



Department of
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor
Michael B. Colbert, Director

June 7, 2012

TO: Directors, Public Children Services Agencies
Directors and Administrators, Private Agencies
Honorable Judges, Title IV-E Courts

FROM: Jennifer R. Justice, Deputy Director
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

**SUBJECT: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Report System (AFCARS)
Assessment Reviews (AAR)**

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has notified the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) they will be conducting Ohio's first AFCARS Assessment Reviews (AAR) during the week of August 20, 2012. AAR is conducted by the Children's Bureau and the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Information Services.

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the review is to assess the:

- accuracy and reliability of foster care and adoption data;
- accuracy of SACWIS data against federal AFCARS requirements;
- capability of SACWIS to accurately collect, extract, and transmit AFCARS data to the Children's Bureau; and
- timeliness and accuracy of data entry by caseworkers.

Components of the Review

There are five components of the AAR process. These include:

1. AFCARS Assessment Review Initial Phase

During this phase the AAR schedule is developed.

2. Pre-site Visit Phase

Prior to the on-site visit the State enters 15 test cases and extracts test data for transmission to the Children's Bureau. During this phase there is an exchange of documentation between the Federal and State teams. The Federal team conducts a preliminary analysis of the State's documentation in order to develop initial findings and identifies additional focus issues for the on-site review.

The select sample for the case file review is provided and contacts with applicable agencies are made to schedule logistics for pick up of hard copy records.

3. On-site Visit Phase

The on-site review is conducted over five business days. It will consist of: (a) an entrance conference; (b) a system demonstration using a sample case scenario; (c) a review of case files; (d) a review of the AFCARS population and data element requirements; (e) a technical review; (f) documenting review findings; and (g) an exit conference.

4. Post-site Visit Phase

The post-visit phase involves a final assessment by the Federal team of the information gathered during the on-site review, including any corrections the State makes to its extraction code within 45 days after the site visit. A report will be prepared which contains the major findings from the review.

5. AFCARS Improvement Phase

If there are areas the State must correct in order to meet the requirements established in the AFCARS Federal regulations, the State will commence the AFCARS Improvement Phase. A State has two years from receipt of the final report to complete its improvement plan and make all system changes and improve data quality.

A major focus of the review is to examine SACWIS conversion data (pre/post 2008). Eighty foster care cases and thirty (30) adoption cases will be reviewed. If cases from your agency are selected for the review, you will need to provide the following:

- The child's entire case record pursuant to OAC 5101:2-33-23 *Case Records for Children Services*.

ODJFS staff will contact applicable public children services agencies with more details regarding preparation of cases and a time to pick up records during the first week in August 2012. Once the review has been completed, the records will be returned to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tresa Young at (614) 387-8910 or via e-mail at Tresa.Young@jfs.ohio.gov.

- c: Crystal Ward Allen, Executive Director, Public Children Services Association of Ohio
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