

Preparing for the FY 2005-2009 Child and Family Services Plan

The following is an advisement to States of the need to engage in the preparation of their FY 2005-2009 Child and Family Services State Plans (CFSPs). The new FY 2005-2009 CFSPs are due to the ACF Regional Office on June 30, 2004. This will be the third 5-year plan to be submitted. States should have already begun the process necessary to review and renew their CFSP. This initial guidance is being provided to begin the process, and will be followed by more specific instructions to be included in a Program Instruction (PI).

Several components of the State child welfare system are included in the CFSP. These include the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (CFCIP), and the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). It is important that States incorporate the goals for these programs and the strategies, benchmarks and outcomes contained in their Program Improvement Plans, which result from the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), into the appropriate sections of the new CFSPs. In addition, each individual component of the plan is supported by legislation that specifically requires consultation with stakeholders to develop the CFSP.

With this in mind, the Children's Bureau would like to put forth some suggestions in regard to the visioning, assessment and consultation/coordination, joint planning, training, and assurances areas of the CFSP in an effort to have States pay special attention to them during the planning process.

Visioning: Visioning means the ability to “see” or envision exactly where we want to go and why we need to get there. Visioning enables an agency to review the potential effects of current and projected forces/issues, define and assess core competencies and values, develop desired future scenarios and begin to plot a strategy for achieving its vision for the future.

Visioning and goal setting are important aspects of the CFSP. We are reintroducing this concept in order to direct States towards revisiting and, if appropriate, revising their visions of ten years ago. As it was in the first planning year for the CFSP, it continues to be our strong expectation that States will take advantage of this opportunity to review their visions in order to ensure that they remain valid, practical and timely and that they continue to move the States' child welfare systems forward towards innovation in a collective fashion. This “re-vision” should incorporate the changes and additions impacting the State system.

Assessment: An assessment is a product developed by gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing information to identify resources, strengths, motivation, functional components, and other factors at a point in time that can be used to enhance functioning and promote growth.

A basic assessment involves three steps:

1) Gather information on agency operations and performance that currently exists from both internal and external sources. These include data reports, Federal reports (i.e., CFSR State assessments, CFSR reports and PIP agreements, title IV-E foster care review recommendations and/or program improvement plans, NCANDS & AFCARS), legislative mandates, and applicable consent decrees and other management and Quality Assurance reports.

Agencies should expand available information with newer information, as needed (i.e., conduct surveys or focus groups, feedback from community meetings and forums, etc.).

2) Analyze and synthesize the information (i.e., utilize agency managers, and the broader planning groups in order to determine agency strengths and weaknesses based on the information gathered). Agencies are required to analyze the State's progress toward accomplishing the goals and objectives of the FY 2000-2004 plan and submit a final report along with the new CFSP.

3) Draw conclusions, hypotheses, and assumptions about what steps the agency can take to impact these areas.

If the agency already knows what goals they want to focus on, the assessment can be focused on targeted areas. For example, as the State ties the results of the CFSR/PIP process into the CFSP, it may use its PIP goals and objectives as a portion of the goals and objectives of the CFSP.

Consultation/Coordination: The consultation and coordination pieces of the CFSP are the combined internal and external processes used to obtain broad and active involvement of major actors in States' development of their child and family service delivery systems.

This upcoming CFSP year, we are asking States to pay special attention to the consultative/coordinative aspects of CFSP requirements. It is important to remember that joint planning and consultative coordination is a process, not an end result only to be dealt with when CFSPs are due. These processes should be used as an opportunity for shared insight about the collective direction in which States should move.

Please bear in mind that all programs within the CFSP require consultation and coordination.

- According to section 432(b)(1) of the Act, the CFSP must be jointly developed with the ACF regional office and the State agency must consult with appropriate public and nonprofit private agencies and community-based organizations.
- Sections 106(a)(13) and (14) of the new Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 (PL 108-36) adds new purposes to the CAPTA State grants that support and enhance collaboration. The "...juvenile justice system [...], public health agencies, the child protection system, and private community-based programs to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including

linkages with education systems)...” are all named as systems to be included in collaboration activities.

- The CFCIP requires, at section 477(b)(3)(E) of the Act, a certification that “the State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and that the State has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan.”
- Section 477(i)(6) of the Act cites Education and Training Voucher (ETV) requirements. The section states, “[that] [t]he program [be] coordinated with other appropriate educational and training programs.”
- Child and Family Services Reviews and Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) also require consultation. 45 CFR 1355.33 (a) (2) (ii) states that the full child and family services reviews (CFSR) will be conducted by a team of Federal and State reviewers that includes, “[r]epresentatives selected by the State, in collaboration with the ACF Regional Office, from those with whom the State was required to consult in developing its CFSP...”

Tribes must be included in the State consultation process. The State also must exchange copies of their CFSP with Indian Tribal Organizations. The CFCIP specifically includes a Tribal consultation requirement at section 477(B)(3)(G) of the Act by requiring States to certify “...that each Indian tribe in the State has been consulted about the programs to be carried out under the plan and that there have been efforts to coordinate the programs with such tribes...”

States should currently be incorporating other members of the broader social welfare community into coordination/collaboration processes, not only for system assessment input but also as a better way of doing business.

Joint planning: Joint planning is an ongoing partnership in the process of planning that takes place between State and Federal staff and the assembled CFSP planning team. Joint planning includes discussions, consultation, and negotiation, between these parties in all areas of CFSP creation. (See 45 CFR 1357.10-Definitions)

It is important to work jointly with the State liaison from your ACF Regional Office early on in the process and in an on-going manner in order to present the best results on the CFSPs. Emphasis should be placed on the ACF State Liaison and the State Agency Administrator and/or Child Welfare Executive working jointly on: 1) selecting participants for their State plan development team and determining their orientation needs, 2) developing their work plan, including the review and analysis of the current CFSP, the timelines needed to meet the June 30 submittal deadline, etc. 3) documenting assurances and selecting preliminary unmet needs to be addressed in the plan, and 4) specifying the new 5-year goals and objectives.

Attachment D

Please bear in mind that the concept of joint planning is essential. We urge States to think of this collaboration as a process to assist States throughout the analysis of the old plan and the planning, development, and implementation steps of the new 5-year CFSP.

Training: The training section of the CFSP is the specific staff development and training plan that supports each of the goals and objectives of the CFSP. This title IV-B training plan must be combined with the training plan for title IV-E as required by 45 CFR 1356.60 (b)(2): “[all] training activities and costs funded under IV-E shall be included in the State agency’s training plan for title IV-B.”

There have been ambiguities or difficulties in articulating descriptions of States’ training plans. There is also confusion regarding allowable expenses. In light of the requirements, and in order to move towards a more standardized format for the training plan section of the CFSP in general, the upcoming PI will include details of the elements that must be included in States’ training plans in order to be considered allowable for Federal financial participation (FFP). These elements are specifically referenced in 45 CFR 1356.60 (b), 45 CFR 1357.15 (t)(1) and 45 CFR 235.60-235.66 (a). We ask that you review all the cited training regulations more fully at this time in anticipation of what will be presented in the upcoming PI.

Assurances: Assurances are the written guarantees and certifications that all the elements included in the CFSP are the State’s actual intended plan of action.

We remind states of the importance of the assurances sections of their plans. The upcoming PI will list details on assurances from 45 CFR 1357.15(c) and title IV-B sections 422(b)(10), 422(b)(12), and 432(a)(9).

This message is intended to encourage States to focus their current efforts on the planning process for the CFSP. The upcoming PI will provide more detailed guidance to the States on all aspects of the CFSP requirements.