

Children's Bureau

Round 4 Child and Family Services Reviews

Fact Sheet for Tribal Child Welfare Officials



What Are the Child and Family Services Reviews?

The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) determine state child welfare system conformity with federal child welfare requirements; (2) learn about the experiences of children, youth, and families receiving child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.

The reviews help states in partnership with Tribes, stakeholders, and other community partners to identify strengths and areas needing improvement within their agencies and programs to help states improve child welfare services and outcomes for families and children who receive services. As part of this work, the CFSR provides the Children's Bureau with an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to advancing the equitable treatment of all children and families.

The reviews help states use the data and information collected to identify strengths and areas needing improvement within their agencies and programs. The reviews also provide states an opportunity to consider and critically analyze evidence of disparities in decision-making processes, programs, and policies that may contribute to inequity in services and outcomes for people of color, Native Americans, and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality in the child welfare system.

Every child welfare system works to address the needs of children who have been maltreated and to achieve positive safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for them and their families. Tribal and state child welfare agencies have many common goals. Among them are enhancing families'

capacity to safely care for their children, preventing the unnecessary removal of children, achieving timely and appropriate permanency, promoting and preserving family relationships and connections, and meaningfully engaging families.

The reviews specifically assess states on the following seven outcomes for families and children who are involved in the child welfare system:

Safety

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families.

Well-Being

- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Through the CFSRs, the Children's Bureau also determines states' performance on seven systemic factors. The systemic factors refer to systems within a state that should be in place to promote positive child safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. The seven systemic factors reviewed are:¹

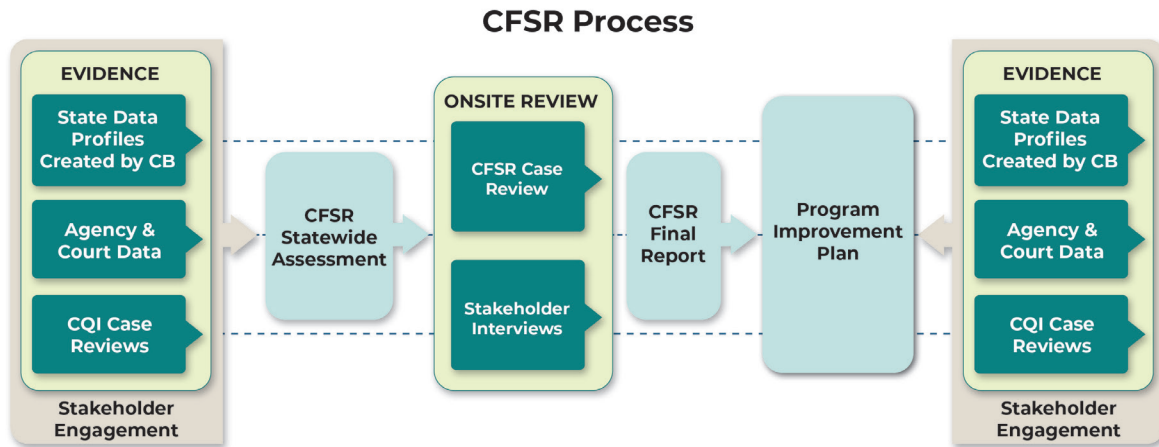
1. Statewide Information System
2. Case Review System
3. Quality Assurance System
4. Staff and Provider Training
5. Service Array and Resource Development
6. Agency Responsiveness to the Community
7. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The Children's Bureau and the state child welfare system under review conduct the CFSRs in partnership with community partners and Tribes. Tribal involvement and partnership in the process is critical to fully understanding the experiences of people served by the child welfare system. Involvement in the CFSRs may include representation from local Tribes; local and statewide Tribal organizations, such as urban service centers; local chapters of national organizations addressing Tribal issues; and Tribal child-placing agencies or social services. (See "More Information" below to learn about the CFSRs and how to get involved.)

¹ For more information on the outcomes and systemic factors, see the CFSR Quick Reference Items List. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cfsr_quick_reference_list.pdf

The CFSR Process

The CFSRs are a partnership between federal and state staff. The process is explained below.



The statewide assessment provides an opportunity for states to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative data and evidence to evaluate their child welfare programs and practices. The information captured in the statewide assessment informs the Children’s Bureau’s substantial conformity determinations and is used to inform subsequent phases. Next is the onsite review, conducted by a joint federal-state team. After the onsite review, states determined not to be in substantial conformity with one or more of the seven outcomes and seven systemic factors are required to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address all areas of nonconformity as

specified in the CFSR Final Report. The PIP provides an opportunity for the state child welfare agency, Tribes, community partners, stakeholders, and persons with lived experience to use information from the statewide assessment and the onsite review to develop, implement, and monitor a state-specific plan to strengthen the functioning of the systemic factors and improve outcomes for the children and families served. Tribes, community partners, stakeholders, and youth and parents served by the child welfare system can be involved in improvement planning efforts and assist the agency in developing, supporting, and monitoring the improvements.

Get Involved

The Children’s Bureau expects states to ensure Tribal participation through early and ongoing outreach to Tribes and by discussing with Tribes the specific opportunities available for participation in the process. States can invite Tribal representatives to participate directly in the review process, and Tribes can request participation, which you can do in several ways:

Statewide Assessment



You can ask to be involved in the CFSR. You can request to participate in focus groups or interviews, and assist in identifying potential review team members and key Tribal members (e.g., officials from Tribal child welfare, Tribal courts, and Tribal governments; people with lived experience; and elders, cultural and spiritual leaders, and other knowledge-holders).

Onsite Review



You can participate as a reviewer or participate in interviews conducted during the reviews. You can also assist Tribal teams with stipends or other help to enable elders and cultural/spiritual leaders to travel to and attend reviews.

Program Improvement Plan



You can help develop your state’s PIP. You can share ideas about changes you would like to see made in the child welfare system. You can offer and hold trainings for Tribal staff and leaders (e.g., on the CFSRs and the PIP) with Q&A and opportunities for peer-to-peer discussion.

Contact your state child welfare agency’s Tribal contact/liaison for information about the CFSR in your state and opportunities for your involvement. A list of agency websites is at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/organizations/>



More Information

Tribal officials can learn about the review process by becoming familiar with the outcomes of their state's last review. Additional information on the reviews is available on the Children's Bureau's website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews> and the CFSR Information Portal at <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources>.

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