

**2008 Child and Family Review  
Summary  
March 2009**

**What is a Child & Family Services Review?**

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. The CFSR is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

There are three phases of the review:

- The Statewide Self Assessment, prepared by the State and stakeholders
- On-Site Review – consists of a file review as well as interviews with children, families and other key stakeholders. Conducted by paired teams of federal and state reviewers.
- Program Improvement Plan – Corrective Action Plan developed by States to work towards achievement of outcomes in areas needing improvement based on the Statewide Assessment and On-site Review.

Background:

- The CFSR assesses State performance on 23 items relevant to seven outcomes and 22 items pertaining to seven system factors.
- System Factors
  1. Statewide Information System
  2. Case Review System
  3. Quality Assurance System
  4. Staff Training
  5. Service Array
  6. Agency Responsiveness to Community
  7. Foster & Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention.
- Outcomes (Safety, Permanency & Well-Being)

**Safety**

1. Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
2. Children are safety maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

**Permanency**

3. Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
4. The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

**Well-Being**

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

**Round 1 - 2002 CFSR**

Nebraska's first review was in July 2002. Two of the six data standards were in compliance with the four others needing improvement. At that time Nebraska did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven safety, permanency or well-being outcomes, despite the fact that we met the national standards with respect to the incidence of maltreatment of children in foster care and the rate of foster care re-entries. In addition, the State was found to be effective in maintaining children safely in their own homes when possible and appropriate and in managing the risk of harm to children. Other areas of strength identified through the CFSR were preventing foster care re-entries and placing children in close proximity to their biological families and with their siblings when possible and in the children's best interest.

With regard to the State's performance on the system factors, the CFSR determined that the State was in substantial conformity with factors related to the statewide information system; training for

child welfare staff and child caregivers; and agency responsiveness to the community. However, the State was not in substantial conformity with factors pertaining to the case review system; quality assurance; the service array; or foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention.

This review led to the development of a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) 2003-2006 with over 200 items needing to be addressed. The State took a strategic approach and focused on the following priority areas that were strategically designed to achieve the deeper and more fundamental long-term changes.

1. Collaborative Case Practice
2. Quality Assurance: Holding Ourselves Accountable
3. Timely Adoptions and Permanency Actions
4. Service Array Enhancements

## Round 2 - 2008 CFRS

Key Changes for Round 2 of the CFRS:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases.
- Standard to obtain substantial conformity was raised from 90% to 95%.
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variation in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items.
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas, such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents.
- Changes in the six data performance measures moving from percentages to data composites.

These changes do not allow the State's to compare performance in the second round of reviews to first round.

What's Happened so far-

- Statewide Assessment completed in May 2008 – over 140 stakeholders participated from across the state.
- On-site review of a total of 65 cases was conducted in three counties (Dawson, Hall and Douglas) in July 2008
- Receipt of courtesy copy of the federal final report on March 13, 2009.

## Round 2 Findings

- There were no identified areas of concern that the State was not aware of prior to receipt of the courtesy report. The strengths and areas needing improvement were identified in the Statewide Assessment completed in May 2008 and that information was confirmed by the on-site review conducted in July 2008.
- So far in Round 2, Substantial Conformity was achieved for 5 of the 7 System Factors. Only three other states, of 19 reviewed, fared better than Nebraska related to achievement of the system outcomes.
  - Achieved
    - Statewide Information System
    - Quality Assurance
    - Staff Training
    - Agency Responsiveness to Community
    - Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment, Training and Retention
  - Areas Needing Improvement (ANI)
    - Case Review System (Only one of the 19 states reviewed at this time has met this outcome.)

- Service Array (Only four of the 19 states reviewed at this time have met this outcome.)
- Substantial Conformity was not achieved for any of the Outcomes for Children and Families. None of the 19 states reviewed at this time have met all of the Outcomes. In fact, only one Outcome (Well-Being 2 – Education) has been met by any state (Idaho, Massachusetts and North Carolina).
  - Nebraska did achieve overall ratings of Strength for the individual indicators pertaining to repeat maltreatment, foster care reentry, placing children in close proximity to their parents and placement with siblings.
  - Key concerns:
    - Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situation) – Nebraska’s lowest ratings were for adoptions and other planned living arrangements (independent living).
    - Well-Being Outcome 1 (families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs) – The lowest ratings were for assessing and meeting the needs of children, parents, and foster parents, child and family involvement in case planning and caseworker visits with parents.
    - Safety Outcome 1 (children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) – The lowest rating within this outcome was for timeliness of investigations.
  - Key Factors
    - High caseloads in parts of the state and the high rate of worker turnover, as well as inexperience in supervisory positions.
    - Number of foster homes and placement resources are insufficient to meet the needs of children.
    - The State’s most effective approach to engaging families – family team meetings – is not utilized consistently.
    - Inconsistent search for or engagement of noncustodial parents in case planning.
    - Inconsistent practices that promote permanency for children including: timely establishment and attainment of permanency goals, conducting permanency review hearings, timely filing for termination of parental rights, maintaining stable placements, and conducting caseworker visits.
    - Lack of sufficient mental health and substance abuse treatment resources.
- Federal Data Indicators
  - Nebraska meets the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended periods of time.
  - No additional data indicators were met at the time, but the State believes that we will receive ACF approval of meeting the data indicators for 1) absence of child abuse or neglect in foster care and 2) timeliness of adoption once the Program Improvement Plan is accepted by the ACF during our first quarter of reporting. We continue to meet the federal data measure related to Youth in Foster Care for Long Periods of time.

### Next Steps

- The State has until March 27, 2009 to notify the ACF of any material deficits the State believes are missing from or included in the courtesy copy of the final report.
- The State has until June 11, 2009 to prepare and submit the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- PIP Completion – June 2011

State	Statewide Information System	Case Review System	Quality Assurance System	Training	Service Array	Agency Responsiveness to Community	Foster & Adoptive Parent Licensing	Total System Factors in Compliance
DC	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	7
Mass	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	6
Idaho	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	Strength	6
Nebraska	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI	Strength	Strength	5
Oklahoma	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI	Strength	Strength	5
Arizona	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI	Strength	Strength	5
Delaware	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI	Strength	Strength	5
Minnesota	Strength	ANI	Strength	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	5
N. Carolina	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	5
Alabama	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI*	4
Georgia	Strength	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	4
Kansas	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	Strength	4
Vermont	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	Strength	4
Florida	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	Strength	4
California	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	3
New Mexico	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	3
Oregon	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	Strength	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	3
Arkansas	Strength	ANI*	ANI*	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	ANI*	2
Indiana	Strength	ANI*	ANI*	ANI*	ANI*	ANI*	Strength	2
<b>Percent of States Meeting Factor</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>1/19</b>	<b>17/19</b>	<b>11/19</b>	<b>4/19</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>13/19</b>	
	<b>94.70%</b>	<b>5.30%</b>	<b>89.50%</b>	<b>57.90%</b>	<b>21.10%</b>	<b>94.70%</b>	<b>68.40%</b>	

\* Area Needing Improvement

State	Safety 1	Safety 2	Permanency 1	Permanency 2	Well-being 1	Well-being 2	Well-being 3	Outcomes Achieved
Alabama	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Arizona	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Arkansas	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
California	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
DC	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Delaware	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Florida	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Georgia	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Idaho	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	1
Indiana	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Kansas	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Massachusetts	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	1
Minnesota	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Nebraska	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
New Mexico	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
North Carolina	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	1
Oklahoma	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0
Vermont	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0

### CFSR Round 2 Data Measures

