Child and Family Services Reviews

North Dakota

Final Report

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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Final Report: North Dakota Child and Family Services Review

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of North Dakota. 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 North Dakota are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the North Dakota Children and Family Services Division, and submitted to the Children's Bureau on July 15, 2016. 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 cases) conducted via a Traditional Review process at Cass, Grand Forks, and Burleigh-Morton counties, North Dakota, during the week of September 12, 2016
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
  - Attorneys representing the agency
  - Attorneys representing parents
  - Child care institution staff
  - Child welfare agency senior managers, program managers, county directors, and regional supervisors
  - Child welfare supervisors and caseworkers
  - Child welfare training partner
  - Community partners and service providers
  - Foster and adoptive parents
  - Guardians ad litem
  - Judges
  - Juvenile probation supervisors

- Licensing staff
- Parents
- Representatives from the courts and Court Improvement Project
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency

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

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

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

I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

North Dakota 2016 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

The following 1 of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity:

- Well-Being Outcome 2

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

- Statewide Information System
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Children's Bureau Comments on North Dakota Performance

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

In general, the case review identified uneven practice across review sites. Site teams saw that in some cases, the safety and risk assessments do not include all of the children in the family (when appropriate) and that safety and risk assessments are not always done at important case junctures, such as prior to case closure. Several in-home cases were closed before assessing safety or offering services. To improve safety outcomes for children, the Children's Bureau encourages North Dakota to examine its practices surrounding safety assessment and management at all critical case junctures.

The case review findings and stakeholder interviews indicate a need for the state child welfare agency and the court system to coordinate efforts to ensure timely permanency for children in North Dakota's foster care system. According to the statewide assessment, stakeholders said that the state's challenge in achieving timely adoptions is a multi-systems issue shared by the court, state's attorney offices, and child welfare agency.

The timeliness of transferring cases from the CPS assessment to the in-home stage of service delivery was another area of uneven practice observed during the review. In such cases, there were concerns about the lack of ongoing risk and safety assessments during the case transition period, and related delays in providing needed services to children and families.

In both in-home and foster care cases, case review results showed significant challenges in appropriately assessing the needs of parents, especially fathers. In addition to the challenges with appropriately assessing parents' needs, the provision of services to meet parents' needs and engaging parents in developing case plans are also areas of concern. Stakeholders and case review results indicated the need for the state to improve its practices in engaging and working with parents. Case review results suggest

that the frequency and quality of visits with children and parents affect the state's performance across safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. The state should examine its practices in this area, particularly in in-home cases.

In the vast majority of applicable cases, the educational, medical, and mental health needs of the child were assessed and services were provided to address the identified needs. Reviewers also saw strong practice in most cases with keeping siblings together in foster care and promoting family connections.

A lack of resources across the state is a cross-cutting concern, identified throughout the review. An insufficient array of appropriate services and service providers contributed to the lack of positive safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families across the three sites.

In the statewide assessment, North Dakota reported plans to develop an overarching statewide case review process. The Children's Bureau encourages the state to continue its efforts to solidify case review as a component of continuous quality improvement efforts.

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 North Dakota 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

North Dakota is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 82% of the 17 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 all investigations of child maltreatment, CPS assessments, be initiated immediately and within 24 hours upon receipt for those cases involving a serious threat or danger to the life or health of a child. All non-emergency child abuse or neglect assessments must be initiated no later than 72 hours after receipt of a report, unless the Department prescribes a different time in a particular case.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 82% of the 17 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

North Dakota is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 74% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 83% of the 40 foster care cases and 60% 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 70% of the 23 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 82% of the 11 applicable foster care cases and 58% of the 12 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 74% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 83% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 60% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.

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

North Dakota is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 40% 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).

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 88% 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 80% 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 43% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

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

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

State Outcome Performance

North Dakota is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 73% 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 86% of the 21 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,[1] and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 77% of the 30 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

[1] 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.

- In 85% of the 13 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 83% of the 24 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 76% of the 17 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

Item 9. Preserving Connections

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

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 85% of the 39 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 70% of the 33 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[2] or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 72% of the 25 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

[2] 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.

- In 79% of the 24 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 65% of the 17 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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 45% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 43% of the 40 foster care cases and 48% 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[3], 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 48% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 45% of the 40 foster care cases and 52% of the 25 in-home services cases..

[3] 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.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

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

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 71% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 78% of the 40 foster care cases and 60% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 50% of the 52 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 33% of the 27 applicable foster care cases and 68% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 69% of the 51 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 45% of the 42 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

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 73% of the 30 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[4] and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 59% of the 61 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 61% of the 36 applicable foster care cases and 56% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.

[4] 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.

- In 81% of the 43 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 87% of the 52 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 58% of the 40 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 68% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 83% of the 40 foster care cases and 44% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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[5] of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 56% of the 52 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 48% of the 27 applicable foster care cases and 64% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 71% of the 51 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 53% of the 40 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

[5] 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.

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

North Dakota is in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 98% of the 46 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 the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 16 because 98% of the 46 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 97% of the 36 applicable foster care cases and 100% of the 10 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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 78% of the 58 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 83% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 67% of the 18 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 86% of the 49 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 88% of the 40 foster care cases and 78% of the 9 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 86% of the 49 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 91% of the 33 applicable foster care cases and 75% of the 16 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

North Dakota is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that North Dakota's statewide information system can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for placement for every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months has been) in foster care.

Case Review System

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

State Systemic Factor Performance

North Dakota is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Three of the 5 items in this systemic factor were 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and obtained during interviews with stakeholder showed that written case plans are not routinely developed jointly with parents. Both sources indicated marked variation in this area of casework practice across the state and concerns about the involvement of fathers.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment.

- In the statewide assessment, North Dakota provided data to demonstrate that periodic reviews are routinely occurring across the state.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders showed that permanency hearings are routinely occurring as required across the state. Stakeholders reported that required time frames for permanency hearings are maintained routinely across the state.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment. North Dakota agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- In the statewide assessment, North Dakota provided data showing that termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions are not routinely filed across the state in a timely manner, as required. North Dakota also noted that stakeholders identified significant barriers to the timely filing of TPRs.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that North Dakota has an established notification process that provides the required notice 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.

Quality Assurance System

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

State Systemic Factor Performance

North Dakota 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment. North Dakota agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- In the statewide assessment, North Dakota reported that the state is planning to re-establish a statewide case review process and that the state has no process for overarching integration and coordination of QA activities to assess services included in the Child and Family Services Plan in a systematic manner.

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

North Dakota is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. One 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the staff and provider training system is not 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. Although new staff complete initial training and are certified within 1 year of their hire date as required, stakeholders reported that new staff are routinely assigned caseloads upon hire or shortly thereafter. Stakeholders reported that there is no formal field supervised “on the job training” component to the initial staff training or formal guidance on how case assignments are made for new staff who have not started or completed the initial training. Because of this, new staff are assigned caseloads without the necessary supervisory guidance and resources needed to carry out their case management duties.

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[6] that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- North Dakota 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 collected during stakeholder interviews indicated that although staff routinely meet ongoing training requirements, there are concerns that the training does not routinely provide staff with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their duties. Stakeholders expressed concerns that supervisors are not routinely receiving the training needed to carry out their duties, and that case managers need skills-based training. Stakeholders also said that budget, workloads, and travel constraints are significant barriers to accessing ongoing training.

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[6] "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.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during stakeholder interviews showed that initial and ongoing training requirements for foster parents, adoptive parents and licensed facility staff are routinely met and foster and adoptive parents and facility staff receive the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their duties Stakeholders suggested that the adoption component of training could be strengthened and reported that to address the needs of prospective adoptive parents, adjustments are made to the training curriculum, and when possible, include a trainer with a professional background in adoption. Stakeholders also reported that the training and monitoring processes in the state are more developed for Residential Child Care Facilities than the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities.

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

North Dakota 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.

- North Dakota 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 stakeholder interviews indicated that families and children experience significant difficulties in accessing an array of critical services and this results in delays in achieving timely

permanency for children in foster care and in addressing the safety and well-being needs of families. Many stakeholders said barriers include insufficient funding, lengthy waitlists, availability of service providers, and travel distance to certain types of services. Accessing inpatient and outpatient substance abuse, addiction, and mental health services for parents and adolescents is a significant challenge. In rural parts of the state, families wait several months before receiving needed in-home services (home visitation, case-management, and therapy). Specialized services particularly difficult to access in many areas of the state include those that address the needs of adoptive parents and their adopted children; victims of sexual abuse and sexual abuse offenders; children at risk of suicide; and children in need of therapeutic foster care and psychiatric residential placement resources. Stakeholders also noted challenges in accessing services that address independent living; prevention and early intervention; housing; domestic violence; transportation; and parent/child visitation. While traveling long distances to receive services remains a challenge, stakeholders reported that agencies are effective in coordinating transportation services when possible.

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.

- North Dakota 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 collected during stakeholder interviews showed that services are not routinely individualized to meet the needs of children and families across the state. Information in the statewide assessment described a lack of fidelity to the Wraparound Practice Model that may contribute to the lack of individualization of family case plans. Stakeholders reported that individualization of services and family plans varies significantly across the state. While child and family team meetings promote individualized case plans, stakeholders noted this practice does not occur statewide. Stakeholders were concerned that youth are not routinely placed in foster care settings that meet their individualized needs. Stakeholders were mixed as to whether services are routinely individualized to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of families, and noted the increasing diversity of non-English-speaking families in North Dakota. Stakeholders said there is a significant need in some parts of the state for non-English-speaking service providers and translation services, including the translation of written documents. They also noted that flexible funds can be applied to individualized safety and permanency needs for children and families, but that the need exceeds the availability of such resources.

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

North Dakota is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One 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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state seeks input from a variety of groups to develop CFSP goals and objectives, and to prepare the annual updates. However, stakeholders reported that parents, foster and adoptive parents, and county child welfare field staff are not routinely engaged in the process. Stakeholders also said that state and Tribal representatives need to discuss whether the current format of joint meetings provides sufficient opportunities for Tribal input.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- In the statewide assessment, North Dakota provided numerous examples to illustrate how the state coordinates services and/or benefits with other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. The state described coordination and partnership activities with Head Start; early childhood and childcare assistance programs; Child Support; federally funded programs within the North Dakota Department of Human Services/Health (e.g., TANF, Food Stamps, Maternal and Child Health, Behavioral Health); county federally funded refugee resettlement programs; Child Advocacy Centers; Tribal social service agencies; Child Protection Teams; Department of Corrections; Division of Developmental Disabilities; and county-based housing programs.

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

North Dakota is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Two of the four items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

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

Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

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

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during stakeholder interviews showed that state standards are equally applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds. Stakeholders reported that reviews of foster family homes and child care institutions have not shown a pattern of unequal application of licensing standards 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.

- North Dakota 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 stakeholder interviews showed that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances. Criminal background checks occur before the licensure of any foster or adoptive home. Information in the statewide assessment and supported by stakeholders indicated that state protocols to address child safety and report safety concerns for children in foster homes and child care institutions are routinely followed.

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.

- North Dakota 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 indicated that there is not an efficient and reliable process to report on the racial and ethnic diversity of licensed foster homes and approved adoptive homes and that the state's process for collecting this information is not able to inform diligent recruitment activities across the state. Stakeholders reported that staff resources for recruitment are limited in some areas of the state. Stakeholders said that the state's diligent recruitment plan prioritizes the need for more Native American foster and adoptive homes and the state is partnering with Tribes and private and public agencies, as well as accessing community resources, to increase the diversity of the pool of foster and adoptive parents. Stakeholders felt that these diligent recruitment and retention strategies were promising, although they also believed more work was needed to fully develop this area of foster and adoptive home recruitment statewide.

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.

- North Dakota received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment. North Dakota agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information in the statewide assessment indicated that home study requests received from other states are not routinely completed within the 60-day requirement. Although activities described in the statewide assessment suggest that cross-jurisdictional resources are being used effectively, the state acknowledges the need to improve its tracking systems to monitor the timeliness of identifying children for whom cross-jurisdictional resources are needed.

Appendix A
Summary of North Dakota 2016 Child and Family Services Review Performance

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

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

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

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1 Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	82% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 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
Safety Outcome 2 Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	74% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	70% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	74% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of North Dakota 2016 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	40% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	88% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	43% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2 The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	73% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	86% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	77% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	70% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	72% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of North Dakota 2016 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1 Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	45% Substantially achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	48% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	71% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	73% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	68% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	56% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	In Substantial Conformity	98% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Strength	98% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	78% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	86% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	86% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

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

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment	In Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of North Dakota 2016 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

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

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

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

III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators[7]

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

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.1%	Lower	10.8%	9.2%–12.7%	FY14–15
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	6.21	4.17–9.26	15A–15B, FY15

[7] 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. The syntax revision is still underway, so performance shown in this table is based on the 2015 Federal Register syntax.

Appendix A: Summary of North Dakota 2016 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	Higher	37.9%	34.9%–40.9%	13A–15B
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	43.6%	Higher	37.0%	32.4%–41.9%	15A–15B
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	24.1%	20.3%–28.2%	15A–15B
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	8.3%	6%–11.3%	13A–15B
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	5.46	5.1–5.85	15A–15B

*** 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 Key Findings 2008

The Children's Bureau conducted a CFSR in North Dakota 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

General Information
Children's Bureau Region: 8
Date of Onsite Review: April 21–25, 2008
Period Under Review: April 1, 2007, through April 25, 2008
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: January 30, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: May 4, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: July 1, 2010

Highlights of Findings

Performance Measurements
A. The State met the national standards for **three** of the **six** standards.
B. The State achieved substantial conformity with **one** of the **seven** outcomes.
C. The State achieved substantial conformity with **five** of the **seven** systemic factors.

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	97.4	Meets Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	98.62	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	106.1	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	113.4	Meets Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	132.8	Meets Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	93.3	Does Not Meet Standard

State's Conformance With the Outcomes

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

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	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Achieved Substantial Conformity

Key Findings by Item

Outcomes

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	Strength
Item 2. Repeat Maltreatment	Strength
Item 3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care	Strength
Item 4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
Item 5. Foster Care Re-entries	Area Needing Improvement
Item 6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 7. Permanency Goal for Child	Strength
Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives	Strength
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	Area Needing Improvement
Item 13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 14. Preserving Connections	Strength
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 Parents	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: North Dakota 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or 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
Item 21. Educational Needs of the Child	Strength
Item 22. Physical Health of the Child	Strength
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	Strength
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	Area Needing Improvement
Item 38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength

Appendix B: North Dakota 2008 CFSR Key Findings

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