

**IOWA TITLE- E
FOSTER CARE ELIGIBILITY REVIEW (Secondary)**

August 23 – 27, 2004

Des Moines, Iowa

I. INTRODUCTION

During the week of August 23-27, 2004, staff from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Regional Office, Central Office and staff from the State of Iowa conducted a Secondary Foster Care Eligibility Review of the State of Iowa's title IV-E foster care program.

The purpose of the secondary title IV-E review was to validate the accuracy of Iowa title IV-E claims to assure that appropriate payments were made on behalf of eligible children, to eligible homes and institutions at allowable rates.

II. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Iowa title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review, which was conducted in Des Moines, Iowa, encompassed a sample of title IV-E cases from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting period from October 1, 2003 thru March 31, 2004. A computerized statistical sample of 150 cases (and a 10% over sample) was drawn from AFCARS data submitted by the State. The sample of cases consisted of cases of individual children who received at least one title IV-E foster care maintenance payment during the six-month review period noted above. For each case, the child's case file was reviewed for the determination of title IV-E eligibility and to ensure that the foster placement was licensed for the period of review. The cases were also examined to determine if criminal background checks had been completed in conformance with the requirements set forth at 45 CFR 1356.30

During the secondary review, 150 cases were reviewed. Seven cases were determined to be in error for either part of or for the entire episode of foster care for reasons that are detailed in the Case Record Summary section of this report. The total dollar value of the sample was \$589,377.46. The 7 error cases totaled \$75,833.66 (Federal share and Administrative costs). Since neither the dollar error rate nor the case error rate exceeded 10%, Iowa is considered to be in substantial compliance and the amount of disallowance is computed on the basis of the payments and administrative costs associated with the error cases for the entire period of time the cases have been in error.

III. CASE RECORD SUMMARY

The following details the error cases and the title IV-E eligibility requirements that were not met. The total ineligible dollar amount is **\$75,833.66**. The following table shows that the errors were as follows:

1. **Contrary to Welfare** (2 errors)
2. **Reasonable Efforts to Prevent Removal** (1 error)
3. **Reasonable effort to finalize the Permanency Plan** (2 errors)
4. **Licensing** (2 errors)
5. **State not having responsibility for care and placement of a child** (1 error)

This count includes multiple errors in some cases.

October 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004

CASE RECORD SUMMARY				
Sample Number	Federal Matching Amount	Federal Administrative Costs	Nature of Error	Dates of Ineligibility
1429064F	\$2833.28	\$1156.00	There was no documentation that DHS had responsibility for care and placement.	11/24/03 – 1/4/04
1325136F	\$4430.43	\$2311.00	Court order did not contain a judicial determination of reasonable efforts to prevent removal or contrary to welfare	10/1/03 – 3/31/04
2039675B	\$3707.70	\$3067.00	Licensing documentation was not in the case file	12/2/03 – 3/31/04
2190942D	\$1212.61	\$770.00	Court order did not contain a judicial determination of reasonable efforts to finalize permanency plan	10/30/03 – 3/31/04
1187866A	\$16,484.63	\$4177.00	Court order did not	02/10/03 – 12/10/03

			contain a judicial determination of contrary to welfare	
1866313A	\$21,268.68	\$8308.00	Court order did not contain a judicial determination of reasonable efforts to finalize permanency plan	6/30/01 – 3/31/2004
2165284A	\$4748.60	\$4192.00	There was no documentation in the case file of the criminal records check	4/1/03 – 3/1/04
Total	\$51,852.66	\$23,981.00		

IV. AREAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

AFDC Determinations - Eligibility for AFDC should be documented in the case record, including the resources available to the family at the time of the child's removal and the nature of the deprivation. Redeterminations of eligibility should be completed annually.

Trial Home Visits – Documentation in the case record should indicate consistently and clearly when a child is on a trial home visit. In some case records, it was difficult to determine whether or not a child was on a trial home visit.

V. STRENGTHS AND MODEL PRACTICES

The review was well organized and reflected excellent preparation by State staff.

The case files were well organized. Complete payment histories were attached to all of the cases.

Case summaries prepared for each case were very helpful for reviewers.

“Initial and Change” title IV-E Eligibility forms was accurate.

Licensing files were well organized with appropriate background checks and clearances.

Children in out of home care did not experience multiple placements.

Voluntary Placement Agreements had prompt court oversight, usually within 90 days.

Service files were accessible and well organized.

Relative placements were consistently sought out and utilized.

Children were being moved quickly toward permanency.

State reviewers were very knowledgeable, committed, and able to read cases objectively.

VI. DISALLOWANCE

Iowa was determined to be in substantial compliance. Seven cases, however, were determined error cases. Therefore, a disallowance in the amount of **\$75,833.66** in Federal Financial Participation (FFP) is assessed for the entire period of time that these cases were determined to be in error