



Child and Family Services Reviews

Nebraska

Final Report

2017



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

This page is intentionally blank.

Final Report: Nebraska Child and Family Services Review

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of Nebraska. The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for Nebraska are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and submitted to the Children's Bureau on April 5, 2017. The statewide assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
- The results of case reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home) conducted via a Traditional Review process at Douglas, Hall, and Platte/Colfax counties, Nebraska, during the week of June 4, 2017
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Attorneys for the agency, children/youth, and parents
 - Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
 - Child welfare agency senior managers
 - Child welfare agency supervisors and caseworkers
 - Child welfare agency training staff
 - Contracted supervisors and caseworkers
 - Foster and adoptive parents
 - Foster and adoptive parent licensing staff
 - Foster care administrative review office
 - Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) staff
 - Information system staff

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Judges
- Parents
- Representatives from the courts and Court Improvement Program (CIP)
- Service providers
- State licensed/approved child care facility staff
- Training staff
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, the Children's Bureau suspended the use of the state's performance on the national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. For contextual information, Appendix A of this report shows the state's performance on the 7 data indicators. Moving forward, the Children's Bureau will refer to the national standards as "national performance." This national performance represents the performance of the nation on the statewide data indicators for an earlier point in time. For the time periods used to calculate the national performance for each indicator, see 80 Fed. Reg. 27263 (May 13, 2015).

Background Information

The Round 3 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates 1 or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome.

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state's substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the statewide assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity.

The Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. As such, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides tables presenting Nebraska's overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about Nebraska's performance in Round 2.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

None of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity.

The following 4 of the 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity:

- Statewide Information System
- Quality Assurance System
- Staff and Provider Training
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Children's Bureau Comments on Nebraska Performance

The following are the Children's Bureau's observations about cross-cutting issues and Nebraska's overall performance:

Nebraska DCFS's commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) over the last few years has been integral to driving change both in case practice and at the systems level. As a part of its CQI process, Nebraska DCFS has demonstrated willingness to be transparent, identify needs, examine root causes behind the data, and work with external partners to identify solutions. As a result, Nebraska is in an advantageous position to continue improvement efforts.

In general, the case reviews identified uneven practice across review sites, and the findings indicate an opportunity for Nebraska to address challenges. Inconsistent practice across sites was found particularly in in-home cases. Foster care cases generally were rated higher in safety and well-being items than in-home cases. In some cases, safety and risk assessments do not appropriately include all children in the family and are not always done at important case junctures, such as prior to case closure. Safety concerns were also seen in alternative response cases at some of the sites. To improve safety outcomes for children, the Children's Bureau encourages Nebraska to examine its practices surrounding safety assessment and management at all critical case junctures.

Structured Decision Making (SDM) is used effectively to assess risk and safety throughout the life of some cases and addresses well-being needs for children and parents. Further, Family Team Meetings contribute to a more holistic understanding of children and parents' needs in both foster care and in-home cases. These stronger practice areas may be foundations for program improvement.

Nebraska's statewide assessment identified concerns regarding lack of timely filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions. This same concern was also seen in the case reviews. During appeals of terminations of parental rights, delays in permanency hearings and periodic reviews contributed to untimely achievement of permanency for children. In some cases, these court hearings were delayed a few months while the case was set for appeal. However, in at least one case, periodic reviews and permanency hearings were delayed for more than a year. Not changing permanency goals timely also contributed to the lack of timely

Nebraska 2017 CFSSR Final Report

permanency for children. This was most often seen when the agency and court maintained a goal of reunification even when the goal was no longer an appropriate goal given the circumstances of the case.

Case reviews identified strong practice in many areas, particularly in foster care cases. Reviewers saw good casework practice that addressed children's needs, particularly medical and dental needs, and in maintaining connections for children in foster care. Additionally, placement with siblings and addressing the education needs of children were often noted as areas of strength. There was effective use of relative and kinship placements that promoted placement stability. The children's current placements, at the time of review, were considered stable in most of the cases reviewed. In some cases, the needs of caregivers were assessed but no supports were provided to meet the identified needs. Opportunities to improve placement stability include strengthening assessment and service provision to foster families and to relatives providing care.

In both in-home and foster care cases, case review results showed significant challenges in appropriately assessing the needs of parents, especially fathers. In addition to the challenges with appropriately assessing parents' needs, the provision of services to meet parents' needs and engaging parents in developing case plans are also areas of concern. Stakeholders and case review results indicate the need for the state to improve its practices in engaging and working with parents. Case review results suggest that the frequency and quality of visits with children and parents affect the state's performance across safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. The CB encourages the state to examine its practices in this area, particularly in in-home cases.

A lack of resources across Nebraska is a cross-cutting concern that was identified throughout the review. An insufficient array of appropriate services and service providers contributed to the lack of positive safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families across the three sites. A synthesis of the information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews found significant challenges in accessing needed services in more rural areas; e.g., areas further from Omaha and Lincoln, and especially in the western part of the state. While this concern was most often noted in the context of substance abuse inpatient and outpatient assessment and treatment for parents, the need for drug and alcohol services for youth was also identified. Challenges in accessing mental health assessment and treatment services for parents and children was also reported, especially the need for more specialized services to address attachment, trauma, adoption, dual-diagnosis, and sexual abuse-related issues. Stakeholders said that the following resources and services are also difficult to access: housing, transportation, residential treatment for youth, prevention services, and adequate placement resources for children; e.g., family foster homes.

Stakeholders varied as to whether services are being individualized and tailored to meet the needs of children and families across the state and whether services are routinely individualized for relatives providing care for children in foster care. Stakeholders reported that tailoring services to meet the needs of non-English-speaking families is a significant challenge in some areas of the state. While translation and interpreter services are generally available, stakeholders noted that it is not always clear whether the translation services provided are meeting the needs of non-English-speaking families. Some stakeholders reported that placement resources are not individualized to meet the needs of youth with high needs and that, as a result, youth are placed in homes or facilities because they are available rather than based on the youth's needs.

In addition to Nebraska's CQI strategies, the state was also found to have strengths in initial and ongoing staff training and training for foster and adoptive parents. The current efforts to enhance supervisor training will also be critical in improving outcomes.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

Although these are not the only strengths in the Nebraska system, they will provide foundations for success as Nebraska continues its improvement efforts. Nebraska will need to identify additional ways to engage parents, the courts, and other agencies in its future improvement efforts.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. Nebraska provides an alternative/differential response to, in addition to a traditional investigation of, incoming reports of child maltreatment or children in need of services. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care, in-home, and in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to DCFS. The state is encouraged to conduct additional item-specific analysis of the case review findings to better understand areas of practice that are associated with positive outcomes and those that need improvement.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Item 1.

State Outcome Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 72% of the 39 applicable cases reviewed.

Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance

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

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes.

State policy requires that when an intake is received by the centralized hotline, a screening is completed to determine if the intake will be accepted for Traditional Investigation or Alternative Response. Traditional Investigations are assigned one of three priority levels. Traditional Investigations assigned as a priority 1 require the case manager to contact the alleged victim within 24 hours from the time the intake was accepted for assessment. The case manager must contact the alleged victim(s) within 5 calendar days from the date the intake was accepted for assessment for intakes assigned a priority 2 response, and within 10 calendar days for those assigned a priority 3 response. In Alternative Response there is not a formal investigation or finding as to whether child abuse or neglect has

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

occurred. Initial face-to-face contact with the family, including all children in the family, is required within 5 calendar days of the date the intake was accepted.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 72% of the 39 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Safety statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

State Outcome Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 63% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 80% of the 40 foster care cases, 43% of the 21 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 4 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 2. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 78% of the 27 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 93% of the 14 applicable foster care cases, 64% of the 11 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 63% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 80% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 43% of the 21 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 4 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6

State Outcome Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 45% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 80% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 70% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 6. Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 58% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Permanency statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

State Outcome Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 78% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 7. Placement With Siblings

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 7 because 90% of the 31 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,¹ and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 79% of the 34 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 76% of the 17 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 86% of the 28 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

¹ For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- In 94% of the 17 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

Item 9. Preserving Connections

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 88% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 10. Relative Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 85% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father² or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 76% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 86% of the 28 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 76% of the 17 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

² For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

State Outcome Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 45% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 53% of the 40 foster care cases, 38% of the 21 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 4 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 12. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents,³ and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 49% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as a Strength in 55% of the 40 foster care cases, 48% of the 21 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 4 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

Sub-Item 12A. Needs Assessment and Services to Children

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 78% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.

³ For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

Nebraska 2017 CF SR Final Report

- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 90% of the 40 foster care cases, 62% of the 21 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 4 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Sub-Item 12B. Needs Assessment and Services to Parents

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 55% of the 58 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 67% of the 33 applicable foster care cases, 48% of the 21 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 4 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 74% of the 57 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 55% of the 47 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

Sub-Item 12C. Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 73% of the 40 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents⁴ and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 67% of the 64 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 77% of the 39 applicable foster care cases, 62% of the 21 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 4 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 74% of the 39 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 88% of the 57 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 64% of the 45 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

⁴ For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 83% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 95% of the 40 foster care cases, 67% of the 21 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 4 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers⁵ of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 57% of the 58 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 64% of the 33 applicable foster care cases, 57% of the 21 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 4 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 72% of the 57 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 58% of the 45 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Item 16.

State Outcome Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

⁵ For Item 15, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

The outcome was substantially achieved in 90% of the 42 applicable cases reviewed.

Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 90% of the 42 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 94% of the 33 applicable foster care cases, 71% of the 7 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 using the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

State Outcome Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 67% of the 58 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 75% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 53% of the 15 applicable in-home services cases, and 33% of the 3 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance

Item 17. Physical Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 85% of the 46 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 88% of the 40 foster care cases, 67% of the 6 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 0 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 65% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 78% of the 23 applicable foster care cases, 50% of the 14 applicable in-home services cases, and 33% of the 3 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item and a description of how the rating was determined. The CFSR relies upon a review of information contained in the statewide assessment to assess each item. If an item rating cannot be determined from the information contained in the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau conducts stakeholder interviews and considers information gathered through the interviews in determining ratings for each item.

Statewide Information System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 19.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Nebraska is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Statewide Information System Item Performance

Item 19. Statewide Information System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the 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.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Data and information in the statewide assessment and collected during stakeholder interviews show that Nebraska's statewide information system can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for placement of children who are, or within the immediately preceding 12 months have been, in foster care.

Case Review System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. None of the 5 items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Case Review System Item Performance

Item 20. Written Case Plan

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment. Nebraska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Data and information in the statewide assessment showed that written case plans for children in the state's foster care system are not routinely developed jointly with parents.

Item 21. Periodic Reviews

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Nebraska did not provide sufficient data or information in the statewide assessment to support that periodic reviews were occurring no less frequently than once every 6 months. Stakeholders reported that periodic reviews routinely occur for many children in foster care. However, stakeholders said that in some areas of the state, in cases when the judicial TPR decision is appealed, it is not uncommon for all periodic reviews to cease. As a result, timely periodic reviews do not occur for these children as required. The state does not have data to indicate the magnitude of this issue.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

Item 22. Permanency Hearings

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Nebraska did not provide sufficient data or information in the statewide assessment to support that permanency hearings were occurring no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter. Stakeholders reported that periodic reviews routinely occur for many children in foster care. However, stakeholders said that in some areas of the state, in cases when the judicial TPR decision is appealed, it is not uncommon for permanency hearings to cease. As a result, timely permanency hearings do not occur for these children as required. The state does not have data to indicate the magnitude of this issue.

Item 23. Termination of Parental Rights

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment. Nebraska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Data and information from the statewide assessment showed that TPR petitions are not routinely filed across the state in a timely manner, as required.

Item 24. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment. Nebraska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Data and information in the statewide assessment showed that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care do not routinely receive notification of and have a right to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

Nebraska 2017 CF SR Final Report

Quality Assurance System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 25.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Nebraska is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Quality Assurance System Item Performance

Item 25. Quality Assurance System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that each element/category of the state's QA system is well-functioning. The state actively engages an array of external and internal stakeholders in ongoing CQI initiatives through multiple levels of CQI teams and monthly quality improvement meetings.

Staff and Provider Training

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Nebraska is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. All of the items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Staff and Provider Training Item Performance

Item 26. Initial Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that training for new case management staff routinely occurs across the state within the state's established time frames. Stakeholders said that the training routinely provides new staff with the knowledge and skills needed to assume their case management duties. Stakeholders explained that any case assignments made before the completion of training are closely monitored and informed by the caseworker's supervisor's assessment of relevant skills and readiness.

Item 27. Ongoing Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff⁶ that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that staff across the state routinely complete the required ongoing training hours within the state's established time frames. Stakeholders said that ongoing training routinely provides caseworkers and supervisors with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their duties.

Item 28. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide 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.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that foster and pre-adoptive parents routinely receive the 24 hours of initial training before receiving a license and that the initial training routinely addresses the skills and knowledge base needed by foster and adoptive parents. Stakeholders said that ongoing training

⁶ "Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

requirements for foster/pre-adoptive parents are routinely met within the established time frames and that the ongoing training routinely provides foster and pre-adoptive parents with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their caregiving duties. Stakeholders also said that the initial and ongoing training requirements for staff of state-licensed facilities are routinely met within the established time frames and that these trainings provide staff with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their duties.

Service Array and Resource Development

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance

Item 29. Array of Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that Nebraska has challenges in accessing needed services in more rural areas of the state, especially in the western part of the state. Stakeholders reported that accessing substance abuse assessment and treatment services for parents and youth was difficult and that there were challenges with accessing mental health services for parents and children, especially more specialized services to address attachment, trauma, adoption, dual-diagnosis, and sexual abuse-related issues. Stakeholders said that it was also difficult to access housing, residential treatment for youth, prevention services, and that there was a lack of adequate placement resources for children. While the state has increased the availability of Intensive Family Preservation Services, stakeholders said that the need for this service exceeds the current capacity. Stakeholders said that the lack of transportation, lack of providers, waitlists, and limited payment options are barriers to accessing needed services.

Nebraska 2017 CFPSR Final Report

Item 30. Individualizing Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although the state has made efforts in recent years to improve how well the state individualizes services to meet the needs of children and families, there is variation across the state. Stakeholders reported that individualizing services to meet the needs of non-English-speaking families is a challenge in some areas of the state even though translation/interpreter services are generally available. Some stakeholders also said that placement resources are not individualized to meet the needs of youth with high needs and, as a result, such youth are placed in homes/facilities because they are available and not based on the youth's needs. Stakeholders were also concerned about whether services are routinely individualized for relatives providing care for children in foster care.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Nebraska is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance

Item 31. State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, 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, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although the state actively seeks input from an array of groups in the development of CFSP goals, objectives, and annual updates, no process exists for soliciting input from parents and therefore, the development of CFSP goals, objectives and annual updates do not

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

incorporate the perspectives of parents. Stakeholders reported that the state is developing a process to ensure parent input is actively solicited and used to develop CFSP goals, objectives, and annual updates.

Item 32. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- In the statewide assessment, Nebraska provided numerous examples of how the state coordinates services or benefits with other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. These included coordination and partnership with federal and federally funded programs related to early childhood development, education, developmental disability, behavioral and mental health, independent living and adult transition initiatives for older youth, family violence prevention, community partnership, prevention of human trafficking, and federal self-sufficiency initiatives.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Nebraska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. One of the four items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Item Performance

Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although generally standards are applied equally across licensed foster family homes and childcare institutions, there is one exception. Stakeholders reported that pre-service training for relatives is waived, and these waivers do not occur on a case-by-case basis.

Nebraska 2017 CFSR Final Report

Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that 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.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that criminal background checks occur before the licensure of any foster and adoptive home as required, and that the state protocols to address child safety and report safety concerns for children in foster homes and child care institutions are routinely followed.

Item 35. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the 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 is occurring statewide.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment. Nebraska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that although the state collects data on the race and ethnicity of children in foster care and of foster and adoptive parents, the information is not used to inform diligent recruitment efforts, and diligent recruitment efforts are not adequately occurring across the state.

Item 36. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- Nebraska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that Nebraska has processes in place to monitor the state's effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources. Nebraska provided information in the statewide assessment showing that although there have been improvements in the timeliness of completing home study requests, timely completion of home studies remains a challenge for the state.

Appendix A

Summary of Nebraska 2017 Child and Family Services Review Performance

I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcome Achievement: Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the state to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

Item Achievement: Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1 Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	72% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	72% Strength

SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 2 Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	63% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	78% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	63% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Nebraska 2017 CFSR Performance

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	45% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	70% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	58% Strength

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2 The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	78% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Strength	90% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	79% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	88% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	76% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Nebraska 2017 CFSR Performance

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1 Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	45% Substantially Achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	49% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	78% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	55% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	73% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	67% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	83% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	57% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	90% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	90% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Nebraska 2017 CFSR Performance

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	67% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	65% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children's Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The Children's Bureau determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the Children's Bureau must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the Children's Bureau must find that the item is functioning as required.

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Nebraska 2017 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Case Review System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 20 Written Case Plan	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21 Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 22 Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 23 Termination of Parental Rights	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 24 Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 26 Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Nebraska 2017 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 28 Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Service Array and Resource Development	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 29 Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30 Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Nebraska 2017 CFSR Performance

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 33 Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 34 Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 35 Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 36 State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators⁷

The state's performance is considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator and provides contextual information for considering the findings. This information is not used in conformity decisions. State performance may be statistically above, below, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the Children's Bureau did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

⁷ In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. The syntax revision is still underway, so performance shown in this table is based on the 2015 Federal Register syntax.

Appendix A: Summary of Nebraska 2017 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.1%	Lower	9.7%	8.7%-10.8%	FY14-FY15
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	7.10	5.63-8.95	15A-15B, FY15
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	Higher	37.9%	36.2%-39.7%	13B-16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	43.6%	Higher	50.3%	47.5%-53.2%	15B-16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	37.6%	35.1%-40.3%	15B-16A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	6.1%	4.9%-7.6%	13B-16A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	2.83	2.67-2.99	15B-16A

* Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is derived from a multi-level statistical model and reflects the state's performance relative to states with similar children and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children and, for some indicators, the state's entry rate. It uses risk-adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a more fair comparison of state performance against national performance.

** 95% Confidence Interval is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state's RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

*** Data Period(s) Used for State Performance: Refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1 – September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1 – March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1 – September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.

Appendix B: Nebraska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Appendix B Summary of CFSR Round 2 Nebraska 2008 Key Findings

The Children's Bureau conducted a CFSR in Nebraska in 2008. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

Identifying Information and Review Dates

General Information
Children's Bureau Region: 7
Date of Onsite Review: July 14–18, 2008
Period Under Review: April 1, 2007, through July 18, 2008
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: March 13, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: June 11, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: July 1, 2010

Highlights of Findings

Performance Measurements
A. The state met the national standards for one of the six standards.
B. The state achieved substantial conformity with zero of the seven outcomes.
C. The state achieved substantial conformity with five of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: Nebraska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

State's Conformance With the National Standards

Data Indicator or Composite	National Standard	State's Score	Meets or Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)	94.6 or higher	91.3	Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.43	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	110.8	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	90.7	Does Not Meet Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	154.1	Meets Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	89.8	Does Not Meet Standard

State's Conformance With the Outcomes

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Nebraska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

State's Conformance With the Systemic Factors

Systemic Factor	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Statewide Information System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Case Review System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Quality Assurance System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Staff and Provider Training	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Service Array and Resource Development	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Achieved Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Nebraska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Key Findings by Item

Outcomes

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
2. Repeat Maltreatment	Strength
3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
5. Foster Care Re-entries	Strength
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	Area Needing Improvement
7. Permanency Goal for Child	Area Needing Improvement
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives	Area Needing Improvement
9. Adoption	Area Needing Improvement
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	Area Needing Improvement
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	Strength
12. Placement With Siblings	Strength
13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
14. Preserving Connections	Area Needing Improvement
15. Relative Placement	Area Needing Improvement
16. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
17. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	Area Needing Improvement
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	Area Needing Improvement
19. Caseworker Visits With Child	Area Needing Improvement
20. Caseworker Visits With Parents	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: Nebraska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
21. Educational Needs of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
22. Physical Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement

Systemic Factors

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
24. Statewide Information System	Strength
25. Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
26. Periodic Reviews	Strength
27. Permanency Hearings	Area Needing Improvement
28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Area Needing Improvement
30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Strength
31. Quality Assurance System	Strength
32. Initial Staff Training	Strength
33. Ongoing Staff Training	Strength
34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
35. Array of Services	Area Needing Improvement
36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement
37. Individualizing Services	Area Needing Improvement
38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength
39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength

Appendix B: Nebraska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength
42. Standards Applied Equally	Strength
43. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Strength
44. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Area Needing Improvement
45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Strength