Understanding The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs)

What is the purpose of the Child and Family Services Reviews?

The CFSRs enable the Children’s Bureau to:

ENSURE conformity with federal child welfare requirements.

DETERMINE what is happening to children and families in the child welfare system.

ASSIST states in enhancing their capacity to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.

The CFSR is an opportunity to advance equity in treatment for all children and families, including persons of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality in the child welfare system. In all stages of the CFSR, including Program Improvement Plan (PIP) development and monitoring, states can use program and administrative data to identify policies and practices that may contribute to disparities and inequities in how children and families are being served, and to propose systemic improvements to address those challenges. The CFSR includes a wide range of partners, including those with lived experience in the system, ensuring that underserved populations are represented and have a voice in the process.

Preparation of evidence to demonstrate how well the state’s child welfare system is functioning.

States and their partners complete 4 sections of the Statewide Assessment:

SECTION I. General Info
A list of participants in the statewide assessment process and a description of their involvement.

SECTION II. State Context
Descriptions of the state’s vision and tenets of the system, cross-system challenges, and current initiatives.

SECTION III. Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes
Data/information to support positive outcomes in safety, permanency, and well-being.

SECTION IV. Assessment of Seven Systemic Factors
Data/information to support how well each systemic factor functions.

State Data Profile
The State Data Profile includes statewide data indicators on safety and permanency, which are key sources of Evidence in the Statewide Assessment. State Data Profiles are provided to states twice per year.

Part 1 Statewide Assessment

Part 2 Onsite Review

Review of cases and interviews to assess substantial conformity on outcomes and systemic factors.

Case Reviews
Reading a case using the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions to determine strengths and areas needing improvement for child and family outcomes. Case reviews include interviews with children and families to collect information that may be missing, confirm documentation, and obtain important experiences.

Stakeholder Interviews
Group interviews to collect information needed to determine whether a state is in substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors.

Part 3 Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

States determined not to be in substantial conformity are required to develop a plan to address areas needing improvement.

PIP Development
States and stakeholders:
- Conduct root cause analysis.
- Identify cross-cutting themes.
- Develop interventions that address root causes and themes.

PIP Implementation and Monitoring
- States have 2 years to implement their Program Improvement Plan.
- After implementation of the PIP, states have an additional 18 months to achieve PIP measurement goals.

More Information
Additional information on the CFSRs is available on the Children’s Bureau website at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews. The CFSR Information Portal is available at https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources.