



Child and Family Services Reviews

Stakeholder Interview Guide

June 2008



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

Table of Contents

Introduction and Instructions.....	1
Interviewee Chart.....	4
Supplementary Page.....	5
Section IV: Statewide Information System.....	6
Section V: Case Review System.....	8
Section VI: Quality Assurance System.....	18
Section VII: Staff and Provider Training.....	22
Section VIII: Service Array and Resource Development.....	28
Section IX: Agency Responsiveness to the Community	34
Section X: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.....	40
Section I: Safety Outcomes for Children	50
Section II: Permanency Outcomes for Children	57
Section III: Child and Family Well-Being.....	77
Appendix: State-Specific Issues	89

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

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Stakeholder interviews are conducted at the local review sites and at the State level during the onsite component of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The purpose of the stakeholder interviews is to collect information for evaluating and rating the outcomes and systemic factors that are examined during the CFSRs.

The review team interviews stakeholders who are representative of the types of organizations and individuals who participated in the development of the State's Child and Family Services Plan, as required at 45 Code of Federal Regulations 1357.15(1). These include representatives of courts, administrative review bodies, children's guardians ad litem, and other individuals or bodies assigned responsibility for representing the best interests of children. Interviews should be limited to approximately 1.5 hours for caseworkers, supervisors, and administrative case reviewers and 1 hour for other respondents. The following core stakeholders must be interviewed:

State Stakeholders

State child welfare director
State child welfare program specialists
State court system representative(s)
Major tribal representatives
State representative(s) of administrative review bodies
Youth being served by the agency
State foster and/or adoptive parent association representatives

Local Stakeholders

Local child welfare agency administrator
Foster and adoptive parent(s)
Juvenile court judge
Law enforcement representative
Caseworker(s) from the local agency
Supervisor(s) from the local agency
Guardians ad litem/legal representatives
Agency attorney(s)
Local representatives of administrative review bodies
Tribal representatives
Youth being served by the local agency

Review teams may interview additional stakeholders at both the State and local levels, as needed. Optional interviewees at the State level may include representatives of the education system, youth service agency, health department, Medicaid program, mental health agency, child welfare advocacy organization, university social work education program, major child welfare initiative or project, or other appropriate stakeholders. Optional interviewees at the local level may include representatives of youth service agencies, major child welfare initiatives or projects, major service providers, mental and physical health agencies, educational institutions (including special education or early intervention coordinators), child and family advocacy organizations, or other appropriate stakeholders.

Note: The guide has been reorganized so that the systemic factors appear first, to reflect the order in which most reviewers prefer to ask the questions. We have retained original section and item numbers, however, to ensure consistency with other review-related documents, such as the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions.

Administration of the Stakeholder Interview Guide

Background Information:

- This interview guide identifies the Core Question(s) to be asked during each stakeholder interview. The identified Core Question(s) listed by item number represent the central theme(s) for each outcome and systemic factor that the reviewer should attempt to address during stakeholder interviews. The ratings that the review team assigns to the outcomes and systemic factors should be based on thorough explanations of and responses to the Core Questions.
- Questions pertaining to children in foster care include juvenile justice cases served by the child welfare agency either directly or through a title IV-E agreement.
- Reviewers should become thoroughly familiar with the questions in the Stakeholder Interview Guide before beginning the stakeholder interviews. Reviewers should note that stakeholders may provide information out of sequence from the order of the Stakeholder Interview Guide. Reviewers should be familiar with the Statewide Assessment and Preliminary Assessment in order to ensure that the appropriate stakeholders are identified to be interviewed and that adequate information is gathered related to the State under review.

General Instructions:

- *Determining who is an appropriate respondent or stakeholder:* **For each Core Question, the Stakeholder Interview Guide lists the respondent or stakeholder groups who are most likely to have sufficient knowledge to respond meaningfully to the item. Reviewers should be careful to pursue issues only with stakeholders who have firsthand knowledge of the issues under review. The information recorded on the Stakeholder Interview Guide, and therefore subsequently used to evaluate the agency's performance, should reflect the input of stakeholders with firsthand, well-founded knowledge of the issues based only on the period under review. (Some stakeholders may offer secondhand experience or express opinions that are not supported by facts or experience; this information should not be recorded on the interview guide.)**
- *Assigning ID numbers:* To identify which stakeholders made specific comments, reviewers should assign a number to each stakeholder (or stakeholder group) interviewed. A chart is provided in the front of the guide for recording a stakeholder's name, ID number, and other identifying information.
- *Recording responses:* The Local Site Leaders (Children's Bureau and Administration for Children and Families staff) or their designees (for example, Consultant Co-Local Site Leaders) should record the notes from each stakeholder interview in the appropriate blank spaces, using a separate Stakeholder Interview Guide for each interview. Reviewers may add pages as needed to record notes under each section of the guide. A supplementary page that can be copied for that purpose is included on page 5 of this guide. Reviewers should be sure to record the item number, stakeholder ID number, and stakeholder type along with any responses recorded on the supplemental pages.
- Local Site Leaders must turn in the completed Stakeholder Interview Guides to their Team Leader before the statewide exit conference and/or before departing the State at the end of the review week.

How to Use the Questions:

- *Core Questions:* While each individual stakeholder may not be able to answer every Core Question, reviewers should be able to elicit all the needed information from the range of stakeholders interviewed at the State and local site levels. Following each item is a list of possible stakeholders who may be able to address the Core Question(s). Reviewers, however, will need to make judgments about which of the questions they should pursue with each individual stakeholder.
- *Follow-up Questions:* Each Core Question is followed by bulleted Follow-up Questions that reviewers may use to fully explore various aspects of the response to the Core Question. Follow-up Questions need not be answered individually but may be used as appropriate during the interviews. The Follow-up Questions should be seen as a guide rather than a mandate or limit on what reviewers may ask. The Follow-up Questions guide reviewers in determining the most appropriate response to the Core Question(s). Reviewers may rephrase the Follow-up Questions or ask related questions in order to explore the Core Question(s) fully, for example, by asking “why” or “why not,” as appropriate.
- *State-Specific Questions:* In addition to the Core Questions and Follow-up Questions, the Administration for Children and Families Regional Office Team Leader, in collaboration with the State and the Children’s Bureau, will identify State-specific issues from the Statewide Assessment that need further examination through stakeholder interviews; these will then be listed in the space provided in the guide for this purpose.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Interviewer(s):

B. Date(s) of Interviews:

County and State Reviewed:

Persons or Groups Interviewed

ID Number*	Title/Agency	Name of Person or Group Interviewed	Type of Stakeholder	
			State	Local

*See instructions on previous page

Supplementary Page

This page may be copied and used when extra space is needed for recording purposes.

Item Number: _____

ID Number Stakeholder Type Response

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Section IV: Statewide Information System (Item 24)

Item 24: Statewide Information System

The State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the legal 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.

Respondents:

Agency Administrator(s), Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Other, Quality Assurance Staff, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Information System Staff, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Training Staff

Core Question:

How effective is the State's statewide information system in readily identifying the legal status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Are there any variations in the State's statewide information system's capacity to track the information in the Core Question across different geographic areas?
- Are there any variations in the State's statewide information system's capacity to track the information in the Core Question for different groups in out-of-home care (including those served through title IV-E agreements with other agencies)?
- Evaluate whether data reports are useful and current, and are provided to staff, supervisors, managers, and administrators in a timely manner. Identify strengths and barriers to producing and accessing current, useful data.
- Does the State have knowledge of any children under its care for whom information on their whereabouts is not in the information system?
- If the State has knowledge of any children under its care for whom information on their whereabouts is not in the information system, what efforts has the State made to obtain and enter the information?

Explanatory Comments *(optional)*:

Section V: Case Review System (Items 25–29)

Item 25: Written Case Plan

The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.

Respondents:

Administrative Review Bodies, Birth Parents, CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate(s), Child Attorney(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Group Care Provider(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Court Judge(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Administrative Review Bodies, Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), State Administrative Review Bodies, State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the State in ensuring that each child has a timely written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parents?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- To what extent do all children, including those in foster care and those receiving in-home services, have current case plans? Identify strengths and barriers in the timeliness of the case planning process.
- Who routinely participates in developing case plans and how do the parties participate?
- Are children's and parents' self-identified needs incorporated into case plans? (Note any differences between foster care and in-home cases with respect to parental involvement in developing case plans.)
- Are case plans updated regularly? Identify strengths and barriers to the State's efforts to develop and update case plans in a timely manner for children in foster care.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 26: Periodic Reviews

The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

Respondents:

Administrative Review Bodies, Agency Attorney(s), Birth Parents, CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate(s), Child Attorney(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Court Judge(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Administrative Review Bodies, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), State Administrative Review Bodies, State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the State in conducting the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Describe the use of judicial and administrative reviews or other procedures for conducting 6-month periodic reviews for all children in foster care, including juvenile justice cases where the children are in foster care and served by the child welfare agency directly or through a title IV-E interagency agreement. Identify strengths and barriers to their use.
- Describe the participation and roles of children, parents, foster and pre-adoptive parents, and others in the 6-month reviews. Identify strengths and barriers to greater participation.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the 6-month reviews in promoting timely achievement of permanency for all children in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers to their effectiveness.
- Does the State have a process at the local level to review the recommendations and results of the 6-month periodic review? If so, evaluate how the results are used to make adjustments to the case plan or direction of the case on an ongoing basis.

Explanatory Comments *(optional)*:

Item 27: Permanency Hearings

The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

Respondents:

Administrative Review Bodies, Agency Attorney(s), Birth Parents, CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate(s), Chief Justice(s), Child Attorney(s), Court Improvement Program Coordinator(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Court Judge(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Administrative Review Bodies, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), State Administrative Review Bodies, State Court System Representative(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the State in ensuring that each child in foster care has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Describe the use of court hearings, hearings by an administrative body appointed by the court, or other procedures for conducting permanency hearings for children in foster care, including juvenile justice cases where the children are in foster care and served by the child welfare agency, directly or through a title IV-E interagency agreement. Identify strengths and barriers to their use.
 - Describe the timeframes used for court hearings, hearings by an administrative body appointed by the court, and/or other procedures. Identify strengths and barriers to their timeliness.
 - Describe the participation and roles of children, parents, foster and pre-adoptive parents, and others in permanency hearings. Identify strengths and barriers to greater participation.
 - Evaluate how well the permanency hearings promote timely achievement of permanency for all children in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers to their effectiveness.
 - Does the State have a process at the local level to review the recommendations and results of the permanency hearing? If so, evaluate the effectiveness of the local process and identify strengths and barriers to its effectiveness.
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Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 28: Termination of Parental Rights

The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

Respondents:

Administrative Review Bodies, Agency Attorney(s), CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate(s), Chief Justice(s), Child and Family Advocate(s), Court Improvement Program Coordinator(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Court Judge(s), Local Administrative Review Bodies, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, State Administrative Review Bodies, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Court System Representative(s), Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the State in filing for termination of parental rights (TPR) when a child is in foster care for 15 of 22 months unless there is a compelling reason not to file, in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate how well the State documents in the case plan compelling reasons for not filing a TPR petition. Identify strengths and barriers to such documentation.
- Explain how decisions are made not to file a TPR, and what the TPR policy is when no adoptive placement has been identified.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 29: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

Respondents:

Agency Attorney(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Juvenile Court Judge(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, Relative Caregiver(s), State Court System Representative(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Tribal Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the State in ensuring that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care receive notice of reviews or hearings held with respect to the children in their care, and have an opportunity to be heard?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Describe the notification process, and identify strengths and barriers to notification. If applicable, identify differences between 6-month periodic reviews conducted by administrative bodies, 6-month reviews conducted by the court, and 12-month permanency hearings.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the ways foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers are given an opportunity to be heard. Distinguish between 6-month administrative reviews, 6-month court reviews, and 12-month permanency hearings where applicable.

Explanatory Comments *(optional):*

Section VI: Quality Assurance System (Items 30–31)

Item 30: Standards Ensuring Quality Services

The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.

Respondents:

Agency Administrator(s), Child and Family Advocate(s), Child Attorney(s), Child Placing Service Provider(s), Group Care Provider(s), Health Representative(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Court Judge(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Licensing Staff, Local Administrative Review Bodies, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), Prevention and/or Reunification Provider(s), Quality Assurance Staff, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective has the State been in developing and implementing standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health?

Please use this Follow-up Question as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the thoroughness, quality, and implementation of the State’s standards to ensure services that protect the health and safety of children in foster care placements. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in services.

Explanatory Comments *(optional):*

Item 31: Quality Assurance System

The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

Respondents:

Agency Administrator(s), Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Agency - Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Other, Prevention and/or Reunification Provider(s), Quality Assurance Staff, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Information System Staff, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Training Staff

Core Question:

How effective is the State in operating an identifiable quality assurance system that evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates implemented program improvement measures?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the ability of the quality assurance system to assess effectively the quality of practice and outcomes, identify strengths and areas needing improvement, provide relevant reports, and evaluate implemented program improvement measures. Identify strengths and barriers to effective assessment.
- How well does the State use the information obtained from quality assurance activities to guide policies and procedures, including ensuring that workers receive sufficient feedback?
- Evaluate the involvement of service providers, parents, youth, foster parents, group caregivers, relatives, tribes, court personnel, and/or other stakeholders in the quality assurance process. Identify strengths and barriers to the process.

Explanatory Comments *(optional):*

Section VII: Staff and Provider Training (Items 32–34)

Item 32: Initial Staff Training

The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the Child and Family Services Plan, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.

Respondents:

ICPC Staff, Independent Living Coordinator(s), Law Enforcement Representative(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Quality Assurance Staff, State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Court System Representative(s), State Information System Staff, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Training Staff, Tribal Representative(s), University Social Work Program

Core Question:

How effective is the State in providing and ensuring completion of adequate *initial* training for all staff who provide child welfare services?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the adequacy of requirements for pre-service or initial training for State child welfare staff. Identify strengths and barriers to these requirements.
- Describe how participation in and completion of initial training is monitored. Is sufficient training (or mentoring) provided before a caseworker receives a caseload? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in monitoring and completion of initial training.
- Evaluate how well initial training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed by staff to perform their jobs, including covering topics and issues that may be unique to particular areas or caseloads. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the training.
- Describe how the State ensures that staff are able to access required trainings. Identify strengths and barriers to accessing initial training.
- Where a State contracts out full case management responsibility (that is, a private agency provides the same services as State staff without a State staff person assigned to the family), does the State require or provide initial training for that staff? If so, identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the initial training the State requires or provides.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 33: Ongoing Staff Training

The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan.

Respondents:

ICPC Staff, Independent Living Coordinator(s), Law Enforcement Representative(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, Quality Assurance Staff, State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Court System Representative(s), State Information System Staff, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Training Staff, Tribal Representative(s), University Social Work Program

Core Question:

How effective is the State in providing and ensuring completion of adequate *ongoing* training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the adequacy of requirements for ongoing training. Identify strengths and barriers to these requirements.
- Describe how participation in and completion of ongoing training is monitored. Is sufficient training or mentoring provided on an ongoing basis? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in monitoring and completion of ongoing training.
- Evaluate how well the ongoing training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed by staff to perform their jobs, including covering topics and issues that may be unique to particular areas or caseloads. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the training.
- Are staff members able to access ongoing training as needed? Identify strengths and barriers to accessing ongoing training.
- Where a State contracts out full case management responsibility (that is, a private agency provides the same services as State staff without a State staff person assigned to the family), does the State require or provide ongoing training for the private agency staff? If so, identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the ongoing training the State requires or provides.

Explanatory Comments *(optional)*:

Item 34: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

The State provides training 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.

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Relative Caregiver(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Training Staff, Tribal Representative(s), University Social Work Program, Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the State in providing and ensuring completion of adequate training for current or prospective foster parents, including relative caregivers, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities, that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the adequacy of the requirements for initial and pre-service foster parent and adoptive parent training, including for relative caregivers. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the requirements.
- Explain under what circumstances foster and adoptive parents, including relative caregivers, do and do not receive initial training prior to caring for children in their homes.
- Evaluate the adequacy of the requirements for providing advanced or ongoing training consistently to all caregivers throughout the State. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps, including timeliness, accessibility, attendance, and monitoring issues.
- How well does the State ensure that training is provided for the staff of State licensed or approved child care facilities?
- Evaluate the accessibility of initial and ongoing training for caregivers. Identify strengths and barriers to accessing training.
- How does the State identify who needs training and what the training needs are?

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Section VIII: Service Array and Resource Development (Items 35–37)

Item 35: Array of Services

The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

Respondents:

Agency Administrator(s), Birth Parents, Child and Family Advocate(s), Child Placing Service Provider(s), Domestic Violence Representative(s), Education/Educational Representative(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Group Care Provider(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Law Enforcement Representative(s), Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Child Welfare Initiative(s) or Project(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Medicaid Representative(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), Prevention and/or Reunification Provider(s), Relative Caregiver(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Substance Abuse Representative(s), Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the State’s array of services in meeting the needs of the children and families it serves, including in-home and foster care cases?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Does the State provide or contract for an adequate array of services to protect children in their own homes and prevent removal? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in services.
 - Does the State provide or contract for an adequate array of services to promote timely reunification of children in foster care with their families? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in services.
 - Does the State provide or contract for an adequate array of services to promote timely adoptions? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in services.
 - Does the State provide or contract for an adequate array of services to support adoptive families and prevent disruption after placement and finalization? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in services.
 - Does the State provide or contract for an adequate array of services to youth in foster care to prepare them for independent living and to make the transition from foster care to adulthood? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in services.
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Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 37: Individualizing Services

The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

Respondents:

Agency Administrator(s), Birth Parents, Child and Family Advocate(s), Child Placing Service Provider(s), Domestic Violence Representative(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Group Care Provider(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Child Welfare Initiative(s) or Project(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Medicaid Representative(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), Prevention and/or Reunification Provider(s), Relative Caregiver(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Substance Abuse Representative(s), Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effectively does the State individualize, or tailor, services to meet the unique needs of children and families?

Please use this Follow-up Question as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Does the State provide an adequate array of services to address the unique needs and challenges of the populations served? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in services.

[illegible]

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Section IX: Agency Responsiveness to the Community (Items 38–40)

Item 38: State Engagement in Consultation with Stakeholders

In implementing the provisions of the Child and Family Services Plan, 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 and objectives of the Child and Family Services Plan.

Respondents:

Chief Justice(s), Court Improvement Program Coordinator(s), Education/Educational Representative(s), Health Representative(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Major Child Welfare Initiative(s) or Project(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Substance Abuse Representative(s), Tribal Representative(s), University Social Work Program, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effectively does the State engage 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 in order to include these stakeholders' major concerns in its State plan?

Please use this Follow-up Question as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- How does the State use the input from external stakeholders in assessing progress in meeting its child welfare goals and objectives? Identify strengths and barriers in using input from external stakeholders.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 39: Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP

The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports pursuant to the Child and Family Services Plan.

Respondents:

Chief Justice(s), Court Improvement Program Coordinator(s), Education/Educational Representative(s), Health Representative(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Major Child Welfare Initiative(s) or Project(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association Representative(s), Substance Abuse Representative(s), Tribal Representative(s), University Social Work Program, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effectively does the agency develop, in consultation with the individuals or organizations identified in item 38, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the State's Child and Family Services Plan?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- How does the agency seek the input of external stakeholders in assessing State progress toward achieving goals and objectives for the Annual Progress and Services Reports? Identify strengths and barriers to seeking input.
- How does the agency use the input from stakeholders in assessing progress for the Annual Progress and Services Reports?

[illegible]

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 40: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

The State's services under the Child and Family Services Plan are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

Respondents:

Child Placing Service Provider(s), Court Improvement Program Coordinator(s), Education/Educational Representative(s), Health Representative(s), Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, Prevention and/or Reunification Provider(s), State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), Substance Abuse Representative(s), Tribal Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effectively does the State coordinate its services or benefits with the services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?

Please use this Follow-up Question as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Describe how the State coordinates its services to children and families with other Federal or federally assisted programs in the State serving the same population. Provide examples and identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the State's coordination.

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Explanatory Comments (optional):

Section X: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention (Items 41–45)

Item 41: Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions

The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.

Respondents:

Child and Family Advocate(s), Child Placing Service Provider(s), Group Care Provider(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effectively has the State implemented licensing or approval standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that ensure the safety and health of children in foster care?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- How do the State's licensing standards ensure the safety and protection of children in foster care? Identify strengths and barriers in the licensing standards.
- How does the licensing process work for foster and adoptive parents? Has the State implemented a unified home study process to avoid requiring foster parents who later adopt to have to meet additional criteria?
- Evaluate the State's effectiveness and timeliness in completing re-licensing or re-inspection of foster homes and facilities in order to ensure continued conformity with its licensing standards. Identify strengths and barriers to licensing standard conformity.

[illegible]

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 42: Standards Applied Equally

The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.

Respondents:

Child and Family Advocate(s), Child Placing Service Provider(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Other, State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the State in applying its foster care standards to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- What types of licenses (e.g., initial, probationary, full, relative home) does the State have and when are they used? Explain whether the State uses waivers of licensing requirements and, if so, in which situations.
- Evaluate the State's effectiveness in ensuring that foster care funds under title IV-E are used in accordance with the title IV-E requirements; specifically that the State does not claim title IV-E foster care funds for children placed in homes that do not meet full licensure requirements. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the State's oversight in this area.
- Evaluate the State's effectiveness in ensuring that foster care funds under title IV-E are used in accordance with the title IV-E requirements; specifically that the State does not claim title IV-E funds for children placed in homes in which a licensing standard is waived, except that a State may waive a non-safety standard on a case-by-case basis for a relative caring for a specific child. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the State's oversight in this area.
- Describe any State policy and procedure used to exclude children from receiving title IV-E foster care funds who are in homes that are not fully licensed (e.g., those in homes with initial licenses or in non-relative homes with waivers). Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the State's oversight in this area.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 43: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

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.

Respondents:

Child Placing Service Provider(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), ICPC Staff, Licensing Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, Relative Caregiver(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the State in conducting criminal background clearances on prospective foster and adoptive parents before licensing or approving them to care for children?

Please use this Follow-up Question as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the thoroughness of the criminal background clearance process in screening prospective caregivers statewide. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the process.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 44: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

The State has in place a 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.

Respondents:

Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effectively has the State implemented a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children needing foster and adoptive homes?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Does the county's (State's) current pool of foster families reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in need of foster care and adoptive placement, and meet most of the foster care placement needs of the children it serves? Identify strengths and barriers or unmet recruitment needs.
- Evaluate the State's statewide plan and local strategies for recruiting foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in need of placement in the State (for example, using diverse methods of disseminating general and child-specific information). Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in diverse recruitment efforts.
- Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of any other recruitment efforts apart from a statewide plan, such as the use of exchanges or interagency efforts. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Identify and evaluate any State programs, services, or activities to promote the retention of a sufficiently diverse group of foster parents. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these programs or services.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Item 45: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

Respondents:

Administrative Review Bodies, Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), ICPC Staff, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Medicaid Representative(s), Other, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effectively does the State seek out and use families who live in other jurisdictions (for example, out of State) to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Describe the methods the State uses to seek out approved or licensed adoptive families outside the jurisdiction or State (for example, by listing children in need of placement in appropriate exchanges or by other means). Identify the official criteria used for listings, and strengths and barriers or gaps in identifying cross-jurisdictional placement opportunities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the State's use of homes identified across jurisdictions. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these cross-jurisdictional efforts.
- Evaluate the State's efficiency in processing Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) requests to send children to, and receive children from, other States, and ensuring medical and adoption assistance payments under the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA). Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in efficiency.

Explanatory Comments (optional):

Section I: Safety Outcomes for Children

Safety Outcome 1:

Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected From Abuse and Neglect. (Items 1–2)

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

Respondents:

Agency Administrator(s), Child and Family Advocate(s), Law Enforcement Representative(s), Local Agency – CPS Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, State Child Welfare Director(s)

Core Question:

How timely is the agency in initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the agency’s effectiveness in consistently responding to all reports of maltreatment within the timeframes specified in agency policy for reports of a given priority, including at night and on weekends. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the process.
- Describe how the agency responds to reports of maltreatment of children in foster care and in-home cases that are already open, including the timeliness of the response and whether a new report is generated in its system. Identify strengths and barriers to the agency’s response.
- Describe the role of other organizations or agencies (such as law enforcement, contracted case managers, alternative response providers) in responding to reports of child maltreatment. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in their responses, including the timeliness of their responses.

Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment

Respondents:

Child and Family Advocate(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Law Enforcement Representative(s), Other, Quality Assurance Staff

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Does the agency have in place and use appropriate and effective policies and procedures for preventing the recurrence of maltreatment? Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the agency's policies and procedures.
- Describe the specific types of cases or situations where recurrence of maltreatment is especially problematic in this location, and evaluate the agency's response to these types of cases or situations.

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Item 3: Services to Family To Protect Child(ren) in Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care

Birth Parents, Domestic Violence Representative(s), Law Enforcement Representative(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), Prevention and/or Reunification Provider(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), Substance Abuse Representative(s)

How effective is the agency in providing services, when appropriate, to prevent removing children from their homes?

- Evaluate the effectiveness and timeliness of preventive and protective services provided by the agency to children in their own homes. Explain under what circumstances these services are provided, and identify strengths and barriers or gaps in service provision.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of preventive and protective services provided following reunifications of children with their families in order to prevent re-entry into foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in service provision.

[illegible]

Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Domestic Violence Representative(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Law Enforcement Representative(s), Licensing Staff, Local Agency – CPS Staff, Other, Parent Attorney(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in reducing the risk of harm to children, including those in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the agency's effectiveness in identifying and assessing safety and risk of harm issues continually while families receive services. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in ensuring children's safety and freedom from risk in the home.
- Evaluate the agency's effectiveness in identifying and assessing safety and risk of harm issues at key decisionmaking points throughout the case (for example, at the point of reunification or case closure). Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in identifying and assessing these issues.
- Evaluate the agency's effectiveness in monitoring and responding to safety and risk of harm issues, such as during visitation or following a report of maltreatment, and ensuring ongoing compliance with case plans. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in monitoring and responding.
- Does the agency use safety plans after the initial assessment?
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the agency's efforts to ensure that children remain safe after they are placed in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.

Section II: Permanency Outcomes for Children

Permanency Outcome 1:

Children Have Permanency and Stability in Their Living Situations. (Items 5–10)

Item 5: Foster Care Re-Entries

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Group Care Provider(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Other, Quality Assurance Staff, Substance Abuse Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in preventing multiple entries of children into foster care?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of agency policy and procedures intended to identify risk factors and reduce the likelihood of re-entry when discharging children from foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the agency's policies and procedures.
- Describe any specific types of cases or situations where foster care re-entry is especially problematic in this location and evaluate the agency's response to these types of cases or situations.

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Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Child Attorney(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Group Care Provider(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Other, Quality Assurance Staff, Relative Caregiver(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in providing placement stability for children in foster care (that is, minimizing placement changes for children in foster care)?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Do children in foster care change placements frequently? Describe the reasons for frequent foster care placement changes and identify strengths and barriers to placement stability.
- Explain how initial shelters, assessment centers, or other temporary placements are used, the expected timeframes for their use, and whether these timeframes generally are met. If temporary placements are not used, explain how they are avoided.
- What helps children to remain, or prevents children from remaining, in stable placements while in foster care?
- Describe any specific types of cases or situations where placement stability is especially problematic in this location and evaluate the agency's response.
- Describe how placement decisions are matched to the needs of the children. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in how placement decisions are matched to children's needs.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of services and/or supports to prevent placement moves provided to foster parents and relatives providing care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these services and/or supports.

Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child

Respondents:

Administrative Review Bodies, Agency Attorney(s), Birth Parents, CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate(s), Child and Family Advocate(s), Child Attorney(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Court Judge(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Administrative Review Bodies, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Relative Caregiver(s), State Administrative Review Bodies, State Child Welfare Director(s), State Child Welfare Program Specialist(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in determining the appropriate permanency goals for children on a timely basis when they enter foster care?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the agency's procedures for, and effectiveness in, consistently establishing appropriate and timely permanency goals for children in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the agency's procedures.
- Evaluate the agency's effectiveness in periodically re-examining and making timely decisions about changing the permanency goals for children in foster care whenever the child's circumstances change, and particularly for those with a goal of other planned permanent living arrangement. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in effectiveness.
- Does the agency document to the court (or does the court review) compelling reasons for choosing a goal of other planned permanent living arrangement instead of reunification, adoption, or relative placement?
- How does the agency use concurrent planning (working toward two different goals simultaneously, such as adoption and reunification)? Evaluate the agency's efforts, and identify strengths and barriers or gaps in concurrent planning.

Respondents:

Core Question:

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- [illegible]

Permanency Outcome 2:
The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections Is
Preserved for Children. (Items 11–16)

Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Child Placing Service Provider(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Licensing Staff, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Parent Attorney(s), Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in placing foster children close to their parents or their own communities or counties?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- How frequently does the agency place children out of State or otherwise not in close proximity to their parents or their own community or county? To what extent are these placements for reasons that are not consistent with the child’s best interests and permanency goals, such as the State not having a sufficient array of placement and/or treatment resources?
- Describe any specific types of cases or situations where placing children in close proximity is especially problematic in this location and evaluate the agency’s response.

Respondents:

Core Question:

Please use this Follow-up Question as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

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Item 13: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Child Attorney(s), Guardian(s) Ad Litem/Legal Representative(s), Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Questions:

How effective is the agency in planning and facilitating visiting of children in foster care with their parents? How effective is the agency in planning and facilitating visiting among siblings placed separately in foster care?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate how well the agency assures that children in foster care have visits, when appropriate, with their mothers, including whether such visits occur frequently enough to meet the children's needs.
- Evaluate how well the agency assures that children have opportunities for visits with their mothers that are of sufficient quality as to support and sustain the family relationships (for example, through the location of the visits and by providing meaningful opportunities for appropriate interaction).
- Evaluate how well the agency assures that children in foster care have visits, when appropriate, with their fathers, including whether such visits occur frequently enough to meet the children's needs.
- Evaluate how well the agency assures that children have opportunities for visits with fathers that are of sufficient quality as to support and sustain the family relationships (for example, through the location of the visits and by providing meaningful opportunities for appropriate interaction).
- Evaluate how well the agency assures that children in foster care have visits, when appropriate, with their siblings placed separately in foster care, including whether such visits occur frequently enough to meet their needs.
- Evaluate how well the agency assures that children have opportunities for visits with other siblings in foster care that are of sufficient quality as to support and sustain the family relationships (for example, through the location of the visits and by providing meaningful opportunities for appropriate interaction).

Item 14: Preserving Connections

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Independent Living Coordinator(s), Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Relative Caregiver(s), Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in preserving important connections for children in foster care, such as connections to neighborhood, community, faith, family, tribe, school, and friends?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- What actions does the agency take to preserve children’s important connections while they are in foster care?
- Evaluate how well the agency takes action to maintain the connections of Native American children by identifying children as Native American, giving timely notice to children’s tribe(s) of their opportunity to intervene in court proceedings, and placing children in homes consistent with tribal placement preferences (for example, placement with extended family or tribal members).

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Respondents:

Core Question:

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

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Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, Parent Attorney(s), Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in promoting or helping to maintain the parent-child relationship for children in foster care, when it is appropriate to do so?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate how well the agency engages in specific activities other than visitation that support mother-child relationships in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in providing opportunities for involvement in the child's life.
- Evaluate how well the agency engages in specific activities other than visitation that support father-child relationships in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in providing opportunities for involvement in the child's life.
- Evaluate how well the agency supports, where appropriate, parent-child relationships when parents are incarcerated or not living in close proximity to the child.

[illegible]

Section III: Child and Family Well-Being

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity To Provide for Their Children's Needs. (Items 17–20)

Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Child Attorney(s), Child Placing Service Provider(s), Domestic Violence Representative(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Licensing Staff, Other, Parent Attorney(s), Prevention and/or Reunification Provider(s), Relative Caregiver(s), State Child Welfare Director(s), State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Substance Abuse Representative(s), Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective is the agency generally in assessing and providing services to meet the needs of children, parents, and foster parents?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate how well the agency assesses and reassesses the needs of the groups it serves (for example, children in foster care and in their homes, mothers, fathers, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, relative caregivers) in determining goals and services. Describe the process used and identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the process.
- Evaluate how well the agency uses information obtained from needs assessments to develop case plans and provide the appropriate services to meet the needs of the groups it serves (for example, children in foster care and in their homes, mothers, fathers, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, relative caregivers). Describe the process used and identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the process.
- Are adolescents' needs for independent living services assessed on an ongoing basis as part of the child's independent living plan?

Respondents:

Core Question:

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- [illegible]

Item 19: Caseworker Visits With Child

Respondents:

Agency Administrator(s), Group Care Provider(s), Independent Living Coordinator(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, Quality Assurance Staff, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency, Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency, Youth Service Agency Representative(s)

Core Question:

How effective are agency workers in conducting face-to-face visits as often as needed with children in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of caseworker visits with children, including whether visits are monthly or more frequent depending on the needs of the child, and where the visits usually occur (foster home, school, agency office, other). Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the effectiveness of visits.
- Describe and explain the reasons for any differences in the frequency of caseworker visits on certain types of cases, such as with children in foster family care and children receiving in-home services, children in residential placements, or children in permanent placements.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of caseworkers in focusing the content of their visits with children on issues that promote the children's safety, permanency, and well-being, and attainment of case goals.

[illegible]

Item 20: Caseworker Visits With Parents

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Local Agency – Foster Care Staff, Other, Parent Attorney(s), Quality Assurance Staff, Supervisor(s) from the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective are agency workers in conducting face-to-face visits as often as needed with parents of children in foster care and parents of children receiving in-home services?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of caseworker visits with the mothers (custodial and noncustodial) of children in their caseloads, including how the frequency of visits is determined, whether the frequency of the visits is consistent with the needs of the child and mother, and where the visits usually occur (foster home, agency office, other). Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in effectiveness.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of caseworker visits with the fathers (custodial and noncustodial) of children in their caseloads, including how the frequency of visits is determined, whether the frequency of the visits is consistent with the needs of the child and father, and where the visits usually occur (foster home, agency office, other). Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in effectiveness.
- Describe and explain the reasons for any differences in the frequency of caseworker visits with the parents in certain types of cases such as children in foster care, those receiving in-home services, and children in residential placement. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the frequency of visits with respect to type of visit.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of caseworkers in focusing the content of their visits with parents on issues that promote the children's safety, permanency, and well-being, and attainment of case goals. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in the content of visits.

Well-Being Outcome 2:
Children Receive Appropriate Services To
Meet Their Educational Needs. (Item 21)

Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Child and Family Advocate(s), Education/Educational Representative(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Local Administrative Review Bodies, Major Tribal Representative(s), Other, State Administrative Review Bodies, State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in addressing the educational needs of children in foster care and those receiving services in their own homes?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate how well the agency identifies, assesses, and addresses the educational needs of children in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate how well the agency identifies, assesses, and addresses the educational needs of children receiving in-home services when appropriate. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate how consistently and promptly the agency provides foster parents with copies of educational records. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in providing records.
- Evaluate the positive and negative aspects of influences outside of the child welfare agency (for example, schools, courts) on meeting children's educational needs.

Well-Being Outcome 3:
Children Receive Adequate Services To Meet Their
Physical and Mental Health Needs. (Items 22–23)

Item 22: Physical Health of the Child

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Health Representative(s), Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Medicaid Representative(s), Other, State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in identifying and addressing the physical health and medical needs, including dental needs, of children receiving in-home and foster care services?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate how well the agency identifies, assesses, and addresses the developmental health and dental needs of children upon their entry into foster care and throughout their placement in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate how well the agency identifies, assesses, and addresses the health and dental needs of children receiving in-home services when appropriate to do so. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate how consistently and promptly the agency provides foster parents with copies of health and dental records, including information on medications and/or ongoing treatment. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate the positive and negative aspects of influences outside of the child welfare agency (for example, the geographical accessibility of services, resources, and funding) on meeting children's health and dental needs.

Item 23: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Respondents:

Birth Parents, Child and Family Advocate(s), Foster and Adoptive Parent(s), Juvenile Justice Representative(s), Local Administrative Review Bodies, Local Child Welfare Agency Administrator(s), Major Tribal Representative(s), Medicaid Representative(s), Mental Health Representative(s), Other, State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Tribal Representative(s), Youth Being Served by the Agency, Youth Being Served by the Local Agency

Core Question:

How effective is the agency in identifying, assessing, and addressing the behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs of children receiving in-home and foster care services?

Please use these Follow-up Questions as needed to fully explore the Core Question:

- Evaluate how well the agency identifies, assesses, and addresses the mental and behavioral health needs of children upon their entry into foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate how well the agency identifies, assesses, and addresses the mental and behavioral health needs of children throughout their placement in foster care. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate how well the agency identifies, assesses, and addresses the mental and behavioral health needs of children receiving in-home services when appropriate. Identify strengths and barriers or gaps in these efforts.
- Evaluate the positive and negative aspects of influences outside of the child welfare agency (for example, the geographical accessibility of services, resources, and funding) on meeting children's mental and behavioral health needs.

[illegible]

APPENDIX

State-Specific Issues

Core Question(s):

Follow-up Questions:
