

## **Appendix G**

### **Preparation for Interviews**

Review team members conduct two types of interviews during the Child and Family Services Reviews: (1) Review pairs conduct case-related interviews with children, parents, foster parents, caseworkers, and other professionals knowledgeable about a child's case to collect additional information about cases under review, and (2) Team Leaders and Local Site Leaders conduct stakeholder interviews to collect information about the systemic factors under review.

Persons with whom interviews are requested should be given basic information about the purpose of the review, the reason they are being asked to participate, and the expected focus of the interview. The following information may be useful to State and local agency staff who arrange the interviews.

#### **Purpose of the Review**

The review of child and family services programs in all States is a responsibility of the Federal Government. All State programs are reviewed periodically to determine how well they are functioning in relation to the needs of the children and families they serve. The reviews are intended to assess the range of services provided by the State or local agency, including child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation and family support, and independent living services. The reviews identify the program areas that are functioning particularly well and those in need of improvement. The Federal Government works with States to address the areas needing improvement that are identified in the reviews.

#### **Reason for Conducting Interviews**

To determine how well the State or local agency is functioning, interviews are scheduled with the people who know the systems best. They include the children and families who receive or have received services from the agency, the service providers and community representatives who work with the agency in delivering services, employees of the agency, and representatives of other agencies and professions with close ties to the State's child and family services programs.

#### **Content of the Interviews**

Typically, one or two members of the review team conduct each interview. Children and families who have received services from the agency are asked whether the services they received have helped them with their needs, whether they have been able to reach their goals, how they have participated in case planning activities, and other general matters related to their safety, permanency, and well-being. Service providers and other State representatives are asked questions regarding their involvement in the agency's programs, systemic issues that affect service delivery or outcomes, and whether services

and agency programs are achieving their objectives. The information from the interviews is reported collectively, and comments are not attributed to specific individuals. The participation of all persons in the interviews is entirely voluntary. Persons asked to participate in interviews, particularly children and families receiving services, should understand that there will be no adverse consequences if they choose not to participate.

The confirmation letter below may be used to confirm scheduled interviews and help prepare the persons with whom interviews are scheduled.

### Sample Interview Confirmation Letter

**Instructions:** Print this letter on agency letterhead, and send it after the State agency representative calls to schedule the interview and at least 2 weeks before the onsite review to persons scheduled for interviews. The State Team Leader or Local Site Coordinator, or the coordinator's designee, should sign the letter. Reasonable revisions to the letter may be made that are in keeping with the basic content and purpose of the letter and the review.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the review of the child and family services program in [enter State]. Your interview is scheduled for [enter time] on [enter date] at [enter location]. Please notify me as soon as possible at [enter phone number] if this date or time is inconvenient or you find that you will be unable to be interviewed at this time.

As we discussed, the purpose of the interview is for the Federal and State governments to jointly review the child and family services programs in our State. In accordance with Federal law and regulation, similar reviews are conducted in all States periodically as a means of identifying the strengths of State programs and areas in which improvements are needed. The review will focus on program areas that include child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation and family support, and independent living services.

As part of the review, members of the Federal-State Review Team will interview individuals and families who are receiving or have received services from this agency.

They also will interview service providers and various professional and community representatives who share an interest in the public child and family services programs in our State. The interviews will last about 1 hour and will focus on the quality of services provided, the outcomes of services, and the needs of the families served by the programs.

Information obtained from the interviews will be used to prepare a report on the status of the State's programs. The comments of individuals interviewed will not be identified by name, but will be used in summary form to describe the findings of the review. Your participation in the review is entirely voluntary. Individuals who choose not to be interviewed will not suffer any adverse effects to the services they now receive or may receive in the future.

Thank you again for your assistance in this important review.