



Child and Family Services Reviews

Alaska

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: Alaska Child and Family Services Review

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of Alaska. 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 Alaska are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Alaska Office of Children's Services (OCS) and submitted to the Children's Bureau on March 21, 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 Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Ketchikan, Alaska, during the week of May 22, 2017
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Child care facility staff
 - Child welfare agency program managers
 - Child welfare agency supervisors and caseworkers
 - Contract caseworkers and supervisors
 - Foster and adoptive parents
 - Foster and adoptive parent licensing staff
 - Parents served by the agency
 - Representatives from the courts and the Court Improvement Project
 - Representatives from other public agencies
 - Service providers
 - Training state partners

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- 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 Alaska's overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about Alaska's performance in Round 2.

I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

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

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

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

One of the 7 systemic factors was found to be in substantial conformity:

- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Children's Bureau Comments on Alaska Performance

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

Alaska's investment in collaborative relationships with stakeholders, partners, and Tribes is a foundational strength on which the state continually develops its strategic plans. The longstanding and bidirectional partnerships the state has cultivated with Tribes and stakeholders were evidenced by the level of participation in CFSP/APSR planning and development, CFSR case reviews, and information shared in both the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. The use of "community cafés" in all five OCS regions; annual staff, Tribal, and foster parent surveys; and quarterly advisory committee meetings serve as institutionalized opportunities Alaska uses to gather, consider, incorporate, and leverage the viewpoints of community partners, service providers, and children and families to support improvements in safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

Alaska collects and considers numerous quantitative and qualitative data sources, including ongoing case reviews using some of the tenets of the CFSR. However, OCS has not yet achieved a complete, statewide, and integrated quality assurance process that assesses, evaluates, and informs policy and practice improvement decisions based on the totality of the data available to the agency. The Children's Bureau believes that moving toward a continuous quality improvement system with these elements will be critical to the success of program improvement planning and implementation.

An overwhelming number of cases reviewed involved, either alone or in combination, substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health challenges. Case review findings for both foster care and in-home services cases highlight significant concerns about the adequacy of risk and safety assessment, safety service provision, and safety planning around these issues. Poor engagement and infrequent and insufficient quality caseworker visitation with children and families was a critical factor in the lack of comprehensive and accurate risk, safety, and needs assessments, resulting in children, in almost half of the applicable cases, remaining in their homes despite unmitigated safety concerns. Stakeholders reported concerns about the availability of in-home safety services intended to address the presenting issues seen in the cases reviewed and to support maintaining children safely in their own homes. The results of the case reviews confirmed those concerns, as well as the gap in the substance abuse service continuum noted by stakeholders. These practice and systemic issues have cross-cutting implications for all outcomes in both in-home services and foster care cases. The Children's Bureau encourages Alaska to further assess its service array and its performance on the national safety data indicators to inform the development of improvement strategies to address these gaps. It is also important to craft strategies that ensure caseworkers have the knowledge, skills, and supervisory support necessary to effectively engage with families to comprehensively assess safety, and develop adequate safety plans with children and families.

The foster care cases reviewed and the statewide assessment demonstrated the stability of foster care placements. Case reviews also revealed that licensing standards are consistently applied. The CFSR results also underscored OCS' assertion that achieving

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

permanency of all types is a significant challenge for the state. Case review findings and OCS' statewide assessment noted, as prevalent concerns across the state, delayed permanency goal establishment, inadequate assessments of and appropriate service provision to parents and foster parents, and lack of engagement in case planning. The statewide assessment also identified a lack of mechanisms to monitor termination of parental rights (TPR) filings and the use of compelling reasons; to ensure caregiver notification of, and right to be heard in, hearings; and to evaluate the effectiveness of foster and adoptive parent recruitment efforts.

Despite evidence that periodic reviews and permanency hearings are being held at least as frequently as required, case reviews revealed court-related barriers and delays that affect the establishment of appropriate permanency goals and the achievement of permanency. Case reviews also revealed ineffective implementation of concurrent planning. While concurrent goals were established in many of the cases reviewed, work toward achieving the identified case plan goals, more often than not, is sequential in nature. The Children's Bureau encourages Alaska and the courts to partner in further assessment of these practice areas to develop targeted strategies that are responsive to the CFSR findings.

Alaska demonstrated strong collaboration with the state's education system to ensure that the educational needs of children in foster care are appropriately assessed and addressed. A disparity in practice between foster care cases and in-home services cases was seen in mental health assessment and service provision, caseworker visits with children, engagement in case planning, and assessing and addressing the needs of children.

OCS, stakeholder interviews, and case-participant interviews with field staff called attention to the significant workforce concerns experienced throughout the state, most notably high turnover rates, sharply increased workloads, inadequate staff training, and limited access to families and services in remote areas of the state. In the cases reviewed, multiple caseworkers and high workloads resulted in disjointed and often delayed case planning, as well as a triage approach to case management. A lack of service availability, accessibility, and facilitation of participation also were barriers noted in the cases reviewed, the statewide assessment, and stakeholder interviews.

Alaska OCS engaged in critical self-reflection throughout the CFSR process. The state demonstrated candor in its statewide assessment and recognizes the strengths, barriers, practice deficiencies, and opportunities for improvement confirmed by the cases reviewed and stakeholder interviews. The Children's Bureau believes Alaska's frank approach to system analysis, its dedicated quality assurance staff, and its ongoing engagement with stakeholders, partners, and Tribes will provide a firm foundation for program improvement work.

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. Alaska provides an alternative/differential response to, in addition

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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 and in-home services cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to Alaska OCS. 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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 72% of the 32 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 reports indicating present danger be initiated as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours from the time the report is received. Reports indicating a child is in a state of impending danger must be initiated no later than 72 hours from the time the report is received. Reports indicating a child may be at high risk of maltreatment must be initiated within 7 days from the time the report is received. Alaska defines initiation of a report of child maltreatment as face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 72% of the 32 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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

The outcome was substantially achieved in 38% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 50% of the 40 foster care cases and 20% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 38% of the 26 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 58% of the 12 applicable foster care cases and 21% of the 14 applicable in-home services 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 40% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 50% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 24% of the 25 applicable in-home services 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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 15% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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).

- Alaska 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 50% 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 25% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 65% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 89% of the 27 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 55% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 47% 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 76% of the 21 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.
- In 75% of the 16 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 75% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 76% of the 37 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 64% of the 22 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 67% of the 21 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 69% of the 16 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.

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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 31% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 38% of the 40 foster care cases and 20% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 33% of the 63 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 40% of the 40 foster care cases and 22% of the 23 in-home services cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

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

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 63% of the 63 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 80% of the 40 foster care cases and 35% of the 23 in-home services cases.

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

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 30% of the 47 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 38% of the 24 applicable foster care cases and 22% of the 23 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 43% of the 47 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 26% of the 39 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 56% of the 39 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 39% of the 59 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 50% of the 36 applicable foster care cases and 22% of the 23 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 47% of the 36 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 49% of the 47 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 30% of the 37 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 48% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 55% of the 40 foster care cases and 36% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 28% of the 50 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 32% of the 25 applicable foster care cases and 24% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 39% of the 49 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 14% of the 37 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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 85% of the 41 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

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 85% of the 41 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 92% of the 36 applicable foster care cases and 40% of the 5 applicable in-home services 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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 50% of the 58 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 60% of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 28% of the 18 applicable in-home services 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 68% of the 47 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 68% of the 40 foster care cases and 71% of the 7 applicable in-home services 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 45% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 60% of the 25 applicable foster care cases and 15% of the 13 applicable in-home services 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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska 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 Alaska uses a variety of standardized processes to input and verify the accuracy of the status, demographics, location, and goals for placement of children in foster care. However, these processes have limitations that affect the quality of the data and the reliability of the information within the system concerning the accuracy and timeliness of case plan data and the accuracy of goals for placement.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Two of the 5 items in this systemic factor were 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information and data in the statewide assessment showed that children and families were included in case planning in 73% of the foster care cases and 45% of the in-home cases. The state provided data showing that since 2014 there has been a decrease in the documentation of initial case planning. Case review data showed that case plans were established timely in 26.1% of the cases.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- Data and information in the statewide assessment showed that Alaska has a fully functioning administrative case review system that ensures that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months. Recent data showed that statewide, 99.9% of the periodic reviews for each child were occurring timely. State administrative reports showed that since July 2014, there has not been a month with less than 87% compliance with timely administrative reviews.

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Alaska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that on average, permanency hearings occur no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care, and subsequent permanency hearings occur on average every 169 days.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska 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 the state does not have a standardized process to track or ensure that TPR petitions are filed timely or that compelling reasons not to file a TPR are documented.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska 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 statewide, there is no standardized method in place to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are consistently notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child. Data from a 2015 foster parent survey demonstrated that 37% of caregivers statewide were not notified of pending court hearings. Those receiving notice and attending hearings reported that they offered comments to the court.

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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska 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 some elements of a functioning quality assurance system are in place throughout the state. While Alaska gathers data from multiple sources, the data do not necessarily drive practice change, nor does the CQI process fully consider all of the data available consistently across the agency and across the OCS service regions. Of particular concern, the state lacks a process to evaluate the quality of the service delivery system and implemented program improvement measures. Alaska has not yet achieved a consistent, statewide, data-driven process that assesses, evaluates, and informs policy and practice improvements and outcomes based on the totality of the data available to the agency.

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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor was 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.

Alaska 2017 CFSP Final Report

- Information in the statewide assessment showed that while the state provides initial training to state staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions, the state is not adequately evaluating the training. While the state requires contracted providers to receive training for performing these services, the state did not provide information regarding training requirements, compliance, or the evaluation of initial staff training for Tribal and contracted providers.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska 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 the state has no requirement for ongoing staff training hours or processes and tools to assess staff's ongoing training needs and evaluate the effectiveness of the training offered. The state also did not provide data or information on the effectiveness of the ongoing training offered to Tribal and community providers.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska 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 while Alaska has training requirements in place for foster parents, tracking and evaluation mechanisms, and opportunities for specialized training, the state does not have training requirements

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

for adoptive parents. Training requirements are in place for Residential Licensed Care Facilities, but there are no data on compliance with the requirements or the effectiveness of the training.

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

Alaska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that because of the state's vast geographical area, Alaska is challenged in ensuring that the array of needed services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP. Alaska does not have an established routine system for collecting needs assessment data from communities regarding service array, resource development, and service gaps. Also, the service array is not routinely included as an aspect of the OCS CQI processes. There are significant gaps in the service array throughout the state, most notably in in-home services and specialized medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment, both outpatient and residential, especially in rural areas. In addition, there is a statewide shortfall in Independent Living (IL) programs that assess and address the needs of eligible youth. The gaps result in long waitlists for some services.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state is challenged in individualizing services to meet the unique needs of families and children because of the limited funding and the lack of availability of community-based services. The flexible funding and the developmentally and culturally appropriate services that exist are not sufficient and do not meet the unique needs of all the children and families in the state, particularly in rural areas. The lack of culturally competent agency workers, turnover in the agency's and Rural Child Welfare grantee staff, lack of universal acceptance of culturally sensitive interventions, and travel restrictions also contribute to the state's inability to individualize services.

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

Alaska is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Both items in this systemic factor were 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that the state effectively engages and consults with stakeholders pursuant to the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP and APSR. The state seeks feedback from internal and external partners to identify concerns, review data, develop strategies, and implement change efforts. The CFSP and Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR) are developed with input and ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, children and families, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Through memoranda of agreement, program coordination, and improvements in technology for collaborative efforts, the state's services under the CFSP are being coordinated with services and benefits of other federal programs that assist the same service population. Alaska identified collaborations with the nine divisions of the state's Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health (former foster care youth Medicaid eligibility), Division of Public Assistance, Department of Revenue, Department of Education, Bureau of Vital Information, Division of Health Care Services (Medicaid), Department of Public Safety, and 11 Tribes/Tribal entities.

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

Alaska 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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- In the statewide assessment, Alaska stated that licensed foster homes and residential child care institutions are required to meet state statutory and regulatory licensing standards. Alaska provided information showing that state standards are applied equally to the licensed foster homes and residential child care institutions. Alaska has functioning processes for tracking foster care homes that are not fully licensed to ensure that licensing standards are met; identifying, assessing, and addressing barrier crimes; receiving and investigating complaints; applying for and evaluating variance and waiver requests; and completing standardized home studies.

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.

Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- In the statewide assessment, Alaska did not provide information to demonstrate that processes are in place for safety planning and monitoring or case planning when safety issues are identified in a child's placement.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska 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 the numbers of children who cannot be returned home exceed the number of available families. The state was not able to provide information on the effectiveness of their recruitment or whether adjustments to strategies are made to recruit families who meet the racial and ethnic needs of children awaiting foster or adoptive homes.

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.

- Alaska received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment. Alaska agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- In the statewide assessment, Alaska reported that it does not have a fully functioning system to ensure successful placement across regional or state lines. Adherence to processes to facilitate inter- and intra-jurisdictional placements are inconsistent. Information in the statewide assessment showed that Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children adoption home studies, licensure requests, and parent and relative requests are not completed timely.

Appendix A Summary of Alaska 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	38% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	38% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	40% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Alaska 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	15% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	25% 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	65% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	89% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	55% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	75% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	76% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	64% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Alaska 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	31% Substantially Achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	33% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	63% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	30% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	56% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	39% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	48% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	28% 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	85% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Alaska 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	50% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	68% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	45% 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	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of Alaska 2017 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Case Review System	Statewide Assessment	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 20 Written Case Plan	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21 Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment	Strength
Item 22 Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
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	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 26 Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of Alaska 2017 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28 Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

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	In Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment	Strength
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Alaska 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	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 33 Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment	Strength
Item 34 Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement
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	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 Alaska 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	23.1%	21.3%–25.1%	FY14–15
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	14.96	12.27–18.23	15AB, FY15
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	Higher	27.1%	24.6%–29.7%	13B–16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	43.6%	Higher	32.8%	29.4%–36.3%	15B–16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	28.4%	25.3%–31.6%	15B–16A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	5.6%	3.7%–8.4%	13B–16A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	4.62	4.35–4.9	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: Alaska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Appendix B Summary of CFSR Round 2 Alaska 2008 Key Findings

The Children's Bureau conducted a CFSR in Alaska 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: 10
Date of Onsite Review: September 8–12, 2008
Period Under Review: April 1, 2007, through September 12, 2008
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: February 3, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: May 4, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: December 1, 2009

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 none of the seven outcomes.
C. The state achieved substantial conformity with one of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: Alaska 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	90.7	Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.57	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	122.4	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	81.1	Does Not Meet Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	125.4	Meets Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	73.1	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: Alaska 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	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Staff and Provider Training	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Service Array and Resource Development	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Alaska 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	Area Needing Improvement
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: Alaska 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	Strength
28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Area Needing Improvement
30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Area Needing Improvement
31. Quality Assurance System	Area Needing Improvement
32. Initial Staff Training	Area Needing Improvement
33. Ongoing Staff Training	Area Needing Improvement
34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Area Needing Improvement
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	Area Needing Improvement
39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Area Needing Improvement
40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength

Appendix B: Alaska 2008 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Area Needing Improvement
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