



Office of Children and Family Services

Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan A Home for Every Child

September 14, 2026

Submitted to the
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Children's Bureau
Administration for Children and Families

*Minor formatting adjustments may have been made to this document for 508 compliance.
Content is unaffected.*

Program Improvement Plan

Section I: General Information

State/Territory: New York State

1st submitted draft under new PIP under TB#14: August 13, 2026

Recent submitted draft under new PIP under TB#14: September 14, 2026

Date Approved: September 23, 2026

PIP Effective Date: October 1, 2026

End of PIP Implementation Period: September 30, 2028

Reporting Schedule and Format: The Children's Bureau will assess implementation of PIP strategies through brief semiannual, written updates not to exceed 3 pages and regular, mutually agreed upon meetings with New York State. These updates and meetings will document the status of strategies and key implementation activities. If circumstances change, New York State may request adjustments to the implementation approach or reporting cadence and discuss proposed modifications with the Children's Bureau.

Introduction

The goal of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is to ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements, assessing what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services, and assisting states in achieving positive outcomes for children and families. The review entails a statewide assessment prepared by New York's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), an onsite review by the Children's Bureau, (which includes case reviews and interviews with stakeholders), followed by the Program Improvement (PIP) process. New York provided an initial PIP draft in April of 2025 and three subsequent drafts after feedback was provided by the Children's Bureau. The most recent draft was submitted in February of 2026 under the traditional PIP model.

Following the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) release of Technical Bulletin #14, New York has voluntarily joined several other states in the new PIP pilot program centered around ACF's new initiative, *A Home for Every Child*. This opportunity allows OCFS to focus its PIP on key areas of prevention, permanency and foster home capacity rather than an overburdened plan that is compliance driven. As per ACF, no state has passed any of the four rounds of the CFSR in 25 years without requiring a PIP and overall ratings have worsened after each round. *A Home for Every Child* strives to improve states' ratios of foster homes to children in foster care to 1:1 or better, which will be achieved by a combination of increasing the number of foster boarding homes, decreasing the time to permanency, and diverting more youth away from foster care who truly can remain safely in their homes.

Section II: Goals, Strategies/Interventions, and Key Activities

Goal 1: New York State will deploy strategies aimed at increasing the number of foster homes. Every child deserves a safe, stable and loving home. The purpose of this goal is to increase the numerator to align with the goal of A Home for Every Child; a 1:1 or greater ratio of homes to children in foster care.

Strategy 1.1: Increase kinship placements and streamline process to become an approved kinship home in New York State

Key Activities	Responsibility	Lead Measure
New York will update kinship foster home approval standards to create a more streamlined process that aligns with the national kinship model standards to reduce burdensome, unnecessary and intrusive assessments not relevant to the circumstances of kinship care. Implementation of separate kinship foster care standards; updates to handouts to prospective kinship homes, streamlined application and home study process, and fewer/updated regulation requirements for kinship versus non-kinship foster homes. Implementation is statewide.	OCFS CWCS & Office of Strategic Policy Planning and Development	Median days to approval of kinship homes
OCFS will utilize the Program Quality Improvement (PQI) program in the next 30-month cycle to evaluate kinship placements in the local departments of social services (LDSS). Rates of kinship placements are obtained for each LDSS and provided during periodic performance reviews. LDSS whose kinship placement fall below specific calculated criteria will provide an in-depth plan to recruit kinship placements in either their program improvement plan or county plan, whichever can be produced first. The plan will be reviewed and monitored by OCFS regional offices.	OCFS CWCS, Regional Offices, LDSS	Percentage of kinship admissions out of the total new admissions each month

Strategy 1.2: Increase number of quality foster homes that meet the needs for placement of children in the foster care system.

Key Activities	Responsibility	Lead Measure
OCFS will provide data, a template, and technical assistance to LDSSs and Voluntary Agencies in development of the four-year foster home recruitment and retention plans. The plan template will include a measurement plan for monitoring by the regional OCFS offices that reviews homes that support teens, special needs and sibling groups (as well as federal requirements such as MEPA). This is implemented statewide.	OCFS CWCS, OREPA, Regional Offices and all counties	Percentage of foster homes open on the last day of the month that are designated therapeutic Percentage of homes at end of month caring for 2 or more siblings

Key Activities	Responsibility	Lead Measure
		Percentage of children with level of difficulty to place in care at end of month placed in a home-based setting Percentage of youth ages 13-17 in care at end of month placed in a home-based setting

Strategy 1.3 Increase retention in open foster homes

Key Activities	Responsibility	Lead Measure
OCFS will seek learning exchanges with other states to share knowledge of retention methods, planning and tracking. Share knowledge within statewide planning for recruitment and retention. OCFS will champion change at the state level to allow for change in retention efforts.	OCFS	Number of foster homes closed each month (statewide info)
OCFS will create, distribute and publicly post an updated version of the Foster Parent Handbook. The purpose is to provide essential knowledge on how foster care works, on building strong partnerships with families, caseworkers and supports and on real-life advice, tips and encouragement. The handbook is for all foster parents, whether they are new or seasoned.	OCFS, SPPD	↑

Goal 2: New York will deploy strategies aimed at reducing the number of children in the foster care system. Every child deserves timely and appropriate permanency outcomes as well as effective child abuse/maltreatment prevention. The purpose of this goal is to decrease the denominator to align with the goal of A Home for Every Child; a 1:1 or greater ratio of homes to children in foster care.

Strategy 2.1 New York will utilize Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) to advance prevention and permanency outcomes for children.

Key Activity	Responsibility	Lead Measure
CQI practices will include outcome data provided to counties in areas of CPS investigation, preventive and foster care; streamlining program improvement plans; and incorporating lived experience in obtaining feedback in case reviews, coordination in improvement plans, and promoting family driven practice.	OCFS CWCS, Regional Offices, Lived Experience (LEX) Strategy Team and Family-Led Case Strategy Team (FLCST)	Core Measure: Number of children entering and exiting foster care during month.

Strategy 2.2 There is a strong connection between quality family time and reunification of children with their families. New York will provide training to LDSS and Voluntary Authorized Agency (VA) Staff across the state to promote best practices that will lead to better reunification outcomes.

Key Activity	Responsibility	Lead Measure
OCFS will develop, monitor and deliver trainings that explore quality family time and visitation with key learning components including trauma focused approach, modeling and coaching safe parenting practices, and parent/caregiver and child bonding. The purpose of expanding training for LDSS and Voluntary Agencies is to promote and improve quality family time, a key driver of reunification. Participant feedback will be gauged to improve trainings as needed.	OCFS and contracted provider(s)	Percentage each month of children who exit foster care in less than 12 months

Strategy 2.3 Decrease the overall number of children entering foster care.

Key Activity	Responsibility	Lead Measure
OCFS will offer coaching and support on case conference processes that occur prior to removal decisions. This bolsters review of safety factors, risk elements and family strengths and considers underutilized and non-traditional services and resources to support families. Implementation is for LDSS agencies with higher rates of removals versus rest of state rate.	OCFS	Core Measure: Number of children entering foster care during month.

Section III: Measurement Plan

- 1) OCFS will submit monthly measurements on the OMS Portal.
- 2) Measurements are submitted no later than 45 days after reporting month ends.
- 3) A consistent deadline by the 15th of each month is required.
- 4) OCFS may choose to update previous monthly data in the OMS portal.

CORE MEASURE

The ratio of the count of all children who were in foster care on the last day of the month (denominator) to the count of homes available to those children (numerator).

CHASER MEASURES

Maintaining Family Connections

Of all children in care on the last day of the month, the percentage of those children who were living with a relative or kin.

Congregate Care

Of all days children spent in foster care during the reporting month, the percentage of those days that were spent in congregate care.

Recent Maltreatment History

Of all children with a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report that reached disposition during the month, the percent who had a prior substantiated or indicated maltreatment report that reached disposition within the prior 182 days.

Home Disruptions

Of all homes with a child placed in the home during the month, the percent of those homes with a disruption during the month.

LEAD MEASURES

GOAL 1

- Median number of days to approval of kinship homes
- Percentage of kinship admissions out of the total new admissions each month
- Percentage of foster homes open at end of month that are designated therapeutic
- Percentage of homes at end of month caring for 2 or more siblings
- Percentage of children with level of difficulty to place in care at end of month placed in a home-based setting
- Percentage of youth ages 13-17 in care at the end of month placed in a home-based setting
- Number of foster homes closed each month (statewide info)

GOAL 2

- Number of children entering foster care each month.
- Number of children exiting foster care during month.
- Percentage each month of children who exit foster care in less than 12 months

Conclusion:

OCFS appreciates the opportunity to participate in this pilot initiative and to focus program improvement efforts on measurable strategies related to prevention, foster home capacity, timely permanency and child and family wellbeing.