

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007

Issue #1: Title IV-E Review Sample Issues: AFCARS Element 59

The State has a high rate of non-IV-E payments listed in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Element #59. The original universe of IV-E cases in Element #59 was 193, which is a very small universe. A sample of 80 cases and an additional 20 over samples were drawn from the universe. There were 20 cases of the 100 cases drawn that were incorrectly coded as having Title IV-E payments, indicating that 20% of the sample should not have been included in AFCARS Element #59.

Goal:

To ensure that the eligibility files included in AFCARS Element #59 are only those reflecting Title IV-E payments.

Action Steps:

- Clear up backlog of IV-E eligibility determinations and redeterminations (see Issue #2)
- Review Element #59 for reporting accuracy
- Convene a DSCYF work group to identify the issues, review AFCARS task order DCYF2007- 067 and make DSCYF adjustments as needed
- Implement the necessary FACTS modifications in 6/07 FACTS version
- Fiscal services will enter the POC payment information into CPA as payments are made including the start and end dates.
- Modify CPA to include a mechanism for electronically generating POC payments in the 10-07 FACTS version

Projected Completion Date:

1/31/2007
2/28/2007

6/30/2007
3/31/07 and on-going

10/31/2007

Person Responsible:

FACTS Liaison
FACTS Liaison/Adoption Program
Manager

FACTS Liaison
Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer

Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer

Evaluation of Progress:

Quarterly reports to the Children's Bureau Regional Office
DSCYF will review the AFCARS Element # 59 report every 6 months for quality assurance

Adoptions Program Manager

Evaluation of Achievement:

100% agreement between CPA payment records and element # 59 reported as IV-E
There will be a system record of a IV-E payment from the report on the monthly maintenance payments electronically and manually

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007

Issue #2: Title IV-E Review Sample Issues: Eligibility Determination Backlog

The State apparently has a backlog of cases in the client eligibility determination unit. This means the title IV-E funds due to the State are not being claimed properly/appropriately. This is further supported by our finding that 10 cases in the sample had underpayments which means the State is not claiming all the title IV-E funds it is entitled to receive. We recommend that the state address this backlog and the underpayment issue and begin to claim title IV-E funds appropriately.

Goal:
 To reduce the backlog and the underpayment issue.
 To begin claiming title IV-E funds appropriately and timely.

Action Steps:	Projected Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current process for conducting IV-E determinations and • Complete eligibility determinations and redeterminations on backlog cases while maintaining timely completion of new cases 	<p style="text-align: center;">1/31/2007 2/28/2008</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Social Service Chief Administrator Social Service Chief Administrator</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% completed • 50% completed • 75% completed • 100% completed 	<p style="text-align: center;">3/31/2007 8/30/2007 11/30/2007 2/28/2008</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop FACTS modifications required to streamline the eligibility process 	<p style="text-align: center;">10/31/2007</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FACTS Project Mgr/Social Service Chief Administrator</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and provide informational materials and training appropriate to identified needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher training • Printed informational materials 	<p style="text-align: center;">10/31/2007</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Social Service Chief Administrator/OCS Administrator</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisory review process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop process • Implement supervisory review process • Routine reports • Issue-based follow-up related to supervisory reviews 	<p style="text-align: center;">3/31/2007 2/28/2007 3/31/2007 Quarterly Quarterly</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Social Service Chief Administrator Social Service Chief Administrator Social Service Chief Administrator Social Service Chief Administrator Social Service Chief Administrator</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute periodic meetings to address conducting IV-E status reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successes/what's working • Recommend changes as needed 	<p style="text-align: center;">1/31/07-bi-weekly and ongoing</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Client Eligibility Supervisor</p>

Evaluation of Progress:
 Quarterly report to the Children's Bureau Regional Office Adoption Program Manager

Evaluation of Achievement:
 Reduction in the number of initial determinations and re-determinations in backlog.
 No more than 10% of work listed cases overdue.

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007

Issue #3: Title IV-E Review Sample Issues: Payment Adjustments		
The State does not have an automated system for identifying adjustments to individual title IV-E payments. It is apparent that many payment adjustments are being made manually. We understand the manual adjustments take considerable staff effort and the automated system does not identify eligibility automatically in certain circumstances. The current system should be modified to address automatic adjustment of payments.		
Goal: To automate the adjustments of IV-E payments in the current FACTS system.		
Action Steps:	Projected Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
•Develop a work group to determine the requirements	3/31/2007	Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer
•Generate a FACTS modification task order and request funding as needed	6/30/2007	Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer
•Complete development and testing of payment adjustment functionality for over payments and under payments	10/31/2007	Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer
Evaluation of Progress: Quarterly reports to the Children's Bureau Regional Office		Adoption Program Manager
Evaluation of Achievement: 100% of the adjustments will be included in the child's payment record		

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007

Issue #4: AFDC		
A. The State needs to clearly identify the month used to make the initial eligibility determination and re-determinations. Currently the State selects a day during the month rather than simply indicating the end of the month.		
Goal: To use the end of the month date to make eligibility determination and re-determinations.		
Action Steps:	Project Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
•Request Training /Technical Assistance from Children's Bureau and the National Resource Centers around these issues	3/31/07	Social Service Chief Administrator/ Adoptions Program Manager
•Convene work group to discuss /implement recommendations	5/31/07	Social Service Chief Administrator/ Adoptions Program Manager
•Change policy on dates and respondents on petitions and court orders.	6/30/07	Social Service Chief Administrator/ Adoptions Program Manager
•Train staff	7/31/07	Social Service Chief Administrator/ Adoptions Program Manager
B. The State needs to change policy to require that the specified relative from whom a child is removed is also listed as a respondent on the removal order or the child is not AFDC eligible.		
Goal: To include relatives as the respondent in petitions and court orders.		
Action Steps:	Project Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
•DSCYF and the court will review this issue and identify solutions to achieve this goal.	6/30/2007	Court Improvement Project Manager/Adoptions Program Manager/OCS Administrator
•Change policy to reflect adding respondents on court petitions and court orders.	6/30/2007	Court Improvement Project Manager/Adoptions Program Manager/OCS Administrator
•Train staff	7/31/2007	Court Improvement Project Manager/Adoptions Program Manager/OCS Administrator
Evaluation of Progress: Quarterly report to the Children's Bureau Regional Office Adoption Program Manager		
Evaluation of Achievement: 100% compliance in use of end of the month dates for determinations and Clear policy indicating a child is removed from a specified relative and this is listed on the court removal order (or the child is not AFDC eligible).		

**Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007**

Issue #5: Licensing and Safety: Approval Timeframes

A. The State needs to revamp the foster home licensing process to clearly show that the foster family home is approved and for what period.

B. The State needs to clearly identify the month-day-year that the foster family is approved and the month-day-year that the approval ends. Currently the State selects a day during the month rather than simply indicating the end of the month. Foster home licensing practice would be more consistent if the State selected the day of the month the license begins and ends (for example the license would begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month).

C. The State needs to be more consistent in licensing practices for foster homes in such areas as timeframes for approval, approval dates, and the use of certificates or letters.

Goal:
Ensure consistency in licensing practices in such areas as timeframes for approval, approval dates, and the use of certificates for initial and annual reviews.

Action Steps:	Projected Completion Date:	Person Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a work group with DFS foster home staff and private agency representatives to review the current foster home approval process and make recommendations for change as needed. 	3/31/07	Foster Care Program Manager/OCCL Administrator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define time frames for initial and annual reviews 	4/30/07	Foster Care Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and issuance of initial approval certificate 	4/30/07	Foster Care Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish timelines for initial and annual reviews 	4/30/07	Foster Care Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine required FACTS modification including fiscal and cost estimates 	4/30/07	Foster Care Program Manager/FACTS Liaison
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and institute use of an annual certificate of approval (consistent with Office of Child Care Licensing - OCCL). 	10/31/07	Foster Care Program Manager/FACTS Liaison/OCCL Administrator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement FACTS system changes 	10/31/07	Foster Care Program Manager/FACTS Liaison
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the FACTS system modification requirements 	10/31/07	Foster Care Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FACTS redesign as needed 	10/31/07	Foster Care Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for staff, administrators and contracted agency staff 	10/31/07	Foster Care Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete contract and policy changes as needed for 7/1/08 contracts 	12/31/07	Foster Care Program Manager

Evaluation of Progress:

Quarterly reports to the Children's Bureau Regional Office

Discuss at quarterly meeting with DFS staff

Discuss at meetings with contracted agency staff

Record review bi-annually

Adoptions Program Manager

Evaluation of Achievement:

100% of the DFS and contracted agency foster homes will have an initial approval certificate, an annual review with clear documentation of effective dates.

**Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007**

Issue #6: Licensing and Safety: Provisional Approvals		
In order to claim title IV-E foster care for provisionally licensed foster homes, the State needs to revise its foster home licensing and approval process to assure that provisional approvals are only awarded to new homes and facilities and are not awarded to homes and facilities with deficiencies.		
Goal: To revise its foster home licensing and approval process to assure that provisional approvals are only awarded to new homes and facilities and are not awarded to homes and facilities with deficiencies regarding health and safety of children.		
Action Steps:	Projected Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
• Review and revise DFS policy and regulations as applicable	6/30/2007	Foster Care Program Manager/OCCL Administrator
• Provide training on updated policy	6/30/2007	Foster Care Program Manager
Evaluation of Progress: Quarterly reports to the Children's Bureau Regional Office		Adoptions Program Manager
Evaluation of Achievement: DFS will have clear guidelines for using provisional foster homes which are documented in FACTS.		

**Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007**

Issue #7: Court Orders		
Termination of parental rights hearings in Delaware did not always include judicial determinations addressing reasonable efforts to finalize permanency plans. After the termination of parental rights, the courts did not continue to address reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan. Technical assistance and training for the State Agency and the courts is available and is recommended to make sure that the judicial determinations for reasonable effort to finalize permanency continue to be made until the child's permanency goal is achieved.		
Goal: To ensure that court orders address reasonable efforts at the permanency hearing and must continue until the child's permanency goal is achieved		
Action Steps:	Projected Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
The Family Court of Delaware recognizes the importance in the lives of children of the timeliness of hearings, and the use of approved language where appropriate to ensure children receive appropriate funding supports. To reinforce the Court's commitment to the success of children, the following steps will be taken:		Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Court, through county-level activities, will examine barriers to timeliness and propose short and long term solutions for local issues. 	Effective 4-2007 coordinate quarterly meetings	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Court, statewide, will review common barriers to timeliness and propose short and long term solutions for statewide issues. 	Effective 4-2007 coordinate quarterly meetings	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and education planning for 2007 will incorporate components addressing the importance of timeliness and use of approved language in orders. Such training and education components will be included as future performance and compliance reviews indicate is necessary. Statewide conference to be held in the fall of 2007. 	12/31/2007	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Judge will issue a memorandum in March 2007, communicating the Court's progress and commitment to further improve performance in the identified areas, and outlining the steps above.* 	3/31/2007	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Court and DSCYF will explore reasonable steps to approach in obtaining a sample of cases to be reviewed periodically. 	6/30/2007	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
Evaluation of Progress: Quarterly report to the Children's Bureau Regional Office DFS & Family Court will review a sample of court orders to verify the correct federal language is written in the court order and there are regularly scheduled hearings/reviews until the child is adopted or exits foster care to another court approved permanency plan.		Adoptions Program Manager
Evaluation of Achievement: 100% of the review sample of court orders will have the required federal language 100% of the court hearings for children in foster care will be timely and within the federal guidelines		

*DSCYF and Family Court are partners in an MOU which includes the CFSR and IV-E PIP

**DSCYF and Family Court will utilize Technical Assistance/Training as needed

**Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007**

Issue #8: Underpayments		
The Delaware Title IV-E review identified ten cases which appeared to have appropriate foster care payments for which title IV-E funds were not claimed by the State.		
Goal: To maximize claiming for all children eligible for title IV-E services.		
Action Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a payment review process within Fiscal Services • Ensure ongoing timely determinations/redeterminations * <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% completed • 50% completed • 75% completed • 100% completed • Address backlog of cases* 	Projected Completion Date: 12/31/2007 3/31/2007 8/30/2007 11/30/2007 2/28/2008 2/28/2008	Person Responsible: Senior Fiscal Administrator Social Service Chief Administrator/Client Eligibility Supervisor Social Service Chief Administrator/Client Eligibility Supervisor
Evaluation of Progress: Quarterly report to the Children’s Bureau Regional Office Quarterly review of a sample of cases to ensure appropriate processing of IV-E claims. Conduct periodic reviews to determine timeliness of judicial determinations in receiving copies of judicial court orders.		Adoptions Program Manager
Evaluation of Achievement: 100% of the cases will have appropriate IV-E claiming.		

* See issue #2 for specific action steps related to addressing this issue.

**Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007**

Issue #9: Ineligible Payments		
The Delaware title IV-E review identified three cases which did not have judicial determinations at 12 month intervals prior to the period under review. The title IV-E amounts claimed for these periods are disallowed as ineligible payments.		
Goal: To ensure timely judicial reviews and timely determinations/redeterminations		
Action Steps:	Projected Completion Date:	Person Responsible:
A. Family Court: The Family Court of Delaware recognizes the importance in the lives of children of the timeliness of hearings, and the use of approved language where appropriate to ensure children receive appropriate funding supports. To reinforce the Court's commitment to the success of children, the following steps will be taken:		
•The Court, through county-level activities, will examine barriers to timeliness and propose short and long term solutions for local issues.	Effective 4/2007 coordinate quarterly meetings	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
•The Court, statewide, will review common barriers to timeliness and propose short and long term solutions for statewide issues.	Effective 4/2007 coordinate quarterly meetings	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
•Training and education planning for 2007 will incorporate components addressing the importance of timeliness and use of approved language in orders. Such training and education components will be included as future performance and compliance reviews indicate is necessary. Statewide conference to be held the fall of 2007.	12/31/2007	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
•The Chief Judge will issue a memorandum in March 2007, communicating the Court's progress and commitment to further improve performance in the identified areas, and outlining the steps above.	3/31/2007	Court Improvement Project Coordinator/Adoption Program Manager
• Family Court and DSCYF will explore reasonable steps to approach in obtaining a sample of cases to be reviewed periodically. The steps outlined above will be incorporated in the CIP Strategic Plan.**	6/30/2007	
B. DSCYF:		
• Address backlog of cases*	2/28/2008	
• Develop a payment review process within Fiscal Services	6/30/2007	Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer
• Ensure ongoing timely determinations/redeterminations	2/28/2008	Social Service Chief Administrator/Client Eligibility Supervisor
Evaluation of Progress:		
Quarterly report to the Children's Bureau Regional Office		Adoptions Program Manager
DFS/Family Court will conduct periodic reviews to determine timeliness of judicial determinations.		
Quarterly review of a sample of cases to ensure appropriate processing of IV-E claims.		
Evaluation of Achievement:		
100% of the review sample of cases will have a judicial determination at 12 month intervals.		
100% of the cases will have appropriate IV-E claiming.		

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan
January 2007

* See issue #2 for specific action steps related to addressing this issue.

**DSCYF and Family Court will utilize Technical Assistance/Training as needed