

## Webinar Series

### *An Overview of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)*

Date

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Philip Breitenbucher: Okay, welcome, everyone. I see folks are still joining our webinar today, so we're gonna get started here in just a few moments and let folks get on the line. So, but we do wanna thank you all for being here with us today and we will get started in just about a minute. Alright. Good morning, good afternoon everyone. Welcome to today's first webinar in the AFCARS Final Rule series, brought to you on behalf of the Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Today's webinar, entitled An Overview of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System 2.0, will focus on the overview of the AFCARS 202 Final Rule, published in May 2020. Today's webinar will include a brief description of the changes from the current AFCARS reporting to the new reporting based on that final rule. It will also introduce a new compliance and penalty section on that final rule. And, this webinar will be co-presented with the Division of Performance Measurement and Improvement and the Division of Policy. I'd like now to introduce our speakers to you. First, we have Jennifer Haight, who is the Director of the Division of Performance Measurement and Improvement. We have Rebecca Odor, who is the AFCAR's administrator in the Division of Performance Measurement and Improvement. We also have with us - if we could advance the slide - we also have with us today Jana Bertucci, she's a Program Specialist in the Division of Policy. And, we also have Tresa Young, a Program Analyst in the Division of State Systems. And, I will be your webinar facilitator today and my name is Philip Breitenbucher. Next slide. So, today, we would like to encourage some participation from you all and there will be periodic polling questions that we'd like for you to respond to. You're also welcome to use the chat function throughout the webinar today. You're also welcome to submit questions using the question and answer feature down at the bottom of your screen. And then, you also have a raised hand feature that

you can go ahead and raise your hand and we can open up your phone line at that point for you to be able to ask a question verbally if you'd like to do that. You're also encouraged and welcome to submit additional questions at [AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov). Alright, next slide, please.

Rebecca Odor: So, thanks, Phil. I want to welcome everyone to our webinar here. This is Rebecca Odor and I am the AFCARS Administrator at the Children's Bureau and for those of you who I haven't met yet - which is most of you, because I'm new to the position - I look forward to working more closely with you all in this position, I've only been in this position since the new year. So, I'm gonna start out by just talking about this webinar itself and what it's meant to be and what it's not meant to be. This webinar is the first in a series and while we expect to address some of your questions, we know that more questions are gonna surface. You guys are gonna have more questions, this is not gonna answer everything. We're working to fully operationalize what these changes are from AFCARS 2.1 and developing guidance for the states and tribes. But, we also want you all to know, I mean, we understand this is challenging, this is brand new, there's lots of changes from the old AFCARS to the new AFCARS and we know there are concerns, we want you to let us know what your concerns are, what your questions are. There's things like changing definitions, there's difficulty in collection. So, we're becoming extremely aware of that and you all let us know, because what we're really trying to do is be clear and deliberate in the technical assistance that we're offering to you all and what resources are most helpful. And, we need to do research on our end too, just to make sure we're fully operationalizing all the definitions and such. So, this webinar won't be everything for everybody, but please submit questions as they come up to the AFCARS mailbox and that is [AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov). Our next webinar is tentatively scheduled for August 31st, so you can mark your calendar now. We will house these webinars, we're recording them now, and they'll be on the CB website as soon as we get that page built. And, we will email you all a direct link, so when that recording is posted, you all who have registered for this will receive that direct link and an associated handout hopefully will come in a follow up email from this. So, here is a presentation, what we're expecting to cover today. So, I'm looking at the background to AFCARS, we're gonna talk about the reporting population, compliance and penalties, the out-of-home data file and adoption and guardianship assistance data file. We're gonna talk about CCWIS and your resources and next steps. So, I'm going to turn this over to Jana so she can walk us through - she is with the Division of Policy and - well, actually I'll do a poll first. I want to know from you all - there's 336 attendees, so we're gonna start this poll - how familiar are you with the new AFCARS 2020 final rule? We want to know are you all very, somewhat, not very or you're just not sure if you know about the rule or you don't know about the rule. So, if you all can let us know where you stand with this AFCARS 2020 rule, it'll help as I'm designing my comments and such. So, the polls open now, you should be able to see it on your screen, there should be a little click for very, one for somewhat, one for not very and one for I'm not sure. Alright. We have folks working in the background on the poll, so, how are we doing? Should we - do

we have folks in the poll, should we close it out?

Rush Bishop: Yup, I will give one more second, just in case and I will be closing it now.

Rebecca Odor: So, we have some experts in here, and but it looks like most of us are falling in that somewhat and not very familiar with this AFCARS rule. Completely understandable, it was just released May 12th, we get that. Although, you had the little preview in the NPRM, which Jana will talk about more soon. And those of you that are not sure, I get it, again, this is new to me in this position also. So, I've closed out that poll and I'm gonna turn it over to Jana in our Division of Policy. So, Jana.

Jana Bertucci: Thank you. I am with the Division of Policy and I will review briefly the background on AFCARS and a short history of the regulation development. Next slide, please. On this slide and the next slide is just a short timeline, an overview of events and it were. The AFCARS regulations were first published in 1993 in response to the requirements of Section 479 of the Social Security Act, which mandates adoption and foster care data collection. In December of 2016, CB, the Children's Bureau issued a final rule revising AFCARS. This rule increased the number of data points that must be reported from the AFCARS 1.0 as we call it, or the 1993 AFCARS. The president ordered, issued executive order 13777 in 2017 and under this executive order, the HHS Regulatory Reform Task Force was created and they identified the 2016 final rule as one in which the reporting burden may impose costs that exceed benefits. In response to the task force in the executive order, CB issued the 2018 Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking - ANPRM for short - that solicited comments on the 2016 final rule's data elements and the cost and burden associated with implementing the 2016 final rule. And as we analyzed the comments that we received in response to the ANPRM, CB also worked with HHS subject matter experts to identify elements that were not needed to meet specific Title IV B or IV-E statutory requirements and program monitoring, congressional reporting or budgeting. Next slide, please. So, in response to the 2018 comments, we issued the 2019 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which proposed a streamlined set of data points for the out-of-home care data file and made conforming changes in just a few other sections. CB analyzed the comments that we received in response to the proposed rule and overall the comments did not provide new information from that submitted in 2018. So, substantive changes to the proposal were not made for the final rule and then the final rule was published last month, as Rebecca said. So, listed on this slide in the third bullet are the other sections of the AFCARS regulation and they're the areas where we did not make substantive changes to the final rule. And, the online edition of the Code of Federal Regulations will be updated sometimes after July 13th and that will house, that will be where you can see all the AFCARS requirements in full. And now, I will turn the presentation back over to Rebecca. Thank you.

Rebecca Odor: Thanks, Jana. Let me share the visual timeline where of what we are showing

in AFCARS. And, I'm going to, let's see, get my little, so I can point to things. So, this is a timeline that I put together just so we could have a visual of what this means where are talking about the old AFCARS, which is what you guys are currently doing now which we sometimes call for shorthand AFCARS 1.0 or the 1993 AFCARS. And, then we are talking about the new AFCARS, which we call AFCARS 2.1, since the December, we just call it AFCARS 2.1. So, the purple numbers or the purple colors really are related to the new AFCARS, AFCARS 2.1 and the blue coloring here on the slide is related to the old AFCARS. So, you can see May is when the new AFCARS came out - so our timeline at the bottom, we are now collecting for 20B and you have a submission period for 20B of the current AFCARS, the old AFCARS, November 14th, 2020. So, you'll be during this time collecting the old AFCARS and you're spending time planning, coding, training, which is what you're doing right now, for the AFCARS 2.1. And here, we get into the sticky part, here, where October 1st of 2022 is when you're gonna actually start collecting for the new AFCARS. You will still be, this is when you'll stop collecting for the old, but the submission period doesn't start, I mean doesn't end until November 14th, 2022 for the old AFCARS and that's the 22B reporting submission period. So, then, your first full submission period will be 23A in the new AFCARS and you will submit that on May 15th, 2023 and then you can see the next submission periods 23B, 24A, 24B and then we'll just keep going on from there. So, hopefully that will help give you the visual of what we need when we're thinking about the next AFCARS. So, reporting population is what this slide is talking about. So, this is the out-of-home care reporting population and so, this essentially hasn't changed here is what we're talking about. A youth of any age who is in foster care under the placement and care responsibility of the agency for more than 24 hours, this is who is in the population. If they're receiving Title IV-E foster care payments under Title IV-E agreement or a youth who has run away at the time the Title IV-E agency becomes responsible for the child. That's the out-of-home care reporting population. Once the child enters the reporting population, he or she remains in that population until the agency's responsibility for the child ends or the child's foster care maintenance payment ends. And then, the second population is the adoption and guardianship assistance reporting population. This includes the youth whose adoption or guardianship was finalized during the report period and adoptive parents or guardians have a Title IV-E adoption or guardianship assistance agreement. I'm gonna go on and talk about the file submission now, just a little bit about it. I also want to encourage you while this, while I'm presenting to go ahead and put any questions that you may have in the chat box, we have multiple people who are monitoring the chat box so they can sometimes answer quick questions or they're going to compile them so that we can look at them later for your technical assistance needs. You're also free to send an email to AFCARS mailbox, [AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov). So, for the final submission, there's an overall change here in what is reported. We're no longer just reporting on the current removal episode and placements. You will report on the current and all prior episodes of removals and the current and all prior living arrangements for the youth. For youth that had removal episodes before October 1st, 2022, you need to report only three elements.

The date of removal, the date of exit and the exit reason, but you'll need to report the full information for all youth who have a new removal after October 1st, 2022 and who are in foster care on October 1st, 2022. So, this is a new conceptualization. The file submission will change from a flat ASCII file to an xml file due to this change. Compliance and penalties. The final rule holds the agencies financially responsible for submitting quality data. So, the submitted files will be checked for compliance based on standards and quality of the data files. The data file standards will be based on timely submission of the file and proper format of the file. The data quality standards will be based on a threshold error rate for applicable records using missing data, invalid data, internally inconsistent data and tardy transactions. It will also be free of cross-file errors, ones that exceed the acceptable thresholds. We in the Children's Bureau have started the process to develop error specifications for these data quality standards. We will make a determination of compliance for each of the data files for each submission period. We'll exempt records from a compliance determination for the child whose 18th birthday occurred in a prior report period. This applies to both data files. But, for the adoption and guardianship assistance data file, the child will be exempt if he or she is in a Title IV-E guardianship. If the submitted file is determined to be noncompliant, the agency will have six months to correct the records and submit a corrected data file. Here, if an agency is still determined to be noncompliant after six months, CB will apply the penalties required in the statute. For the A files, which are due on May 15th, CB will assess the penalty based on the agency's claims for the third quarter of the federal fiscal year. For the B files that are due on November 14th, CB will assess the penalty based on the agency's claims for the first quarter. The penalty is 1/6th of 1% of the agency's Title IV-E foster care administrative and training funds. If your submissions continue to be out of compliance, the penalty increases to 1/4th of 1%. CB will offset the agency's Title IV-E foster care grant award in the amount of the penalty from your agency's claims. So, now I'm gonna talk about the out-of-home care data file and many of these elements that we're gonna go over, many of them are the same. And so, I didn't spend time putting those into this presentation. This presentation is going to be where there are changes, where there are revisions, where elements were removed or where elements were added from the old AFCARS. So, here's a big chunk that was added for the Indian Child Welfare Act data elements - and there are six of them here - and these are to be collected by state category agencies only. Tribes are to submit for the AFCARS data also, but not for these ICWA elements, this is for the state Title IV-E agencies only. So, these are six that have been added - the reason to know that a child is and "Indian Child"; the child's tribal membership in a federally recognized tribe; and then what that, which recognized, federally recognized tribes that might be; whether the ICWA applies is the (b)(5)(i) there; and the date of the application of ICWA; and whether notification was sent to the Indian child's tribe. Another place where we have added abandoned and declined options to the child's race and ethnicity, and replaced the option of unable to determine with unknown. So, those are smaller changes to the child race and ethnicity, whereas most stay the same there. Also, in the child

information here for the health assessment and child diagnosed conditions an element was added on whether the child had a health assessment. And then, the revised options for whether the child has a health, behavioral, or mental health condition so you can see the four answers there are different than the yes/no that used to be part of the question. Now it's child has a condition, the exam was conducted and none of the conditions apply, the exam conducted but the results haven't been received or there's been no exam. And so, here's a revised list of the diagnosed conditions. Very similar to the old list. Another group that has been added to ASCARS 2.1 is the schooling and education level and special education. These three elements are completely new and are not currently reported. So, we're asking whether the child is enrolled in elementary, secondary, post-secondary education or college or if the child is not school-age or not enrolled. The other question is on the level of education. You can see kindergarten to 12th grade, GED, post-secondary education, college or not school-age. And, a question about special education if the child has an individualized education program or an individualized family service program all added. Here are three questions - whether the child is pregnant or parenting - these are completely new and are not currently reported. Wanting to report whether the child is pregnant; whether the child ever bore or fathered a child; and whether the child and his or her child or children are placed together. Now to move onto prior adoption or guardianship. And so, here for prior adoption, we revised the element that was child's age at legalization is now prior adoption finalization date. You used to collect whether the child was adopted less than two years old, two to five years old and now you're just collecting what was the prior adoption date. We're adding whether there was a prior intercountry adoption and whether the child experienced prior legal guardianship and what date that is or was. In the financial and medical assistance, we revised the list of sources. So, you can see those all here, those are all in the final rule itself, you'll see it in the CSR when that's available after July 13th - all of these are there. As far as the Title IV-E foster care during that report period, we used to ask for the dollar amount of the monthly foster care payment and that has been removed. Siblings is new also for AFCARS 2.1. So, these are three elements, also - the total number of siblings in foster care; the number of siblings in foster care; and the number of siblings who are in the same living arrangement. Now, collecting information on the parent or the guardian information - so, the year of birth is the same, except the addition of abandoned if the parent is unknown and then added whether the parent is a member of an Indian tribe. The termination of parental rights is different from the current AFCARS in certain ways. So, we added this termination and modification of parental rights as to whether it's voluntary, involuntary or not applicable. And then, we added the date the termination, the date of the termination or modification of parental rights petition. So, this is something that's completely new to this part of AFCARS in looking at the petition itself and having that - which, it can be left blank if not applicable, but this is an added data element, with the option of deceased, as well. We removed the current caretaker, family structure. Now, I'm gonna go onto - yes?

Jennifer M. Haight: Hi, Becky, this is Jennifer, I'm sorry. There are a couple of, there's some hands raised - yeah, little technical difficulty, my apologize, my apologies. But, there are some people, there are some questions in the chat, some of which we can address now and some later, but there are two people with hands raised, so I thought maybe we could take a minute to see if those with hands raised had questions they wanted to ask if they relate to things you just reviewed.

Rebecca Odor: Let us, so - Rush and Phil, do you see the hand raise and are you able to open?

Rush Bishop: Yes. This is Rush. Yup, I, if you just want to call on someone in the attendee tab and then I can allow them to speak up.

Philip Breitenbucher: Okay, Cynthia Richter-Jackson, it looked like you had your hand raised first, if you don't mind.

Cynthia: Oh no, I'm good now. My questions are answered. Thank you.

Philip Breitenbucher: Okay, good to hear that. Alright, we'll move down to the next person, which is Anne Hunt. Anne, would you like to ask a question?

Anne Hunt: This is Anne, I didn't mean to raise my hand. Sorry.

Philip Breitenbucher: That's okay. Alright, thanks, Jennifer.

Rebecca Odor: Did you see, were there questions that you wanted us to address from the chat?

Jennifer M. Haight: Well, there were a couple of simple questions, it might, one was just maybe the definition, somebody asked about what tardy means - tardy submissions - we could maybe circle back to that and answer at the end. I think it had to do with data entry being entered late, I believe is the answer to that. And then, there was a question about the data prior to October 1st, 2022 and whether that requires all historical data to be submitted for those three required fields. Actually, I don't know if that's something that we can also answer at the end, that is. Maybe we should wait for that one.

Rebecca Odor: I think that one will be answered, but, if you, I see that that's what you asked, if you wanted to, if we don't answer it by the end, then you can send it to AFCARS mailbox and we'll make sure to get that in there. But, I think that will be answered within here. Any other questions in the chat box or question and answer?

Philip Breitenbucher: I think we're good for now. We'll continue to monitor those and as you said earlier, Rebecca, we do have a team that's trying to respond to these as they come in. I think that was it, thank you.

Rebecca Odor: Thank you, all. It takes all of us to run these webinars. But, we will move onto the removal information right now. So, for the child's removal, this is different from the old AFCARS in that your agency will report information on each of the child's removals instead of just the most recent. So, this information will be reported for the child's current and all prior removals. You'll need to report only three elements - the date of removal, date of exit and exit reason - on the prior removals of youth that had removal episodes before October 1st, 2022. But, youth who are in foster care and youth who are in your reporting population after that will have to be reporting each child's removal information on all of the episodes that are happening to that child, not just the most recent. That's a big change here. We removed the element on the data first removal, and this is because we will be collecting information on all removals. The total number of removals to date has been removed because we will have information on all removals. The date of latest removal removed and the manner of removal from home are all elements that have been removed from the new ASCARS. We added the type of environment the child was living in at the time of removal for this one. You can see parent, relative, legal guardian, or relative legal guardian household, justice facility, medical/mental health facility or other. And the family circumstances at removal - this exhaustive list, or it's probably not exhaustive, but this long list was added and revised circumstances. So, they're all listed here, you can see some of them are new to what has been collected prior but - you guys may have been collecting this as a state but just hadn't been reporting it through ASCARS - but these are all ones that we're asking for you to report in the new ASCARS. Sex trafficking is new to collect here and we're adding six new elements wanting to know if the child was a victim of sex trafficking prior to entering foster care and then if so whether that was reported to law enforcement or what date that was. And then, if the child was a victim of sex trafficking while in foster care and whether that was reported to law enforcement and the date. Living arrangements - here, we're revising the terminology which we use to talk about placements and we're now talking about living arrangements. So, swap that out in your terminology. It's different from the old ASCARS in that the agency will report information on each of the child's living arrangements instead of just the most recent. So, just what I talked about in two slides back of the removal episodes, all of them, we're also asking for all of the living arrangements. So, this information will be reported for the child's current and all prior living arrangements. So, under the, talking about the living arrangements and the date of the living arrangements, we removed the number of previous placements in this episode, because that's unnecessary since we're collecting all. We revised the date of placement to make it the date of the living arrangement and then we clarified the definition. So, the definition is entering the first date of the placement or indicating the date of the voluntary placement agreement or the court order that provided the agency with the placement and care responsibility for the child. So, in the case of a child who has run away or who is already in a living arrangement and remains there when the agency receives placement and care responsibility, including the date of the agreement or the court order was, rather than when the child was originally placed in the arrangement. And, in the current placement setting was sort of changed out to



multiple elements. So, here's an element, is it the, is it a foster family home? And, choosing all that apply here. So, it could be, so licensed home, therapeutic foster home, shelter care foster home, relative foster family home, pre-adoptive home, kin foster family home. You can see I indicated that three of those are brand new that you haven't seen ASCARS reporting before, but you can choose whichever ones of these apply and it could be multiple - you can have a licensed, therapeutic foster family home, so, for an example. Or, if it's not a foster family home, then you may choose another living arrangement, but you may choose only one form all of those listed there. In the location of the living arrangement, we're asking where it is, so rather than being a yes/no question, like it was in old ASCARS, now it is is it in-state or in-tribal service area, is it out-of-state or out-of-tribal service area, is it out of the country is the runaway or whereabouts unknown. And if it is indicated that it was out-of-service area or out of the country then to report the jurisdiction or country where the child is living. We revised the foster family structure to be the marital status of the foster parents. So, it's married couple, unmarried couple, separated - which is new - and single adult, rather than a single female or single male. We added the child's relationship to the foster parent being that it is relative, non-relative or kin. And I put a definition into kin there, because kin wasn't used in the old AFCARS. But, where there's a psychological, cultural or emotional relationship between the child and child's family and the foster parents without a legal or biological, martial connection between the child and the foster parent. We added the foster parent's tribal membership and added the sex of each of the foster parents. Slide 41 brings us to permanency planning. So, we revised no longer using the most recent case plan goal where reporting the permanency plan. So, we updated the response option to include reunify with parent - which was from the last one - live with other relatives, adoption, guardianship, planned permanent living arrangement and permanency plan not established. So, those are the ones that are updated and this last bullet in there says we removed emancipation and long-term foster care as response options. We added five elements under permanency planning - the date of the permanency plan; and then the dates of the periodic reviews and the dates of the permanency hearings; case worker visit dates and case worker visit location - child's residence or other location. So, this is all new for AFCARS 2.1. Now, we move onto exit information. So, we added whether the child was transferred to another agency, and these are the listing of the agencies under that. And under exit to adoption and guardianship, we added the adoptive parents or guardians tribal membership; we added the sex of the adoptive parents or guardians; we replaced adoptive parents or guardians family structure with marital, a martial status question; we added the number of siblings in the adoptive or guardianship home. Here, also, we replaced the monthly subsidy and adoption agreement with the assistance agreement types. So, you see the types there and you would choose which of those apply. The adoption and guardianship assistance data file is very small. Some of the information that in AFCARS 1.0 that was submitted for the adoption file is now mostly incorporated in the out-of-home care data file. So, some things were, are still being collected but they're submitted in a different file. But, one change to this file it comprises

only children with a IV-E guardianship agreement or adoption agreement and it includes elements - I already said that - contains elements from the current adoption data file that have been incorporated into and revised into the out-of-home care file, so those sort of have been removed from this, but you're still collecting the information. It includes an assistance agreement termination date because this is when the child exits the reporting population. And, we revised the current child was placed by element to the adoption or guardianship placing agency - those are the Title IV-E agency, private agency under agreement or the Indian tribe under contract agreement would be the response options for that. And I'm now going to turn this over to our colleague in the Division of State Systems, so Teresa Young can share a little bit about the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System.

Teresa Young: Thanks, Becky. If we could go to the next slide, please. Okay, we just wanted to make sure that folks know that IV-E FFP for system changes, whether you are a CCWIS or a non-CCWIS are available. You would need to make sure that you describe those changes in an APD as with any of your system changes. And, if you have questions or you're thinking about the best way to make those changes, you should discuss those with your analyst on a regular call. Next slide, please. And -

Rebecca Odor: Thank you, Teresa.

Teresa Young: You're welcome, and I think Phil is going to go ahead and pull questions.

Philip Breitenbucher: Yeah, so, thank you very much, Teresa, thank you, Rebecca, thank you, Jennifer and thank you, Jana. We'll go ahead to the next slide. We'd like to move now into a, we'd like to launch a poll and if we could advance that slide, Becky. So, we just wanted to quickly know from you - which we saw that there were 361 of you on the call today - how helpful was this webinar in providing you with an overview. So, we'll give you a few minutes to launch the poll. And now, to respond to that poll, was it very helpful, somewhat, neither helpful or not helpful, somewhat helpful or very helpful. And we'll let you go ahead and respond to that. And, I can see also that we are continuing to respond to questions in the Q and A box, as well as in the chat. And so, Rush, let me know how we're doing there and we're getting ready to close this out, I believe.

Rush Bishop: Yup, we'll give it another second or two. Some people are still voting.

Philip Breitenbucher: Wonderful.

Rebecca Odor: And, for those of you who have questions based on the content and what was shared here, please feel free to ask that in the chat box and/or the question and answer box. I will go to my colleagues who have been monitoring those and see if there are any additional questions that we are able to ask and answer during this webinar, otherwise we're gonna take those questions with us as we develop additional technical assistance materials.

Rush Bishop: Alright, we're done polling. Ending poll now and sharing the results.

Philip Breitenbucher: Okay. Great, well most of you felt that this was at least somewhat helpful or very helpful and somewhere kind of neutral, neither helpful or non-helpful. So, we appreciate you responding to that poll. Again, this is the first webinar in this series on the AFCARS final rule. We'll go ahead and close up those results now. And, at this point, I think we will go to the resource slide; while we have those resources pulled up, we will again, go to questions. And, again, if you have questions, you can just go ahead and raise your hand. There's the raise hand function and then that way we can unmute your line for you and we can try and answer your question right here. We have some time allotted for today's webinar. So, if you'd like to ask your question live you're able to do that. In the meantime, I see that we have several open questions and I'll ask my panelists if there are some questions that you're seeing in the question and answer box that you would like to go ahead and read out loud for everyone and we can answer it this way, if you'd like to do that, and/or in our chat box while we give folks a chance to think about their question and raise the hand, raise their hand.

Jennifer M. Haight: So, this is Jennifer -

Philip Breitenbucher: Thanks, Jennifer.

Jennifer M. Haight: I was just gonna point out that there are a number of questions about definitions and I, I think that I just want to let folks know that those are the kinds of things that we're going to be offering some very precise advice about. And we appreciate, we do appreciate your asking them, so please keep them coming, because they definitely will reveal nuances perhaps that we want to include in our consideration when we give the technical assistance back. So, please continue to ask them, but I'm letting you know now, as I'm sure Becky did at the beginning that some of the more detailed information about how to produce these AFCARS variables are forthcoming. There is a request that we release the question and answers with the PowerPoint and recording, and we can, we can work with our gateway folks to see what's the best way of doing that. I can see that that would be helpful.

Rebecca Odor: I don't know that we'll have the answers to all of these questions available when we send out the PowerPoint and the recording, but, we do intend to answer these questions as they come in, either through technical bulletins or through additional webinars or through different other methods. One of those may be an FAQ document, but it won't be available at the same time as this PowerPoint and recording is sent out.

Jennifer M. Haight: I see, too, that there are a number of questions about the structure of the file - another area that we are developing some very specific guidance on, so that is also forthcoming. This is about both the structure of the format of the variables,

as well as the structure of the file itself.

Rebecca Odor: Well, this has been really helpful for me to get a look at some of you alls questions and I will be, we all have access to the ASCARS resource mailbox, so when your questions come in - and some of you sent in very detailed questions before the webinar, I appreciate those, keep sending them in and hopefully we will be able to provide answers to those in the best way format that you all can best set up your systems to collect and report this information to us. We do have the next webinar set up for August 31st, most tentative date. So, please mark that on your calendar for the second in this series of webinars and we will also be sending out after this an email that's gonna come with a link to a very short evaluation - but, again, please try to fill that out, because this is our first in our series of webinars, so any feedback you give us on this particular webinar will help us in the series that we're gonna continue on to help until the implementation begins October 1st of 2022. And, I'll also try to send out some handouts related to this in that webinar so that you have some more helpful handouts and then, when this recording is available, I'll let you know where that's housed, also. So, I don't see any raised hands and I know more questions are coming in, but I don't think that we have ones that are, we have definite answers to quite yet, so please continue sending your questions and I will take this opportunity to thank you all for being a part of this webinar and thank you for your questions and your responding to the polls and any additional feedback. We welcome any feedback, sending it to the AFCARS mailbox and I will be back in touch with you in the next few days as a follow up to this webinar.

Philip Breitenbucher: Becky, it does look like we have a question, a raised hand, did you want to take that before we close out today?

Rebecca Odor: Whoops, we have two, we have three - now everyone is getting, we can try.

Philip Breitenbucher: Let's go in the order that they've come in at, if that's okay. So, if you did raise your hand using the hand raise function, keep it up, please do that if you have a question. If you might have tapped on that by accident, we don't wanna put you on the spot, so, you can put your hand down if that was just an accident. Otherwise, I'm gonna go ahead and call on our first person with a question or a comment and that is Lee Brown. And so, we'll unmute your line now.

Lee Brown: Hi, yes, there are several questions in the Q and A that haven't been answered, so, I just wondered if those were missed or what happened there. My question in particular was about gender reporting and that lots of us are collecting binary, you know, non-gender specific information, I'm wondering how we're supposed to report that.

Rebecca Odor: I'm looking through - this is Rebecca - I'm looking through and I don't see that question, so, I apologize if that's in there somewhere, but, we will be sending out additional clarification information on reporting sex and what the elements

are that are in the AFCARS 2.1 for that, so we will be sharing more information on that when that's available in our additional technical assistance materials.

Philip Breitenbucher: Okay. Lee, do you have any other questions, you said you might have had more than one. And, I would say that as - just for me on watching the questions come in - they were coming in really fast, so if we didn't address it right away, we apologize, we're trying to respond as quickly as we can. So, thanks for that. And, okay, we'll go to the next person I see with their hand raised and that's Stephanie Champagne. Hopefully I said that right. And you should be unmuted now. Stephanie? Can we unmute her? Okay.

Rush Bishop: I think it was an accident.

Philip Breitenbucher: Okay. We'll come, maybe we'll try it the next one we see here, which is Jason Desantis. Jason, are you still with us?

Jason Desantis: Hi, I'm sorry, that was a mistake, I don't have a question.

Philip Breitenbucher: Okay, no problem.

John Hargrove: This is Hargrove. There was an individual who did ask about, I guess evidently, they were -

Rebecca Odor: John, it's a little hard to hear you, I'm not, can you get closer to the microphone?

John Hargrove: Yeah, can you hear me now? There was an individual asked about evidently, they missed the presentation about the expected file format that we asked for, so if you want to mention that.

Rebecca Odor: Yeah, John, I can't really hear you, so. I think you said something about an expected file format. And there was another question, yes, we're hoping to address questions about the file format and the file submissions in our next webinar. And, so we don't have much more than what we've shared today available for you all yet. Besides the xml - oh, I see now in there Mark had asked - yes, an xml file is what we're expecting. Okay.

Philip Breitenbucher: Yes, the -

Rebecca Odor: Jennifer -

Philip Breitenbucher: Rebecca, I think we're ready to go ahead and wrap up this. What we can do, though, is we can leave the line open for a few more minutes if you would like to submit questions through the Q and A box, you can and then that way, we can collect those so that we can incorporate them in our future technical assistance. Again, these resources we'd like to point to you, which is our Children's Bureau AFCARS website and you see the link there and also where

the Code of Federal Regulations for AFCARS can be found. The Information Memorandum link is there. And again, as Rebecca had said and also Jennifer, we continue to ask that you submit questions to us at [AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:AFCARS@acf.hhs.gov). That will definitely help us prepare for the next webinar on August 31st. And, please expect an email from AFCARS following this webinar which will include a follow up handout, as well as a link to an evaluation that we really would encourage you to participate in, as we hope to strengthen each of these webinars as we go through the series. And, with that, the time for August 31st, we expect that to be at 2pm Eastern. So, our next webinar for right now is scheduled for August 31st at 2pm Eastern, please be on the lookout for a save the date and a registration link for that webinar, as well. Okay, and if I don't have any other comments from our panelists, we will go ahead and close out today's webinar with, again, a big thank you to everyone who participated, as well as to our panelists.

Jennifer M. Haight: Thanks, Phil.

Rebecca Odor: Thanks, Phil.

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