of the 46 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 58% of the 38 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents<sup>4</sup> and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 48% of the 62 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 49% of the 37 applicable foster care cases and 48% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 53% of the 40 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 67% of the 57 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 45% of the 42 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

### Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 52% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 48% of the 40 foster care cases and 60% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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<sup>4</sup> For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

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### Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers<sup>5</sup> of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 33% of the 57 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 28% of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 40% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 46% of the 57 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 24% of the 42 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

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

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

#### State Outcome Performance

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 84% of the 38 applicable cases reviewed.

#### Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

### Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

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

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<sup>5</sup> For Item 15, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 84% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 88% of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 67% of the 6 applicable in-home services cases.

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

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

#### **State Outcome Performance**

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 49% of the 55 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 48% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 53% of the 15 applicable in-home services cases.

#### ***Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance***

##### **Item 17. Physical Health of the Child**

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 62% of the 52 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 60% of the 40 foster care cases and 67% of the 12 applicable in-home services cases.

##### **Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child**

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 59% of the 37 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 63% of the 27 applicable foster care cases and 50% of the 10 applicable in-home services cases.

### III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

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

#### Statewide Information System

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

##### State Systemic Factor Performance

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

##### *Statewide Information System Item Performance*

##### Item 19. Statewide Information System

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the statewide information system has the capacity to readily identify the child's status, demographic characteristics, and location for children who are, or within the immediately preceding 12 months have been, in foster care. However, stakeholder interviews indicated that permanency goals for children in foster care are not routinely updated in the statewide information system and are often inaccurate.



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### Case Review System

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

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Montana is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. One of the 5 items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### Case Review System Item Performance

##### Item 20. Written Case Plan

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment. Montana agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that written case plans for children in the state's foster care system are not routinely developed jointly with parents.

##### Item 21. Periodic Reviews

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that periodic reviews are routinely occurring across the state. In Montana, the foster care review committee conducts administrative reviews and is the primary entity used by the state to meet this requirement. There was variation among stakeholders on the quality of the reviews and the degree to which key factors that affect permanency for children are meaningfully discussed.

##### Item 22. Permanency Hearings

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

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- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that the state does not have a mechanism in place to track the timeliness of permanency hearings. Stakeholders reported that permanency hearings are not routinely occurring in a timely manner across the state. Barriers to timely permanency hearings included the size of court dockets, hearing continuances, and delays in submitting the required reports.

### Item 23. Termination of Parental Rights

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and obtained from stakeholder interviews showed that termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions are not routinely filed across the state in a timely manner. Stakeholders reported that barriers to timely filing of TPRs include uncertainty about when a petition should be filed in accordance with federal requirements and a lack of uniform and consistent internal case staffing procedures to discuss appropriateness of TPR.

### Item 24. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that there is variation across the state as to whether foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care routinely receive hearing notifications. Many stakeholders said that caregivers are not routinely notified of their right to be heard in reviews or hearings held with respect to the child in their care. Stakeholders also reported that not all jurisdictions in the state have procedures in place to meet the requirement.

## Quality Assurance System

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

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### State Systemic Factor Performance

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

### *Quality Assurance System Item Performance*

#### Item 25. Quality Assurance System

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although Montana is developing its quality assurance (QA) system, it is not fully functioning statewide. A random sample of foster care cases is reviewed every 6 months and in-home cases are not reviewed. Stakeholders reported that statewide data are beginning to be used to inform programmatic initiatives, but the QA system is not able to routinely monitor the initiatives and provide data that can be used to make needed adjustments. Stakeholders said that the statewide review of foster care cases is unsustainable given current staffing resources, but a plan has been developed to increase the resources available for the case review component of the state's QA system.

### Staff and Provider Training

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

### State Systemic Factor Performance

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

### *Staff and Provider Training Item Performance*

#### Item 26. Initial Staff Training

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

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- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that there are no time frame requirements for completion of the training, although most caseworkers complete initial training within 6 months of their hire date. Many stakeholders reported that the initial training does not prepare new caseworkers to assume entry-level case management duties. Stakeholders reported that new caseworker training lacks a sufficient skill-based component. They noted that some new caseworkers are assigned cases before they complete initial training and that there are variations in the level of adequate oversight provided to caseworkers who are assigned cases before the completion of initial training. Most stakeholders reported that there is little to no communication between training and field supervision staff while new caseworkers are in training status.

### Item 27. Ongoing Staff Training

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff<sup>6</sup> that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews showed that although there are no ongoing training requirements for staff, caseworkers generally receive the training needed to perform their job duties. Some stakeholders reported that it is difficult to find the time needed to attend training that meets their ongoing professional development needs and supervisors do not routinely receive the ongoing training that is relevant to the supervision of casework practice.

### Item 28. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

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

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<sup>6</sup> "Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.

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- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that foster and adoptive parents and facility staff receive initial and ongoing training within established time frames. However, stakeholder interviews indicated the quality of the pre-service foster parent training varies significantly and overall, does not adequately prepare foster parents to fulfill their roles. Some stakeholders were concerned about the possibility of a reduction of required pre-service training hours and the effect of this decision on foster parent retention and the ability of new foster parents to provide quality care to children. Stakeholders said that both initial and ongoing training for facility staff prepares them to perform their duties.

### Service Array and Resource Development

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

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

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

#### *Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance*

##### Item 29. Array of Services

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that there were significant challenges in accessing services, particularly in rural areas of the state. There were significant gaps and waitlists for transportation, family-based prevention and in-home services, housing, youth and adult mental health and substance abuse inpatient and outpatient services, child care, and supervised visitation services to promote parent-child connections. Stakeholders reported a need for post-adoption services, independent living services, services to support reunification, and school-based social/mental health services. Stakeholders said that the difficulties in accessing mental health and substance abuse treatment and appropriate placement resources for youth resulted in placing youth out-of-state.

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### Item 30. Individualizing Services

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and gathered during interviews with stakeholders showed that although there has been improvement in some areas of the state, services are not routinely individualized and tailored to meet the needs of children and families. Stakeholders reported that services are not routinely individualized to meet the cultural needs of Native American children and families and that there is a need for more collaboration with the Tribes. Stakeholders said that high caseloads can be a barrier to ensuring services are individualized.

### Agency Responsiveness to the Community

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

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Montana is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### *Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance*

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

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment described the state's efforts to actively seek input from an array of individuals and groups in the development of CFSP goals, objectives, and annual updates. However, many of the stakeholders said that they had not participated in or were unfamiliar with any process to provide input. Additionally, the state does not have a process to solicit input from parents in the development of CFSP goals, objectives, and the annual update. As a result, perspectives of parents are not incorporated in such agency goals, objectives, and annual updates. Efforts to engage the Tribes in the CFSP goals, objectives, and annual updates are mixed.

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### Item 32. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders indicated concerns that the coordination of services across agencies is uneven and does not occur in some areas of the state, the state has recently initiated concerted efforts to establish partnerships with other agencies and organizations to coordinate services and benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. Efforts are underway to address the need for an inter-agency approach to coordinate key services to promote child safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families. Stakeholders reported that the current child welfare agency administration has recently begun establishing partnerships with agencies across the state to maximize the availability of services through joint inter-agency coordinated efforts.

### Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

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

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Montana is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. One of the four items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

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

### Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that there are no data to show how well foster and adoptive and child care institution licensing standards are equally applied across the state. Stakeholders said that the foster and adoptive home licensing process includes ongoing statewide group supervision to



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provide consistency in applying the standards. However, there is no process in place for child care institution licensing, and stakeholders were concerned that requirements have not been equally applied across the state.

### Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that there are no data to show that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background checks and that the state has a process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children. Stakeholders said that criminal background checks occur before the licensure of any foster or adoptive home, and they did not report any pattern of exceptions to meeting the federal requirement. Stakeholders reported that the state routinely follows protocols to address child safety and reporting of safety concerns for children in foster homes and child care institutions.

### Item 35. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

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

- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that there is no process in place to capture data on foster and adoptive recruitment and retention efforts across the state. The statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews indicated the state cannot determine what is working well and there is a need to focus more attention on using relevant data and information to inform diligent foster and adoptive parent recruitment strategies statewide. Stakeholders reported mixed efforts to recruit Native American foster and adoptive parents and a need for more goal-directed collaboration with the Tribes to increase the number of Native American foster family and adoptive homes.

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

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



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- Montana received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and data provided during the stakeholder interviews showed that the state is not routinely completing home study requests received from other states in a timely manner. The lack of adequate staffing was identified as a key barrier to ensuring home studies are routinely completed timely. Many stakeholders reported that the state is effective in utilizing cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. However, there are no statewide data to measure the state's performance in this area.

## Appendix A

### Summary of Montana 2017 Child and Family Services Review Performance

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

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

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

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Safety Outcome 1</b> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	82% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 1</b> Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	82% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Safety Outcome 2</b> Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	48% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 2</b> Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	79% Strength
<b>Item 3</b> Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	48% Strength

## Appendix A: Summary of Montana 2017 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Permanency Outcome 1</b> Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	23% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 4</b> Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	78% Strength
<b>Item 5</b> Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	60% Strength
<b>Item 6</b> Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	33% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Permanency Outcome 2</b> The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	63% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 7</b> Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	81% Strength
<b>Item 8</b> Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	51% Strength
<b>Item 9</b> Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	75% Strength
<b>Item 10</b> Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	76% Strength
<b>Item 11</b> Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	52% Strength

## Appendix A: Summary of Montana 2017 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Well-Being Outcome 1</b> Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	34% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 12</b> Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	38% Strength
<b>Sub-Item 12A</b> Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	62% Strength
<b>Sub-Item 12B</b> Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	41% Strength
<b>Sub-Item 12C</b> Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	58% Strength
<b>Item 13</b> Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	48% Strength
<b>Item 14</b> Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	52% Strength
<b>Item 15</b> Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	33% Strength

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

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

## Appendix A: Summary of Montana 2017 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Well-Being Outcome 3</b> Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	49% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 17</b> Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	62% Strength
<b>Item 18</b> Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength

## II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

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

### STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

## Appendix A: Summary of Montana 2017 CFSR Performance

### CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

### QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

### STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

## Appendix A: Summary of Montana 2017 CFSR Performance

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

### SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

### AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 31</b> State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 32</b> Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

## Appendix A: Summary of Montana 2017 CFSR Performance

### FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</b>	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 33</b> Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 34</b> Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
<b>Item 35</b> Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 36</b> State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

### III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators<sup>7</sup>

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

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<sup>7</sup> In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. Performance shown in this table reflects performance based on May 2017 revised syntax that is pending final verification.



## Appendix A: Summary of Montana 2017 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.5%	Lower	6.5%	5.2%–8.1%	FY14–FY15
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	9.67	Lower	5.19	3.74–7.2	14A–14B, FY14–FY15
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	42.7%	Higher	39.7%	37.2%–42.2%	14A–16B
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	45.9%	Higher	40.2%	36.7%–43.7%	16A–16B
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	31.8%	Higher	27.6%	25.0%–30.2%	16A–16B
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.1%	Lower	8.5%	6.6%–10.9%	14A–16B
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.44	Lower	4.58	4.34–4.83	16A–16B

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

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

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

## Appendix B

### Summary of CFSR Round 2 Montana 2008 Key Findings

The Children’s Bureau conducted a CFSR in Montana in 2008. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children’s Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

#### Identifying Information and Review Dates

<b>General Information</b>
<b>Children’s Bureau Region:</b> 8
<b>Date of Onsite Review:</b> August 11–15, 2008
<b>Period Under Review:</b> April 1, 2007, through August 15, 2008
<b>Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued:</b> April 3, 2009
<b>Date Program Improvement Plan Due:</b> July 1, 2009
<b>Date Program Improvement Plan Approved:</b> January 1, 2010

#### Highlights of Findings

<b>Performance Measurements</b>
A. The state met the national standards for <b>four</b> of the <b>six</b> standards.
B. The state achieved substantial conformity with <b>one</b> of the <b>seven</b> outcomes.
C. The state achieved substantial conformity with <b>six</b> of the <b>seven</b> systemic factors.

## Appendix B: Montana 2008 CFSR Key Findings

### State's Conformance With the National Standards

Data Indicator or Composite	National Standard	State's Score	Meets or Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)	94.6 or higher	95.7	Meets Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.81	Meets Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	99.7	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	121.7	Meets Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	94.6	Does Not Meet Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	103.9	Meets Standard

### State's Conformance With the Outcomes

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

## Appendix B: Montana 2008 CFSR Key Findings

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

### State's Conformance With the Systemic Factors

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

## Appendix B: Montana 2008 CFSR Key Findings

### Key Findings by Item

#### Outcomes

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

## Appendix B: Montana 2008 CFSR Key Findings

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

### Systemic Factors

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 24. Statewide Information System	Strength
Item 25. Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
Item 26. Periodic Reviews	Strength
Item 27. Permanency Hearings	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
Item 29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Strength
Item 31. Quality Assurance System	Strength
Item 32. Initial Staff Training	Strength
Item 33. Ongoing Staff Training	Strength
Item 34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
Item 35. Array of Services	Strength
Item 36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement
Item 37. Individualizing Services	Strength
Item 38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength
Item 39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
Item 40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength
Item 41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength

## Appendix B: Montana 2008 CFSR Key Findings

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