U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)

STATE GUIDE TO AN AFCARS ASSESSMENT REVIEW

4th Edition

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PREFACE

The Children's Bureau is committed to the collection of quality data to be used for policy development, program management and evaluation at both the State and Federal levels. The use of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data is legislatively and programmatically significant for the administration and oversight of programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

The Children's Bureau created the AFCARS Assessment Review process to assure the accuracy and reliability of the foster care and adoption data. During these reviews, the Federal review team assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of States' data collection, extraction, and reporting processes, and provides intensive technical assistance to State staff responsible for those processes.

The Children's Bureau produced this *State Guide to an AFCARS Assessment Review* to provide guidance to State child welfare program and technology staff regarding the AFCARS Assessment Review process. Revisions in this fourth edition are based on the Children's Bureau's experience from conducting AFCARS Assessment Reviews since the Guide was first issued in April 2002. Also, the fourth edition contains new information regarding the AFCARS Improvement Phase.

The Children's Bureau welcomes comments and suggestions from those using this guide. Comments may be sent to:

> Department of Health and Human Services
> Administration for Children and Families
> Administration on Children, Youth and Families
> Children's Bureau
> Director, Division of Program Implementation
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> Washington, D.C. 20024

The *State Guide to an AFCARS Assessment Review* is available for download on the Children's Bureau's web site. The document is available in HTML and PDF file formats.

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A. OVERVIEW

States are required by Federal law and regulation to collect data on children in foster care and those who have been adopted under the auspices of the State child welfare agency. The Federal information system that collects and processes this data is known as the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). States that fail to meet any of the standards set forth in 45 CFR 1355.40(a-d) are considered not to be in substantial compliance (i.e., are lacking in substantial conformity) with the requirements of the title IV-E State plan, and are subject to penalties[1].

The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau provides national leadership and direction in planning, managing, and coordinating the administration and financing of a broad range of comprehensive and supportive programs for children and families, including child welfare programs. These programs are, in large part, carried out by State and local agencies. The Children's Bureau retains responsibility to monitor and evaluate the programs to ensure they are being operated as intended by law and regulation. This includes the assessment of the automated information systems operated by State child welfare agencies that support the programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, and the collection of relevant data.

The Children's Bureau is committed to providing assistance to States to support the collection of quality adoption and foster care data. To this end, the AFCARS Assessment Review (AAR) was developed to evaluate the accuracy and reliability of the foster care and adoption data. The State's information system is assessed against the AFCARS requirements in the Federal regulation, policy issuances, and the AFCARS Technical Bulletins. The AAR evaluates a State's information system's capability to accurately collect, extract, and transmit the AFCARS data to the Children's Bureau. A second focus of the AAR is to assess timeliness and accuracy of data entry by caseworkers.

The Children's Bureau has produced the *State Guide to an AFCARS Assessment Review* (the Guide) to provide information to State child welfare program and system staff regarding the AAR process. The Children's Bureau continues to evaluate and improve the review process. As such, this is the fourth edition of the Guide. The revisions in it are based on the Children's Bureau's experience conducting AARs and implementing AFCARS Improvement Plans (AIP) since the Guide was first issued in April 2002.

The Guide can also be used by States as a self-assessment tool. The appendices contain the general requirements and data element standards that are required in order for a State's AFCARS data to be compliant and are used during an AAR to evaluate the State. Additionally, the charts

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[1] The Administration for Children and Families is not assessing AFCARS penalties at this time (see ACYF-CB-IM-02-03) and will not take penalties until new, final AFCARS regulations are issued implementing P.L.108-145 (The Adoption Promotion Act of 2003).

contain questions that are used during the review to assess whether the State is collecting and/or reporting the correct information. States are encouraged to review this information against their own data collection processes to ascertain whether the AFCARS data accurately reflect the State's child welfare business process and meet the AFCARS standards. This guide can be used at any stage in the development of the State's information system that is used to collect AFCARS data. The State may want to contact the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology for assistance in conducting a self-assessment.

Finally, the Guide ensures that the same criteria are applied equally to all States, that Federal AFCARS Assessment Reviews are conducted in a consistent manner, and that they are well-documented and substantiated.

B. AUDIENCE

The Guide is intended to assist State agency staff to prepare, plan, and participate in the AFCARS Assessment Review. State agency staff who are involved with the assessment review include both information technology and program staff. Additionally, individuals who represent other divisions or agencies during the AAR may also find the information in this Guide helpful.

C. BACKGROUND

1. Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)

AFCARS was created, in part, due to concerns raised about the lack of national information available on children in foster care, their families, the types of foster care settings, and adopted children. In 1986, Congress amended title IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act) by adding section 479, which requires the Federal government to institute a foster care and adoption data collection system. In response to the law, requirements for States to report adoption and foster care data to a Federal system were implemented under Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355.40. The AFCARS collects case-level information on all children in foster care for whom the State child welfare agency has responsibility for placement, care, or supervision and on children who are adopted under the auspices of the State's public child welfare agency.

The Children's Bureau uses AFCARS data for a number of reasons, including:

- determining and assessing outcomes for children and families;
- responding to Congressional requests for current data on children in foster care or those who have been adopted;
- responding to questions and requests from other Federal departments and agencies, including the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the DHHS Office of Inspector General (OIG), national advocacy organizations, States, and other interested organizations;
- short- and long-term budget projections;
- trend analyses and short- and long-term planning; and
- targeting areas for greater or potential technical assistance efforts, for discretionary service grants, research and evaluation, and regulatory change.

Additionally, the AFCARS data are used specifically in the:

- Adoption Incentives Program;
- Child Welfare Outcomes Report;
- Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR);
- Title IV-E Eligibility Reviews; and
- Allotment of funds in the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

States are required to submit AFCARS data semi-annually to the Children's Bureau in accordance with 45 CFR 1355.40[2]. These data submissions are subject to a minimal number of edit checks, as listed in Appendix E of 45 CFR 1355. These edit checks are only able to determine substantial compliance for:

- the timely submission of the data files;
- the timeliness of data entry of certain data elements; and
- whether the data meets a 90% level of tolerance for missing data and internal consistency.

As such, these edit checks are an important first step to ensuring the collection of quality data. However, substantial compliance with these edit checks neither informs the Children's Bureau as to whether or not a State's information system satisfies all Federal regulatory requirements, nor demonstrates the State is submitting accurate and reliable data to the Children's Bureau. This explains why a State may have been found to be in compliance with the semi-annual data submissions yet still needed to improve its AFCARS data for accuracy, reliability, and validity. For example, the edit checks cannot assess the AFCARS data files to determine whether the State submitted data on the correct foster care population for the correct time period required by the regulations. Also, the edit checks cannot determine whether the State has correctly collected the necessary data and mapped it to the appropriate AFCARS values.

2. Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)

In December 1993, HHS/ACF published regulations at 45 CFR 1355.50-56 implementing section 474(a)(3)(C) and (D) [42 U.S.C. 674(a)(3)(C) and (D)] of title IV-E of the Act. Section 474(a)(3)(C) (now revised) provided enhanced Federal financial participation (FFP) at the 75 percent match rate for Federal fiscal years (FFY) 1994 – 1996[3] for planning, design, development, or installation of SACWIS to support the States' programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act. Additionally, section 474(c) [42 USC 674(c)] of the Act indicates that States do not have to allocate expenditures between title IV-E and non-title IV-E clients for SACWIS-related costs.

The Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355.53 provide the conditions for approval of funding for a SACWIS. As a condition of funding, the SACWIS must be designed, developed (or an existing

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[2] AFCARS report periods are based on the Federal fiscal year. Report periods are October 1 – March 31 (data are due by May 15) and April 1 – September 30 (data are due by November 14).
[3] The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193) extended enhanced funding through FFY 1997.

system enhanced), and when implemented, produce a comprehensive, effective, and efficient system to improve the program management and administration of the State plans for titles IV-B and IV-E. At a minimum, the system must provide for effective management, tracking, and reporting by providing automated procedures and processes to, among other things, meet the adoption and foster care reporting requirements through the collection, maintenance, integrity checking, and electronic transmission of the data elements specified by the AFCARS requirements mandated under section 479(b) of the Act and 45 CFR 1355.40. As a result, States that receive FFP to develop a SACWIS must not collect and maintain the AFCARS data in a separate automated information system after the SACWIS is operational. A State found out of compliance with 45 CFR 1355.53(b)(1) by the use, or continued use, of an external system in addition to the use of SACWIS can lead to a final finding of non-compliance with the SACWIS functional requirements, and may result in a disallowance of some of the Federal incentive funds used by the State to develop its SACWIS.

Since SACWIS is intended to support a variety of child welfare programmatic purposes, it should be considered to serve as the official case file and as such, contain all the same type of information that would have been generated by the agency and kept in the paper record. This does not mean that documents that are generated by agencies outside of the child welfare agency must be stored in the SACWIS. These documents will be part of a hard copy record. However, information that is entered over time by caseworkers should be maintained in the system and not overwritten by new occurrences. This allows the State to evaluate the status of a case at any point in time based on information that was known at that time.

D. INFORMATION SYSTEM REVIEWS

The Children's Bureau conducts separate assessment reviews to evaluate the development, implementation, and operations of SACWIS and AFCARS.

The SACWIS Assessment Review (SAR), conducted by the Children's Bureau's Division of State Systems (DSS), focuses solely on operational statewide automated child welfare systems for which States have received SACWIS-level FFP. DSS assesses a State agency's SACWIS for its compliance with Federal statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as functional, technical, and operational specifications approved in a State's Advance Planning Document (APD).

As part of this review, DSS identifies whether or not the State is using the SACWIS to collect and submit the AFCARS data. Once a State has an operational automated system identified as a SACWIS, or its case management module is operational, the Children's Bureau expects that the State's system be used to collect and submit the AFCARS data. If an AFCARS data file has not been submitted by the time of the review, DSS assesses the State's system's capability to submit it. Additionally, DSS transmits any on-site State questions and findings regarding AFCARS to the Children's Bureau's AFCARS project leader who will follow up with the State.

The AFCARS Assessment Review (AAR) is a comprehensive evaluation of the State's automated information system which collects, extracts, and submits AFCARS data, and assesses the accuracy of data collected in accordance with the definitions of the data elements. This is

done by verifying the State information system's capability to collect, extract, and transmit the AFCARS data accurately to the Children's Bureau. Additionally, the AAR provides assurance to the Children's Bureau that the data being collected are reliable and consistent across all States. The AAR process goes beyond the edit checks that must be met in order to pass the AFCARS compliance error standards that are assessed on each six-month submission. The AAR assesses the extent to which a State is meeting <u>all</u> of the AFCARS requirements <u>and</u> the quality of its data.

AFCARS Assessment Reviews will be conducted in every State, regardless of whether a State operates a SACWIS. An AAR will also be conducted in those States that participated in the pilot AFCARS reviews. States that have not developed a SACWIS, and are not planning to do so, are considered ready for an AFCARS Assessment Review at any time. For States with an operational SACWIS, an AAR may occur either prior to or following a SAR. It is possible for AFCARS and SACWIS reviews to be conducted concurrently. To be considered ready for an AAR, States that have developed, or are in the process of developing a SACWIS must be:

- operating all modules related to the collection of AFCARS data;
- operating these components statewide; and,
- collecting, extracting, and submitting both the foster care and the adoption data files from the SACWIS.

The Children's Bureau's SACWIS and AFCARS review teams share the results and documentation of their reviews with each other as well as with the Data Team and CFSR Team.

E. AUTHORITY

The statutory basis for AFCARS and SACWIS is the Social Security Act (the Act). The following lists the specific requirements that govern information systems, data collection, and the Children's Bureau review of the AFCARS requirements:

- Section 422(b)(8)(A)(i) of the Act: Requires States to have an operating "statewide information system that, at a minimum, 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."
- Sections 471(a)(6) and 476(a) of the Act: Establishes ACF's responsibility to verify the correctness and reliability of State reports and to exercise oversight of foster care and adoption data.
- Section 479 of the Act: Requires HHS to implement a national data collection system to collect information with respect to the foster care and adoption population.
- Section 474(a)(3)(C) and (D) of the Act: Provides Federal financial participation (FFP) to States for the planning, design, development, or installation of statewide mechanized data collection and information retrieval systems that, among other things, support the collection of foster care and adoption data under section 479 of the Act and lead to a more efficient, economical, and effective administration of the programs under state plans approved under titles IV-B and IV-E.

- 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357: Sets forth the requirements implementing programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act.
- 45 CFR Parts 1355.40 and Appendices to 45 CFR 1355: Sets forth the requirements for the AFCARS data system.
- 45 CFR 1355.50-57: Sets forth the requirements for developing and implementing a SACWIS.

F. STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

The Guide is organized into seven chapters. Chapters I through III provide a general overview and background of the AAR and the review teams. Chapters IV and V describe the activities involved in an AFCARS Assessment Review. Chapter VI addresses the activities that occur after the site visit. Chapter VII provides information on the AFCARS improvement phase.

Information regarding AFCARS and SACWIS can be found on the Federal and State Reporting Systems page of the Children's Bureau's web site. Additional program-related guidance is available from the Children's Bureau web page at http://acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb.

This *Guide* may undergo periodic updates and/or revisions. To ensure you have the latest version of the *Guide*, check the Children's Bureau's AFCARS web page at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/afcars/review.htm.

CHAPTER II: OVERVIEW OF AFCARS ASSESSMENT REVIEWS

A. INTRODUCTION

The AFCARS Assessment Reviews (AAR) are conducted by the Children's Bureau (Central and Regional staff) and the ACF Office of Information Services (OIS). The review process incorporates an understanding of a State's child welfare policies and practices into an analysis of the information system designed to collect information and the technical documentation used to extract and report the AFCARS data to the Children's Bureau.

The AAR process goes beyond the edit checks that must be met by a State in order to pass the AFCARS compliance error standards assessed semi-annually. The AAR ascertains the extent to which a State meets all of the AFCARS requirements in addition to evaluating the quality of its data. Additionally, while the AAR is an assessment of the State agency's collection and reporting of AFCARS data, it is also an opportunity for Federal staff to provide substantive technical assistance to State agency staff. During the AAR, the Federal team identifies improvements to be made to the system and recommends changes to the program code used to extract the AFCARS data.

The AFCARS reviews are not designed to be done on an on-going basis. However, if information regarding the quality of a State's data is identified through another means, such as a CFSR or an audit by an outside organization (Office of Inspector General, etc), then it possible that another AFCARS Assessment Review will be conducted. In addition, if the Children's Bureau's changes or modifies the existing AFCARS data collection through publication of a new final rule, each State will be subject to an AAR based on the new standards.

B. SUMMARY OF AAR PHASES

The AFCARS Assessment Review process consists of five components. They are:

- AFCARS Assessment Review Initiation Phase
- Pre-site Visit Phase
- On-site Visit Phase
- Post-site Visit Phase
- AFCARS Improvement Phase

Exhibit 1, at the end of this section, outlines the major activities that occur in each phase. The remainder of this section provides a high level overview of each phase. More detailed information is given in later chapters.

1. AAR Initiation Phase

The purpose of this phase is to develop the AAR schedule. The initial step in the process is to identify States that are eligible for an AAR. This is a Federal task, not covered in detail in this Guide. However, States may request an AAR. Guidance is provided in section E of this chapter on how to request an AAR. Once States have been identified for an AAR, they are contacted in

order to schedule the AAR. See section E for additional information on the identification and selection process.

2. Pre-site Visit Phase

The pre-review phase begins no later than ten weeks prior to the scheduled site visit. This phase includes activities that are necessary to prepare for the on-site review. During this phase the State enters a set of test cases and extracts the test data for transmission to the Children's Bureau. This phase also involves the exchange of documentation between the Federal and State teams. The Federal team conducts a preliminary analysis of the State's documentation in order to develop initial findings and identify those areas that require emphasis during the on-site review. Chapter IV further addresses the procedures for this phase.

3. On-site Visit Phase

The on-site review is conducted over five business days. At the end of the AFCARS Assessment Review, an exit briefing is held with the State review team and management officials. During the exit briefing a summary of the major findings is presented. In addition to the briefing, draft findings documents are left with the State team in order to allow the State to begin making or planning any necessary changes to the system. Chapter V further addresses the procedures for this phase.

4. Post-site Visit Phase

The post-review phase involves a final assessment by the Federal team of the information gathered during the on-site review, including any corrections the State makes to its extraction code within 45 days after the site visit. This phase should last no more than 90 business days from the end of the on-site visit. A report is written noting the major findings from the assessment review, with copies attached of the detailed findings. This report is signed by the Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau and mailed to the State agency. Chapter VI further addresses the procedures for this phase.

5. AFCARS Improvement Phase

In the event there are areas the State must correct in order to meet the requirements established in the AFCARS Federal regulation, the State will start the AFCARS Improvement Phase. This phase begins once the State receives its report and ends when the State has made all system changes and the quality of the data has improved and remains consistent. It is the Children's Bureau's expectation that the State complete its improvement plan within two years of receiving the final report. The elements and/or general requirements that receive a rating factor of "3" or lower in the final report will make up the action items in the improvement plan (for more information on the rating factors please see Section D in this chapter). Chapter VII further addresses the procedures for this phase.

Exhibit 1: Overview of the AFCARS Assessment Review Process

PHASE	AAR Initiation	Pre-site Visit	On-site Visit	Post-Site Visit	AFCARS Improvement
Activity	Federal Identification of States for AAR State Requests an AAR Notify State of AAR Finalize AAR Schedule for FFY	Conduct Conference Call(s) Schedule Site Visit Exchange Documentation Enter Test Cases Select Sample for Case File Review Identify Case Files Finalize Arrangements for On-site Review	Conduct Entrance Conference System Demonstration Using a Sample Case Scenario Review Case Files Review AFCARS Population and Data Element Requirements Conduct Technical Review Document Review Findings Conduct Exit Conference	Final Review and Findings Prepare and Send Letter and Final Report to State Agency State drafts Timeline for Corrections	State Makes Corrections to Information System/ Screens and Program Code Implement Data Quality Improvement Measures
Timeframe		10 weeks prior to the onsite Review Phase	5 business days	90 business days following the onsite review	2 years from the onsite review

C. REQUIREMENTS SUBJECT TO REVIEW

States' AFCARS data and information systems are reviewed against the requirements in 45 CFR 1355.40, the appendices to 45 CFR 1355, AFCARS policy, and AFCARS Technical Bulletins. There are two major areas that are assessed during an AFCARS Assessment Review. They are: 1) the AFCARS general requirements, and 2) the data elements. The general requirements include the population to be reported to AFCARS and the technical requirements for constructing a data file. During an AAR, each of the 103 data elements and each of the 26 AFCARS general requirements will be assessed on the basis of the requirements in the regulation and other policy and technical issuances. Information on each item that is collected from each of the components of the AAR is combined and a rating factor is assigned. The general information requirements will be evaluated and rated separately from the data elements. Chapter V provides more detail on the evaluation process. Additional information is also available in the following appendices:

❑ Appendix A lists the AFCARS policy issuances and technical bulletins.

❑ Appendix B lists the AFCARS general requirements.

❑ Appendix C lists the AFCARS data elements.

D. RATING FACTORS

A scale of 1 (does not meet AFCARS standards) to 4 (fully meets AFCARS standards) is used to assign a rating factor for each of the AFCARS general requirements and data elements. Exhibit 2 lists the rating factors and definitions. The State is not given an overall numerical rating based on the AFCARS Assessment Review.

In 2006, we updated the rating factors to include a category that applies to States that have received SACWIS-level FFP. If during an AAR, the Federal team finds that the State's AFCARS data are not collected or extracted from a SACWIS, the appropriate area will be given a rating factor of "0." The State's AAR will be considered incomplete in regard to the area not collected in the SACWIS. The items that are collected in the system will be evaluated based on the AFCARS requirements. For instance, if the foster care elements are collected in the SACWIS but the adoption elements are not, the foster care elements will be given the appropriate rating factor between one and four, and each adoption element will be given a zero. Once the State completes the tasks associated with enhancing the SACWIS to collect and report the AFCARS data, the Federal team will complete the AFCARS Assessment Review on that area. Depending on the degree of changes needed, this may require a second on-site review.

Since an AAR is conducted on those States that are collecting, extracting, and submitting both the foster care and the adoption files from the SACWIS, the Children's Bureau expects that a rating factor of "0" will be rare. If it is found during a SACWIS Assessment Review that the State is not collecting and reporting its AFCARS data from the system in compliance with 45 CFR 1355.53(b)(1), it is the Children's Bureau's expectation that this requirement be implemented immediately and given the State's highest priority. As noted in section C.2 of

Chapter I, this may result in a disallowance of some of the Federal incentive funds used by the State to develop its SACWIS.

Exhibit 2: Rating Factors

RATING FACTOR	DEFINITION
4	All of the AFCARS requirements have been met. The information system is functioning as required, and the information is being accurately collected and extracted.
3	There are data quality issues. For example: • The data are underreported due to inconsistent data entry. • The data are not being entered. • Data entry is unreliable due to incorrect or ambiguous instructions, definitions, and/or data entry screens. • There are no supervisory controls for ensuring data entry, or accurate data entry. • Incorrect data entry due to training or design issues. • Missing or incomplete data due to conversion errors.
2	The technical requirements for AFCARS reporting are not fully met. For example: • The State information system has the capability to collect the data, but the program logic is incorrect. • The State uses defaults for blank information. • Information is coming from the wrong module or field in the system. • Information is located in the wrong place on the system, i.e., it should be in foster care screens, not adoption screens. • The system needs modification to encompass more conditions, e.g., disability information. • The extraction code for the AFCARS report selects and reports incorrect data.
1	An AFCARS requirement(s) has not been implemented in the information system. For example: • The State information system does not have the capability to collect the correct information (i.e., there is no data field on the screens). • There is no program logic to extract the information. • There is 100% missing data according to the frequency report or DCU/DQU reports.
0	States operating an automated information system for which they received SACWIS-level FFP were found to be using an external information system, or a tool (such as Excel or Access), and are not collecting and reporting the AFCARS data from the SACWIS system. In addition, there is no program code for the extraction of data from the SACWIS.

It is possible that the problem with the data is due to both system issues and case worker data entry issues. In this case, the element is given a "2" because corrections must be completed to either the system or the extraction code. Once the corrections are made to the system during the AFCARS Improvement Phase, the data needs to be re-analyzed by the Children's Bureau. If problems related to case worker training or data entry still exist, then a "3" is assigned to the requirement. A finding of fully meeting the AFCARS standard (a factor of "4") is not given to the element until all system issues and/or data quality issues have been addressed in the AFCARS Improvement Phase.

A State that has been determined to not fully satisfy the AFCARS standards (a rating factor of 3 or lower) must make the corrections identified by the review team to improve data quality. Action steps are identified in the AFCARS Improvement Plan (AIP) and included in the final report. The State is required to make the changes to the information system, extraction program, and/or data entry in order to fully satisfy the applicable requirements and standards. Since the AFCARS data are used for several significant activities at the Federal and State level, the State should implement the action items as soon as possible as a way to improve the quality of its data.

To the extent that the State takes action to correct its collection and extraction of AFCARS data, it is possible that a resulting improvement will bring to light weaknesses masked by prior problems. For example, a State's extraction code may be written to ensure there are no missing data by incorrectly mapping missing information to a known AFCARS value (i.e., setting defaults). Once the program code is corrected the State needs to address data entry in order to ensure that workers are actually entering the required information.

States found not to be in compliance during the AFCARS Assessment Review do not incur penalties. We expect the State to use the AIP as a way to formalize technical assistance needs, action steps, and improve the quality of its data.

E. AAR INITIATION PHASE

As noted previously, this phase is primarily a Federal task. It is included in this Guide in order to assist States in determining when they may be selected for an AAR. Also, States may request an AAR and information is included on this process.

1. Federal Selection Process

In order to determine a State's readiness for an AAR, the Children's Bureau determines whether a State has developed and is operating a SACWIS. States that have not developed a SACWIS, and are not planning to do so, are considered ready for an AFCARS Assessment Review.

States that have developed and are operating a SACWIS are considered ready for an AFCARS Assessment Review. States that have developed, but not completed the implementation of a SACWIS, must be:

- operating all modules related to the collection of AFCARS data;
- operating these components statewide; and,

- collecting, extracting, and submitting both the foster care and the adoption files from the SACWIS.

When determining the AFCARS review schedule, the following factors are taken into consideration:

- Is the SACWIS-level funded automated child welfare information system being transferred to another State?
- Is the State scheduled for a CFSR within two years of the current Federal fiscal year?
- Has the State requested an AFCARS Assessment Review?
- Were AFCARS-related issues identified during a CFSR, SACWIS Assessment Review, or title IV-E review?
- Have AFCARS-related issues been identified by other sources, such as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)?
- What is the quality of the State's data?

A State may contact its Regional Office to inquire when it may be scheduled for an AAR.

2. State Request for an AFCARS Assessment Review

States may request an AFCARS Assessment Review. This section outlines the steps for a State to request an AFCARS Assessment Review.

- ❑ The State Child Welfare Director must submit a written request by July prior to the Federal fiscal year in which the State is asking for the AAR. The letter should be submitted to the State's Children's Bureau's Regional Office stating the reason(s) for the request.
- ❑ The letter should respond to the selection factors listed above, suggest preliminary dates for the AAR, and identify a State contact person for coordinating the review.
- ❑ For States that are implementing a SACWIS, the request should address the developmental and/or operational status of the State's automated system, whether an AFCARS data file has been submitted from the system, and how and when the State's data conversion process occurred.
- ❑ The Children's Bureau will respond to a State's request for an AFCARS Assessment Review within 30 business days.

CHAPTER III: THE REVIEW TEAMS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies the individuals that must be involved in the AFCARS Assessment Review. It includes responsibilities for various tasks in each phase of the review, and indicates who should be present for each of the on-site segments. In general, the AFCARS review team is composed of two groups, the State team and the Federal team. Membership on the review team requires a significant commitment of time and effort. Both State and Federal team members are responsible for the following activities:

- participation in conference calls scheduled prior to the review;
- implementation of all assigned activities associated with the review;
- participation in review activities during the on-site review; and
- participation in entrance and exit conferences.

B. COMPOSITION OF THE REVIEW TEAMS

At a minimum, the following individuals should be considered members of the <u>State</u> team:

- Child Welfare Administrator;
- AFCARS Project Manager (or a person responsible for AFCARS);
- SACWIS Project Manager (or a person responsible for SACWIS), for those States implementing a SACWIS;
- Adoption Program Specialist;
- Foster Care Program Specialist;
- Policy Director;
- Child and Family Services Review Coordinator;
- System Analyst/Programmer familiar with AFCARS data extraction routines;
- Field staff; and
- Contractor Representative, if applicable.

There is not a designated limit on the number of individuals who can be members of the State review team. The State team may include staff other than those listed above. For instance, the agency may want to include members from their eligibility or financial units during the discussion of the foster care and adoption elements, or for the section on the sources of income for the child. Section C below provides additional guidance on who should participate in each segment of the review and expectations for team members.

At a minimum, the <u>Federal</u> team will consist of:

- Children's Bureau Central Office Representative(s);
- Office of Information Services (OIS) Representative(s); and
- Children's Bureau Regional Child Welfare Program Specialist.

The Federal team may include other staff than those listed above, either program or systems staff. Contract staff from OIS may also be part of the review team.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEAM MEMBERS

Exhibit 3 provides summary information on the role and responsibilities of the State and Federal team members' responsibilities.

1. State Team

This section gives additional guidance on who should participate in the AAR and their responsibilities. State team members should be identified as soon as an AAR has been agreed upon by the Children's Bureau and the State agency. Also, the agency should designate a State Review Team Coordinator.

- Administrators (such as the Child Welfare Administrator, Commissioner, Division Directors)

  Administrators are not expected to participate in the entire review process, but are considered an integral component of the State team. Administrators should be informed of the AAR and should attend the entrance and exit conferences.

- The State Review Team Coordinator

  The State review team coordinator serves as the liaison with the Federal review team coordinator to plan the AAR and to ensure follow-through on the pre-site visit activities. The coordinator disseminates information internally on the nature and scope of the AAR in order to prepare program and data processing staff who participate in the on-site review. A checklist of activities that may be used to prepare for the AAR is included in Appendix D. This individual will continue to be the liaison between the State and the Federal review team during the post-site review phase, and if applicable, the AFCARS Improvement Phase.

- Foster Care and Adoption Managers

  Program staff representing the State's foster care and adoption units are integral members of the State AFCARS review team. In order to assess the State's collection and reporting of the AFCARS data, the State's child welfare policies and practices need to be taken into account. Additionally, since it is often the program staff who are using and explaining the data, having them participate in the AAR provides an opportunity for them to further examine the quality of the data. It is important for the foster care and adoption managers to be present for the entire review as there often are policy or practice questions that arise that are best answered by program staff.

- SACWIS Project Manager

  The SACWIS Project Manager (or other SACWIS representative) should participate in all components of the onsite review process. Since part of the analysis of a State's AFCARS

relates to how data are recorded in the SACWIS, it is important that the SACWIS Project Manager be involved, if necessary, regarding potential changes to the SACWIS. It may also be necessary for the SACWIS Project Manager to explain how and why certain components were developed in the SACWIS.

- Field Staff

   Field staff (front line case workers, supervisors, regional staff, etc.) should participate in the case file review. The State may decide the level and number of staff that participate in the case file review. See chapters IV and V for more information on the case file review process. The State is not limited to having field staff present only during the case file review. If the State agency has "super users," i.e., primary contacts for providing assistance and information on the system, etc., in its field offices, then the agency may want to consider adding these individuals to the State team.   The agency may include them for the full week or for selected segments of the review.

- Technical Staff

   Technical staff representing the State's child welfare system are part of the core review team. This includes any staff under contract to the State agency to develop or operate the information system. The technical team is primarily responsible for describing how the system collects and extracts the AFCARS data. The person primarily responsible for developing the program code and writing the routines for AFCARS data extraction must be present during the week of the review.

- Additional Staff

   The State may choose to bring in representatives from other agencies that provide data to the State for its AFCARS reporting. Their participation may be useful during the general discussion of the types of information that are needed for AFCARS or for the data element review. Examples include representatives from juvenile justice, the courts, mental health, contract providers, or Tribes. Additionally, the State may want to include training and fiscal staff.

2. Federal Team

A Federal review team coordinator will be identified as soon as the State has been scheduled for an AFCARS Assessment Review. The Federal review team coordinator serves as the liaison with the State review team coordinator to plan the AAR and to ensure that pre-site visit activities are completed in a timely manner. The Federal review team coordinator is responsible for finalizing arrangements for the site visit, clarifying expectations and answering questions about the AAR process, and ensuring the State has submitted all the needed documents on time to the Children's Bureau.

Exhibit 3: Review Team Roles and Responsibilities

Title	Roles/Responsibilities
State AAR Team	• Represent areas of the State's child welfare program under review. • Provide expertise in team members' respective areas, including foster care, adoption, program policy, and information technology. • Attend on-site sessions.
State AAR Team Coordinator	• Serve as the liaison with the Federal review team coordinator through all phases of the AFCARS Assessment Review. • Provide a list of State team members to Federal review team coordinator. • Ensure the timely delivery of materials to all team members. • Ensure that State information system documentation is sent to ACF Regional and Central Offices staff on time. • Handle logistics for calls, schedules, and documentation dissemination. • Ensure that the test cases are entered into the State's information system. • Ensure that paper case files are pulled and sent to the office where the review will be held. • Schedule State review team members for on-site review. • Reserve a room large enough to accommodate the State and Federal review teams during the site visit. • Reserve additional space for reviewing the case files, if necessary. • Ensure access to the State information system for the entire week. • Ensure that State team members attend the on-site review meetings.
Federal AAR Team	• Conduct site visit. • Produce findings. • Provide applicable technical assistance. • Produce and review draft final reports.
Federal AAR Team Coordinator	• Schedule pre-site visit conference calls. • Finalize due dates for documentation exchange, and ensure documents are received by the ACF Regional and Central Offices. • Finalize arrangements for the on-site review with the State review team coordinator. • Follow up with team members on their assignments. • Send letter to State confirming the dates of the site visit, names, positions, and telephone numbers of the Federal team members.
Federal Technical Coordinator	• Review State's system documentation. • Assume lead responsibility in technical matters related to the review. • Run frequency and case file review reports on raw data.

CHAPTER IV: THE PRE-SITE VISIT PHASE

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the activities State agency staff need to complete in order to prepare for the on-site phase of the AAR. During this phase the State should identify those areas it wants to specifically address during the site visit. The State agency should view the AFCARS Assessment Review as an opportunity to examine its foster care and adoption data concerns completely and take advantage of the intensive technical assistance available from the Children's Bureau. The State should also review its CFSR data profile to identify any areas in which it may want to request assistance from the Federal AFCARS review team.

The pre-site visit phase involves the following activities:

- documentation exchange;
- test case scenario entry, extraction, and transmission;
- case file review preparation; and
- finalize the on-site agenda.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE PRE-SITE VISIT ACTIVITIES

The pre-site visit phase officially starts when a State is notified of its AAR. Ideally, a State will know by July that it will have its AAR the next Federal fiscal year. A State will have no less than three months notice of an AAR.

Once the dates are selected for the AAR, a confirmation letter will be sent to the State. This letter contains the following information:

- The date of the on-site review.
- The date the State's system documents are due to the Children's Bureau.
- The date the case file sample and test cases will be sent to the State.
- The date the test case extraction is due to the Children's Bureau.
- The contact information for the Federal review coordinator and members of the Federal team.

C. DOCUMENTATION EXCHANGE

This section describes the documents that are exchanged between the State and the Children's Bureau. It is not the Children's Bureau's expectation that the State create new system documentation for the review team to analyze. The State should submit its technical documentation in its current format.   Exhibit 4 contains examples of the types of documents to submit. The documentation should reflect the options available to the caseworkers for each AFCARS data element, and the State value for that option.

The State's system documentation may be submitted earlier than the due dates. States should begin consolidating the system documentation as soon as possible and maintain an up-to-date

library of system documentation. This is helpful for those States that are developing a SACWIS and to those preparing for the SACWIS Assessment Review.

The Federal review team needs a "fixed" set of documentation in order to prepare its analysis and provide the State with useful feedback. The State should submit its most current version of the extraction program code and reference tables. If the State identifies areas that need to be corrected, or is in the process of making overall system modifications after the documentation is submitted to the Federal team, then the State should provide the Federal team (either onsite or during the pre-site phase) a list of all changes and planned changes. When modifications are subsequently made to the screens and/or the program code as it relates to AFCARS those modifications will be included in the post-site visit review.

Procedure

❑ By the due dates, submit copies of the documentation to the Children's Bureau. The documentation is to be submitted electronically.
   ❑ E-mail all documents to the Federal team members.
   ❑ If electronic copies of the documents are sent on a compact disk, this must be sent via overnight mail to the Children's Bureau[4]. Do not send zip disks.

❑ If the State technical staff has questions regarding what technical documentation is to be submitted, contact the Federal Technical Coordinator.

❑ Screen prints must include a copy of the screen as it first appears on the system, and copies of AFCARS related drop-down lists. This may take more than one screen print. The Federal review team must have the actual view that appears to the user.

❑ A data dictionary should include all of the State's values/codes used in the system. While many of these are not related to AFCARS, we have found it is easier for the State to provide a comprehensive list. This provides the Federal team an opportunity to review the values and ensure that the State is including all appropriate values in its AFCARS extract.

❑ If the extraction code is sent to the Federal team in multiple files that are sections of the complete code, include a master list that identifies the order the files are executed.

❑ States that use forms as a means to collect the AFCARS data are to include these in their documentation submission.

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[4] Regular US Mail to Government Offices in Washington, DC is subject to sterilization process that will melt any electronic media sent via the US Mail.

Exhibit 4: State Documentation List

- • Programming Logic (Source Code): The programming logic that derives and extracts each AFCARS element from the State's System.

- • Data Element Dictionary: A data dictionary or similar documentation will provide the Federal team with definitions and representations of the State's values for AFCARS - related fields. This document should be complete and reflective of options available to the caseworker to select. This documentation may be supplemented by code/lookup tables that will enable the team to understand elements referenced in the source code or mapping forms. For example, placement code 257 = relative foster care, licensed.

- • Relevant Reference Tables and Fields: Specific fields and tables from which the data are pulled.

- • Database Structures: Tables referenced in mapping documentation.

- • Extraction Routine Notes: A logical description, or the steps in pseudo code, of how records are selected for inclusion in the foster care and adoption submission.

- • Data Entry Screens: Printouts of screens relevant to AFCARS data elements.

- • Change Request Orders: Changes that the State has planned that impact the AFCARS data elements that are not included in the current version of the extraction program code.

- • Organizational Charts: Charts of the program and information technology divisions.

Note: It is crucial that the documentation be submitted to the Children's Bureau on time. Delays in the submission of the documents affect the Federal team's preparedness for the on-site review and may result in an incomplete on-site evaluation.

D. TEST CASE SCENARIOS

The use of test cases is a way to assess the State's collection and extraction of the AFCARS data. This process assists the Federal review team to gain a better understanding of the State's policies, practices, training, and extraction routine prior to the onsite review. The records that are created by the test cases are extracted from the State's data system and compared with an established answer key. This information in conjunction with the analysis of the extraction program code and the other components of the AAR, provides the Federal team with a comprehensive view of the State's system.

The intent of the test cases is to validate the State's information system for accuracy. As such, the Federal review team coordinator may answer some questions the State has on the cases, but most will not be answered in the interest of determining objectively the State's AFCARS capability.

Procedure

❑ The Federal review coordinator e-mails the test cases to the State review coordinator by the established due date.

❑ The State review coordinator will identify a staff member who is familiar with the system and/or case practice to enter the cases. Approximately 40 working hours should be allotted for this task.

❑ A training or test environment may be used to enter the test cases. This should mirror the production system. The State needs to ensure that the method used to enter the data will also allow for the entry/extraction of the financial data elements that are obtained through an interface.

❑ Once the test cases are entered into the system, the State review team coordinator will contact the Federal Technical Coordinator for instructions on electronically transmitting the test file(s). The file must be submitted by the established due date.

❑ The electronic copy of the scenarios are to be transmitted to the Federal review coordinator (in Word) with the encrypted case number provided for the respective test case. Additionally, the State team can include any relevant notes pertaining to the test cases as necessary.

E. CASE FILE REVIEW PREPARATION

Another tool used in the AFCARS Assessment Review process is the case file review. A sample of 80 foster care records and 30 adoption records is pulled for the AFCARS reporting period under review. The AFCARS data submitted to the Children's Bureau on each record is then compared to information found in the paper case file during the onsite review. The process involves all members of the State and Federal teams, technical and program. The State is encouraged to incorporate field staff, including supervisors and staff from training units, etc., as

part of the State team for the purpose of reviewing cases. See Chapter III for additional information on who the State may want to include on the case file review team. A preliminary analysis of the findings is conducted during the onsite review and shared with the State. A further discussion of the onsite process can be found in Chapter V.

The Children's Bureau has found that while there may be challenges to identifying the information in the paper file, the process provides very valuable information to the review teams. The case file review is also the only means for the Federal team to assess the accuracy and the level of completeness of the State's conversion process from a paper or legacy system to its new information system. The findings often provide additional information that increases the Federal team's understanding of the data reported to AFCARS. Also, this process allows the review team to assess how well records are being kept up-to-date, the accuracy of the AFCARS data, and usage of the State's information system. Typically, this process does not identify new problems, but confirms findings from the other components of the AAR.

While the Children's Bureau recognizes that current data may no longer be in the paper files but will, instead, be in the automated information system, there are some documents that may not be part of the State's information system, such as medical reports, court reports, home studies, etc. These documents usually provide a significant amount of the information for the case file reviewers. It is important that the State have available the complete case file; frequently relevant information is found in a sibling's folder instead of the folder on the child under review which can be challenging.

Since the case file review is the only means to assess conversion, the cases selected for the review will primarily be those in which the most recent removal date, or the first removal date, precedes the date the State's system went operational. If the State phased in its operational status, then the sample may reflect these dates.

Depending on the length of time since the State converted to a new information system, this portion of the AAR may be modified to accommodate the State's situation. During the initial conference call, the Children's Bureau and the State will discuss and plan for the case file review and make adjustments, as necessary.

Procedure

Once the State review team coordinator receives the list of encrypted or sequential case record numbers from the Federal review team coordinator, he/she should:

❑ Create a list to cross-reference the encrypted/sequential record number with the actual case record number.

❑ Arrange for the case files to be delivered to the State office by the first day of the on-site review.

❑ Ensure that case records are as complete and up-to-date as possible, and include any files maintained separately, e.g., child protective services files, provider files, and eligibility files. All case records should include:

- court orders;
- placement history;
- caretaker (person from whom child was removed) information;
- medical history;
- biological parent file for the adoption records; and
- foster care records on children adopted (if the relevant AFCARS information cannot be found in the child's adoptive record).

Note Regarding Sealed Adoption Records: If a sufficient number of cases cannot be identified for review due to their having been sealed, then the State will have to petition the court to open the records prior to the on-site review.

❑ Identify and schedule staff to participate in the case file review. It is recommended that the State have field workers, supervisors, and/or regional administrators participate in this part of the review.

F. THE ON-SITE AGENDA

Appendix E contains a sample agenda for the on-site review. Any changes to the overall agenda must be discussed with the Federal review team coordinator prior to any changes being made to the agenda. The State review team coordinator should provide the Federal review team coordinator with a list of the names and titles of the State staff participating in each segment of the AAR.

G. SITE LOGISTICS

The on-site review activities are conducted in one location. The State capitol is generally the designated location since it is the location of the State agency central office/administrative staff, but another site may be mutually agreed upon. It is preferable to conduct the meetings in one large room to allow enough space for the size of the team and materials needed for the AAR. A separate room can be added on the day of the case file review, as this activity will include additional staff and the case files. The room used for the case file review should be secure to protect the confidentiality of the case records.

CHAPTER V: THE ON-SITE REVIEW PHASE

A. INTRODUCTION

The on-site review occurs over a period of five consecutive working days. During this week, there is an entrance and exit conference with management staff, the entry of a case scenario, a discussion of the State's provision of child welfare services and policies, a review of the technical documentation used to extract the AFCARS data, and a review of case files. During the exit briefing a summary of the major findings is presented. Draft documents of the team's preliminary on-site findings are left with the State team in order to allow them to begin making or planning any needed changes to the information system and the AFCARS reporting process. The State should also use this time to identify priority areas and a work plan for achieving them.

The State's information system is assessed against the AFCARS requirements in the Federal regulation, policy issuances, and the AFCARS Technical Bulletins. The AAR evaluates a State's information system's capability to accurately collect, extract, and transmit the AFCARS data to the Children's Bureau. A second focus of the AAR is to assess the accuracy of the collection and documentation of information related to the foster care and/or adoption case of a child.

There are two major areas that are assessed during an AAR. They are: (1) the AFCARS general requirements, and (2) the data elements. The general requirements include the population that is to be reported to AFCARS and the technical requirements for constructing a data file. During an AFCARS Assessment Review, each of the 103 data elements and each of the 28 AFCARS general requirements are assessed on the basis of the requirements in the regulation and other policy and technical issuances. Information that is collected from each of the components of the AAR is combined and the item is assigned a rating factor. The general requirements are evaluated and rated separately from the data elements.

B. ON-SITE LOGISTICS

During the week of the AAR, work hours will generally be between 8:30 a.m and 5:30 p.m. The agenda in Appendix E gives a general timeframe for each day. The review team will require access to the State's information system all week (particularly on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday).

For the case file review, it is necessary for the reviewers to be in one room. If this is not possible, a smaller second room can be designated for the group that will review the adoption files. The information system will not be needed for the case file review.

C. ON-SITE REVIEW ACTIVITIES

There are five components of the AFCARS Assessment Review process. These are the:

- system demonstration using a sample case scenario;
- reports from the AFCARS utilities (Data Compliance, Data Quality, and Frequency);
- State policy and procedures;

- paper case file review; and
- system review (screens and extraction code).

The Federal AFCARS team utilizes each component to assess the State's AFCARS data. Each component is discussed with the State team in order to gain a better understanding of the State's child welfare practice and policy, how the data are collected and extracted, and State staff's understanding of the data elements.

1. Day One – Entrance Conference and System Demonstration

The first day of the on-site visit begins with the entrance conference which serves to:

- introduce the Federal team to State management, project staff, and State review team;
- review the nature and scope of the on-site review;
- respond to any questions the State staff might have related to the AAR process; and
- make any final modifications to the on-site agenda.

Immediately following the entrance conference, the State presents a brief walk-through of the system that is used to collect and extract the AFCARS information. The State should ensure that appropriate technical and programmatic staff participate in the demonstration. The Federal team will provide the State review team with a sample case scenario onsite. This sample case scenario is entered as part of the system demonstration. The purpose of this activity is to observe the entire process of entering data, and learn the flow of the screens used to enter the data. The State team should also be prepared to identify the test cases that were entered during the pre-site visit phase and these will be discussed as well.

2. Day Two – Case File Review

The Federal team provides the forms for each record drawn in the sample. This form contains the data submitted by the State for each element in the record. There are four columns to the form (see Appendix F for an example):

- column one lists the data elements;
- column two lists the information submitted to AFCARS by the State;
- column three is for noting information found in the case record; and
- column four is marked if the information does not match.

Procedure

❑ An introductory briefing and training will take place before reviewing the cases.

❑ The entire State and Federal team will review case files and will be divided into two groups. One group will review the foster care files and the other group will review the adoption files.

❑ After all the cases are reviewed, team members will debrief on their significant findings. Once this process is completed, the Federal review team coordinator collects the forms.

❑ A preliminary analysis is conducted by the Federal team onsite and the results are shared with the State team during days three and four. Final analysis of these forms is completed during the post-site visit review phase.

3. Days Three and Four – Foster Care and Adoption Population and Elements

a. Population and Data Element Review

During days three and four the Federal team meets with the program and technical staff that are responsible for oversight of the foster care and adoption services, policy development/implementation, and implementing the technical requirements of AFCARS. Days three and four comprise the core components of an AFCARS Assessment Review. They build on the initial analysis conducted during the pre-site phase by the Federal team and the results of the test case entry and the case file review.

Throughout the day, the Federal team will ask several questions regarding the State's organizational structure, the population of children served, and other practice-related questions. At the same time, the technical documentation is reviewed and assessed on whether it is reflecting State and Federal policy, and State practice.

Appendices B and C contain a sample of the type of questions that the Federal team asks in regard to the foster care and adoption populations and the data elements.

The frequency report generated from the State's data for the report period under review is assessed by the Federal and State staff to determine if the data are representative of the State's child welfare population. The States have their own copy of the AFCARS Frequency Utility and can use this report on an ongoing basis to evaluate their AFCARS data. Technical Bulletin #12 describes how to use the frequency report to evaluate the data.

When analyzing the program code, the types of questions that are asked include:

- Are there any AFCARS elements or values that do not have information mapped/extracted to them from the State system?
- Are there any relevant values in the State system that do not map to an AFCARS element?
- Are there any elements or values where the State's definition does not appear to match the AFCARS definition?
- Are there any State data collection policies or procedures that may cause some data not to be reported to AFCARS, or to be reported inaccurately (i.e., not reflecting the true circumstances of the case)?
- Does the program code exclude a group of children served that must be reported to AFCARS? Conversely, is it including children that should not be in the AFCARS reporting population?

b. Document Review Findings

A preliminary draft of the findings is completed by the Federal review team on-site. Generally, the above review activities are completed by noon of the fourth day. The afternoon of the fourth day is left open in the event more time is needed for the population and data element review or if time is needed for some other reason. Otherwise, this time is used by the Federal team to begin consolidating its findings.

At this time, the Federal team reviews all of the on-site findings for each component and assigns a rating factor for each general requirement and data element. The findings are documented in three tables, one for adoption, one for foster care, and one for the general requirements. The tables include notes, comments, and significant findings of the AAR for each data element and general requirement.

If ten percent or more of the cases in the case file review have errors for an element, this is determined to be a data quality issue and is noted in the preliminary findings. This may be the sole reason for an element receiving a "3." The State should also note that the preliminary findings are based on a cursory review of the case file review findings. Based on the final review, an initial rating factor of "4" may get adjusted to a "3," and the State will need to address improvements in data quality.

A preliminary draft of the tables are completed by the Federal review team onsite and shared with the State review team prior to the exit conference with the State agency administrators. The Federal and State teams review the findings in order to ensure agreement on the action items.

Depending on time, this meeting may be at the end of day four, or early on day five prior to the exit conference.

4. Day Five – Exit Conference

Once the on-site review process is complete, an exit briefing is held with the State review team and management officials.

The purpose of the exit conference is to:

• present specific findings resulting from the AAR process;
• report the preliminary recommendations and/or proposed resolutions to outstanding issues; and,
• answer any questions that the State agency administrators might have as a result of the AAR.

The exit conference should include all staff members that were involved with the AAR during the week and senior management staff.

A one-page summary of the AAR findings is distributed during the exit briefing.

CHAPTER VI: THE POST-SITE VISIT PHASE

A. INTRODUCTION

The post-site visit phase involves a final assessment by the Federal review team of the information gathered during the on-site review. A final report is written detailing the major findings from the assessment review with copies attached of all of the detailed findings. The final report is signed by the Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau and mailed to the State agency.

While this is primarily a set of activities conducted by the Federal review team, the State may use this time to begin making corrections to the system or the extraction code based on the preliminary on-site findings. Also, the State team should utilize this time to create a timeline for completion of each task identified in the draft findings matrices provided by the Federal team during the exit conference.

B. FINAL ANALYSIS

Although the major portion of the AFCARS evaluation is conducted on-site, a number of steps in the assessment and documentation analysis may be completed during the post-site visit phase. These steps include consolidation of documentation from all members, consultation among Federal team members, and a final analysis of all findings, documentation, and (if applicable) revised program code. The Federal review team coordinator may contact the State with additional questions or request additional information.

Changes/corrections to the program code or the system screens submitted to the Children's Bureau within 45 business days after the completion of the on-site review will be incorporated into the final report. If the State submits corrections to the extraction code, the State also needs to include a list of the changes, where the changes are located in the extraction code, or how they are identified within the extraction code. Additionally, the State should refer to the document list in Chapter IV. If any of the original documents submitted by the State during the pre-site visit phase have been modified, the State needs to also submit them.

C. FINAL REPORT

The final report is issued to the State within 90 business days after the completion of the on-site review. The purpose of the final report is to document the findings of the AFCARS Assessment Review, including the agency's strengths, areas needing improvement, and changes necessary to meet all of the AFCARS requirements at 45 CFR 1355.40.

The AFCARS Assessment Review report to the State will include:

- a cover letter;
- an introduction that provides an overview of the background and purpose of the AAR;
- a summary of the findings and required changes;
- a table with the completed findings; and,

- the AFCARS improvement plan matrices.

The final rating factors may differ from those given as the preliminary on-site ratings. Changes in the rating factors reflect the post site-visit review of the case file review findings, the State's program code, and the system screens. In order to identify those elements for which a rating changed, the original on-site rating is included with a strike-through mark and the new rating below it.

If there are areas that need correcting, the AFCARS Improvement Phase begins after the State receives the final report with the final findings. This phase is discussed in the next chapter.

D. DISSEMINATION OF THE FINAL REPORT

The Children's Bureau will provide copies of the report to the appropriate officials at the State agency, CFSR staff, the Children's Bureau's Division of State Systems, and the Children's Bureau Regional Office. All documentation is retained by the Children's Bureau as part of the permanent archive file on the State's AFCARS. Additionally, the State's final report, including all attachments, will be posted on the Children's Bureau web site at http://www.the Children's Bureau.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/afcars/review.htm.

CHAPTER VII: AFCARS IMPROVEMENT PHASE

A. INTRODUCTION

Based on the final analysis, the State may have to enter the AFCARS Improvement Phase if there are areas that must be corrected in order for the State to meet the requirements established in the AFCARS Federal regulation at 45 CFR 1355.40, the appendices to 45 CFR 1355, AFCARS policy, and/or Technical Bulletins. This phase begins once the State receives the final report and ends when the State has made all system changes and the quality of the data have improved. The elements/general requirements that receive a rating factor of "3" or lower make up the action items in the plan.

B. AFCARS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (AIP)

A State may have an improvement plan for the general requirements and/or the foster care and adoption data elements. Each requirement will be grouped by the rating factor it received. For instance, all elements that received a rating of "2" are listed first in the matrix, followed by those receiving a rating of "3." Each finding and its related action item are numbered for ease of reference. Action items may include but are not limited to program extraction code and/or screen modifications, modifications to data elements mapping, system interface development, case worker training, and development of an appropriate quality assurance process.

The AIP included with the report does not include due dates. After the site visit the State should evaluate each item (general requirement and/or data element) identified in the draft findings document as needing correction and determine the length of time it will take to complete the item. Within 30 days of receipt of the final report, State staff must submit the initial AIP electronically to the Children's Bureau with dates for completing each action item. Upon receipt of the State's initial AFCARS Improvement Plan, the Children's Bureau will review the due dates to ensure the AIP will be implemented in a timely manner. In general, the Children's Bureau will seek to respond to the State within 30 days with any questions or its approval of the initial AIP.

It is recommended that the State set the action item completion dates prior to their next CFSR to improve the quality of the data that will be used to assess the State's child welfare practice. Furthermore, because the AFCARS data are used for several significant activities at the Federal and State level, the State's completion of the action items will be a contributing factor to improving the overall quality of its data.

The State's plan for implementing changes to the system and for caseworker training must be included in the State's title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan or the Annual Progress and Services Report as part of the information required in 45 CFR 1357.15(t) and 45 CFR 1357.16(a)(5) to be submitted by June 30th of each year. If a State has a SACWIS, changes being made to the system should also be included in the State's Advance Planning Document (APD) Update to the Children's Bureau Division of State Systems.

The State must provide quarterly updates of its progress to the Children's Bureau. The first AIP update is due three months after the State receives the Children's Bureau's approval of the initial AIP. Each subsequent updated AIP is due 3 months after the State receives the Children's Bureau's response.

The electronic version of the AIP is used by the State and the Children's Bureau for tracking changes, progress notes, and the Children's Bureau's approval of completed action items. As changes are made to either the program code or screens, documentation noting the updates must be included with the electronic AIP (e.g., screen shots or revised program code). All information provided by the State or the Children's Bureau is to remain in the matrices. Do not delete prior estimated due dates or notes. It is important for this information to remain as historical documentation of the improvement phase and to allow others that may be new to the team a complete history of what has occurred to date.

The Children's Bureau will review the State's updated AIP and respond with comments or sign-off on approved completed action items generally 30 days after receiving the AIP update. Appendix G contains sample pages of the initial AIP and quarterly updates.

Procedure

❑ After the onsite review, the State reviews items needing correction and begins to outline its own work plan for making the changes and estimated due dates for each action item listed in the draft findings.

❑ Upon receipt of the final report, the State requests electronic copies of the AFCARS Improvement Plan from the Children's Bureau.

❑ Within 30 days of receipt of the final report, the State submits the initial AIP to the Children's Bureau with the State's due dates for the completion of each action item and its implementation plan.

      o Where appropriate, the State should include milestones in its plan noting dates for activities such as system analysis and design; development and testing; and, implementation and training.

❑ The first quarterly report is due approximately three months after the Children's Bureau approves the initial improvement plan.

❑ If the State has not made any changes since the last update, submit an email to the Children's Bureau indicating there are no changes.

❑ Notify the Children's Bureau in e-mail correspondence if there are changes in personnel that may affect the implementation of the AIP.

❑ Modified extraction code: Submit a complete copy of the extraction code, not just the sections that were modified. Strategies for change notations include:

      o Change/Modification History section of code: this may include dates and/or a numbering methodology.

o   The section of program code that was modified includes a change request number or a date.

o   Bold or highlight the section that was modified.

❑   If the State's extraction code is submitted to the Children's Bureau in multiple files, include the index of the order the files are executed. If the State created new routines, annotate the original index submitted to the Federal team during the pre-site visit phase.

❑   Modified and/or new screens: Submit a copy of the screen as it first appears and copies of any relevant drop-down option lists.

❑   Submit an updated data dictionary if new codes/values have been added to the system.

❑   The State may want to submit design documents to the Children's Bureau for review and feedback as part of its quarterly update, or between updates.

❑   Refer to the document list in Chapter IV. If any of the original documents submitted by the State during the pre-site visit phase have been modified, the State needs to also submit them.

❑   The State is to submit changes on an on-going basis via e-mail to the Children's Bureau and not wait to complete them all before submitting an updated AIP.

❑   If the date the State provided as an estimated completion date changes, strike through the old date and insert the new one. If an item was completed prior to the estimated due date, strike through the estimated date and add the completed date.

❑   Format for providing updates in the matrices: <u>ST, date</u>: comment. Where ST is the State's abbreviation code, date is the date the AIP update is due, and comments are remarks from the State regarding the item. Be sure to use the corresponding finding/task item number for the date and the comments. This allows for easy referencing of all the information as time passes and the document increases in size. In the footer of the document, strike through the previous date and insert the date of the current AIP update.

C. NEW CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

In the event that during the life-cycle of the AIP the State designs and implements a completely new information system, the Federal team will suspend monitoring of the State's improvement plan. However, the State is expected to utilize the findings from its initial AFCARS Review Assessment and incorporate the findings into the new system. Once the new system is in production and a data file has been submitted from the system, the Children's Bureau will conduct a new AFCARS Assessment Review.

D. CLOSE-OUT OF AFCARS IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The close-out of an AIP may occur in stages and the AFCARS Improvement Phase is not considered complete until all tasks/revisions have been approved by the Children's Bureau.   For instance, the State may complete all of the technical changes and have them approved by the Children's Bureau, but the data may not show an improvement indicating additional attention on data entry by case workers or a need for additional training.

In general, the close-out process is similar to the pre-site visit phase. It includes the following activities:

- A complete review of the State's technical documentation by the Federal team.
- Entering and extracting a set of test cases by the State team, and the Federal team's analysis of the results.
- A review of the State's data, including cases from the sample.

Once the Federal team determines the State has completed the tasks for the technical corrections, a set of test case scenarios will be sent to the State. The State is to enter these cases and extract them as was done during the pre-site visit phase. These test cases are used to analyze whether all technical changes are accurate. At the same time, the State should provide the Children's Bureau with the most recent version of the AFCARS extraction code, and any other documents that have not already been received by the Federal team. Based on the results of the test cases, the Federal team will conduct a complete analysis of the extraction code. If errors are still identified with the extraction code, they will be included as a response to the State's AIP update.

The Children's Bureau will also utilize the frequency report on the most recent data submitted by the State to assess it for improvements in the quality of the data. The Children's Bureau may utilize other means, such as reports generated by the Children's Bureau's Data Team, to determine accuracy of the State's data. The Children's Bureau will also review what the State has done in the areas of training and supervisory oversight to ensure the accuracy of the data. If issues were identified during the case file review related to converting data from an older information system or the paper case files, specifically in regard to missing historical removal episodes, then the AFCARS records for those cases will be reviewed again to ensure the data has been entered.

All items in the improvement plan must have a rating of four before the AIP is considered completed. Once the AIP is completed and approved, a letter will be sent to the State agency from the Children's Bureau's acknowledging the completion of the AFCARS Improvement Plan.

E. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Children's Bureau Regional Office will work with the States to identify technical assistance needed to implement the AIP. The State may also access technical assistance from the Children's Bureau's National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRC-CWDT). The NRC-CWDT can be contacted at nrccwdt@cwla.org, or at its web page: http://www.nrccwdt.org. To arrange on-site technical assistance from the NRC-CWDT, contact your Children's Bureau Regional Office.

AFCARS FEDERAL RESOURCES

45 CFR 1355.40

Children's Bureau's Child Welfare Policy Manual, Section 1, AFCARS.

ACYF-PI-CB-95-09 (REVISED), issued 5/23/95
Methods of Extracting Data for Submission to AFCARS

ACYF-CB-IM-00-04, Issued March 30, 2000
Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Re-issuance of Technical Bulletins.

ACYF-CB-PI-01-07, issued 5/4/2001
Change in the State AFCARS File Name

ACYF-CB-IM-02-03, issued April 8, 2002
Decision regarding AFCARS Penalties, AFCARS File Name

ACYF-CB-IM-02-05, issued April 22, 2002
AFCARS Assessment Reviews

TECHNICAL BULLETINS

Technical Bulletin #1: ACF Electronic Data Transmission

Technical Bulletin #2: AFCARS File Format (Revised April 2002)

Technical Bulletin #3: Optional Explanatory Footnotes and Questions to Guide Footnote Preparation

Technical Bulletin #4: Encryption Guidelines & Algorithms for State Use

Technical Bulletin #5: Record Identifier Encryption/Decryption Utility

Technical Bulletin #6: FC Data Element Standards

Technical Bulletin #7: Adoption Data Element Standards

Technical Bulletin #8: State Data Compliance Utility

Technical Bulletin #9: Data Quality Utility Version 1.0

Technical Bulletin #10: Receipt of AFCARS Report

Technical Bulletin #11: Acceptance Test Guidance

AFCARS FEDERAL RESOURCES

Technical Bulletin #12: AFCARS State Frequency Report Utility

Technical Bulletin #13: AFCARS File Extraction

Technical Bulletin #14: Disability Information

SOFTWARE UTILITIES

   Encryption/Decryption in C and COBOL
   Data Compliance Utility
   Data Quality Utility
   Frequency Utility

WEBSITES

Children's Bureau:
AFCARS web page: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/afcars
SACWIS web page: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/index.htm#sacwis

National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology:
http://www.nrccwdt.org

OTHER RESOURCES

NRC-CWDT AFCARS Toolkit

APPENDIX B

AFCARS GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

	Foster Care Reporting Population	
No.	**Requirement**	**Checklist**
	45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)/(b)(1) and Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions	
1	Each State's data transmission must include all children in foster care for whom the State title IV-B/IV-E agency has responsibility for placement, care, or supervision (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)). The State agency shall transmit semi-annually information on each child in foster care during the reporting period (45 CFR 1355.40 (b)(1)). The population to be included in this reporting system includes all children in foster care under the responsibility of the State agency administering or supervising the administration of the title IV-B Child and Family Services State plan and the title IV-E State plan; that is, all children who are required to be provided the assurances of section 422(b)(10) of the Social Security Act (Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions).	Are the following agencies included in one Department: • Child Welfare • Juvenile Justice • Mental Health • Other? If the above is yes, what agency is designated as the title IV-B/E single State agency under the respective state plans? If the Department is designated as the single State agency, are all children removed from their homes and placed in foster care in the Department's responsibility for care and placement, regardless of the Division, included in AFCARS? Are the protections under section 422(b)(8)(ii) and 475(5)(B) of the Social Security Act being provided to these children? Does the State include children in the foster care population who are under the responsibility for placement, care, or supervision of the agency even if there are no foster care payments? Are all children in foster care under the joint placement and care responsibility of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems reported to AFCARS? Are all children in foster care under the joint placement and care responsibility of the mental health and child welfare systems reported to AFCARS? Are children under the agency's responsibility for care, placement, or supervision whose only placement is a locked facility or a hospital excluded?

2	This includes American Indian children covered under the assurances in section 422(b)(10) of the Act on the same basis as any other child (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)).	Are all children in the joint care and custody of a Tribe and child welfare systems reported to AFCARS?
3	For children in out-of-State placement, the State placing the child and making the foster care payment submits and continually updates the data (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)).	Does the selection logic exclude children placed in the State by another State?
4	This population includes all children supervised by or under the responsibility of another public agency with which the title IV-B/IV-E State agency has an agreement under title IV-E and on whose behalf the State makes title IV-E foster care maintenance payments (Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions).	Does the State have title IV-E agreements with other public agencies (section 472(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Act) to provide foster care maintenance payments to eligible children to AFCARS?
	Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions	
5	The reporting system includes all children who have or had been in foster care at least 24 hours.	Is the State excluding children that were out of their homes for less than 24 hours?

Does the State include children placed in emergency facilities? |
| 6 | Foster care does not include children who are in their own homes under the responsibility of the State agency. | Does the State have a policy of "protective supervision?"

Does the State provide "protective supervision" without ever removing the child from his/her home? |
| | **Child Welfare Policy Manual, Section 1, AFCARS** | |
| 7 | Includes youth over the age of 18 if a payment is being made on behalf of the child (Child Welfare Policy Manual, Section 1.3). | What is the State's legal age of majority?
Does the State provide voluntary services to youth over the age of 18? If, so are these records reported as discharges when the child turns 18?

Does the State claim title IV-E funds for youth over 18 up through completion of school, or their 19th birthday? If yes, are these records reported with a discharge on or before the 19th birthday or when the child is no longer receiving title IV-E funds? |
| 8 | Include all children who are in the placement, care, or supervision responsibility of the title IV-B/E agency that are on "trial home visits" (Child Welfare Policy Manual, Section | Is there a State policy that all children are returned home prior to the release of court ordered placement, care, or supervision? |

	1.3).	Is there a timeframe specified in policy or statue for the length of time that the State must maintain placement and care responsibility before the child is considered discharged?
		Does the program code define a length of time for children that have been returned home but are still in the agency's responsibility for placement and care?
Adoption Reporting Population		
	45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3)	
9	[D]ata are required to be transmitted by the State on all adopted children who were placed by the State title IV-B/IV-E agency, and on all adopted children for whom the State agency is providing adoption assistance (either ongoing or for nonrecurring expenses), care or services directly or by contract or agreement with other private or public agencies. All children adopted who had been in foster care under the responsibility and care of the State child welfare agency and who were subsequently adopted whether special needs or not and whether subsidies are provided or not (Appendix B to Part 1355--Adoption Data Elements, Section II - Definitions).	Are all adoptions under the jurisdiction of the agency required to be entered into the system? What controls exist to ensure that all adoption cases are entered into the system? Are private agency adoptions included? Under what circumstances? Does the State contract out any of its adoption services? If the above is yes, are these adoptions entered into the system, and by whom?
10	For a child adopted out-of-State, the State which placed the child submits the data.	Does the selection logic exclude children placed in the State for adoption by another State?
	Appendix B to Part 1355--Adoption Data Elements, Section II--Definitions	
11	The State must report on all children who are adopted in the State during the reporting period and in whose adoption the State title IV-B/IV-E agency has had any involvement. All special needs children who were adopted in the State, whether or not they were in the public foster care system prior to their adoption and for whom non-recurring expenses were reimbursed; and	Does the State enter into adoption assistance agreements with families adopting from a private agency? Are private individual adoptions included?

	All children adopted for whom an adoption assistance payment or service is being provided based on arrangements made by or through the State agency.	
	Reports on all other adoptions are encouraged but are voluntary.	
Technical Requirements		
	45 CFR 1355.40, sections (b)(1) and (b)(2); and, Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts Section A.1.b(5)	
12	The data must be extracted from the data system as of the last day of the reporting period and must be submitted in electronic form as described in appendix C to this part and in record layouts as delineated in appendix D to this part.	For Regular Files: <u>The file should not include information from the next report period.</u>
	For foster care information, the child-specific data to be transmitted must reflect the data in the information system when the data are extracted (45 CFR 1355.40(b)(2)).	The data must be reflective of the child's circumstances for the report period being submitted.
	Provide data for all children who were discharged from foster care at any time during the reporting period, or in the previous reporting period, if not previously reported (Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts Section A.1.b(5)).	Does the State information system store all historical information, or is information overwritten with the most recent event? (Example: The system stores all case plan goals with its associated date.)
		<u>For Subsequent Files:</u> How does the State extract subsequent files?
		The data must be reflective of the child's circumstances for the report period being submitted.
		Does the State information system store all historical information, or is information overwritten with the most recent event? (Example: Are diagnosed conditions overwritten or deleted when they change?)
	45 CFR 1355.40(b)(1) and section (b)(3)	
13	The State agency shall transmit semi-annually information on each child adopted during the reporting period.	What controls exist to ensure that an individual adoption record is extracted and reported to AFCARS only once?

	Adoption data are to be reported during the reporting period in which the adoption is legalized or, at the State's option, in the following reporting period if the adoption is legalized within the last 60 days of the reporting period. For a semi-annual period in which no adoptions have been legalized, States must report such an occurrence.	How does the State extract subsequent files? Does the data in the subsequent submission reflect activities for that report period? Or, are current data extracted instead?
	45 CFR 1355.40(b)(4) and Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts Sections A.2 and B.2	
14	A summary file of the semi-annual data transmission must be submitted and will be used to verify the completeness of the State's detailed submission for the reporting period. The values for these data elements are generated by processing all records in the semi-annual detailed data transmission and computing the summary values for Elements 1 and 3-22. Element 2 is the semi-annual report period ending date. In calculating the age range for the child, the last day of the reporting period is to be used.	Does the State's semi-annual transmission often fail the format standard for the summary file?
	Appendix C, 45 CFR 1355 Electronic Data Transmission Format	
15	Data file must be in ASCII format.	
16	Elements must be comprised of integer (numeric) value(s).	
17	All records must be a fixed length.	
	Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts	
18	Provide data for all children who were discharged from foster care at any time during the reporting period, or in the previous reporting period, if not previously reported (Section A.1.b(5)).	Does the State have a number of "dropped" records? How does the State ensure the accurate reporting of youth that have aged out?
	ACYF-PI-CB-95-09, Reissued May 23, 1995 and Technical Bulletin #13, AFCARS File Extraction	
19	State extracts all records based on the transaction date of discharge (foster care element #57) or the date of latest removal (foster care element #21), if the child has not been discharged.	The data submitted to AFCARS should be extracted based on removal episodes and not on placement information. Does the selection logic check: • For a transaction date of discharge for a record that occurs during

		the reporting period.
		• If the transaction date of discharge is after the last day of the reporting period, but the same day or prior to the date the State extracts the data for submission, AND the date of latest removal is equal or prior to the last day of the reporting period, then the record must be included.
		• If the transaction date of discharge is absent AND the date of latest removal is equal or prior to the last day of the reporting period, then the record must be included.
		If the transaction date of discharge is present, but does not fall within the dates of the reporting period AND the date of latest removal is after the last day of the reporting period, the record must not be included.
	Technical Bulletin #2, File Format	
20	State must use correct file name for transmission.	Does the State submit the file using the incorrect naming convention?
	Data Quality - Conversion	
21	State transferred historical information on open cases. Specifically, it included information on: date of first removal, total number of removals, and whether the child's mother was married at the time of the child's birth. If the case was open at the time of conversion, information on the number of placement settings was included.	Did the State have a legacy system? Were all records converted? How are cases that were closed at the time of conversion, but have re-opened, handled?
22	The information system has the capability of recording historical information. This should apply to both open cases in which historical information must be entered, and for closed cases that re-open after conversion and must be entered into the system.	

APPENDIX C

AFCARS DATA ELEMENTS

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
#1 State	U.S. Postal Service two-letter abbreviation for the State submitting the report. Must be the correct FIPS code for the State. Best if system hard-coded.
#2 Report Date ___(mo) ___ (year)	The last month and the year for the reporting period.
#3 Local Agency (County or Equivalent Jurisdiction)	Identity of the county or equivalent unit which has responsibility for the case. The 5 digit Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) must be used. Must be the code of the office responsible for the case and not the home residence of the child. Is the State incorrectly using Regional Offices instead of County offices? Does the State incorrectly default to the county where the State office is located for missing FIPS codes?
#4 Record Number	The sequential number which the State uses to transmit data to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or a unique number which follows the child as long as he or she is in foster care. The record number cannot be linked to the child's case I.D. number except at the State or local level. State must use an identifier that remains the person's identifier statewide. Is the same number used for the life of the child? Is the person number the same number from intake through the life of the case? The record number is not to be a social security number.
#5 Date of Most Recent Periodic Review (if applicable) ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Must be the most recent periodic review for the <u>current</u> removal episode. Must be actual review dates and not the due date for the next review. Must not include supervisory reviews, must only be reviews that meet 422(b)(10) standards.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	Must not include periodic review dates after the end of the current report period.
	If a periodic review was conducted prior to the seventh month of the child's foster care episode, the date of the review should be included.
	Are there review dates that precede the current reporting period? Is there a parameter in the program code to select review dates for <u>this removal episode only?</u>
	For States that the designated title IV-B and IV-E agency includes either juvenile justice or mental health: children that either directly enter a community based placement (foster home, group home, etc.) or are placed in such a setting after leaving a correctional /detention facility, and are under the placement and care responsibility of the single IV-B/E state agency must be reported in AFCARS and be provided the protections.
	"An entry in this field certifies that the child's computer record is current up to this date" (Appendix A, section II, of 45 CFR 1355). Does the agency require a review of the accuracy of the information in the automated system at the same time that all aspects of the case are under review?
#6 Child Birth Date ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Month, day and year of the child's birth. If the child is abandoned or the date of birth is otherwise unknown, enter an approximate date of birth. Use the 15th as the day of birth. Are there system edits to verify the accuracy of the child's date of birth in comparison to other factors (child is 18 or younger when entered care, child is not older then the primary caregiver(s) or the foster parents)?
#7 Child Sex 1 = Male 2 = Female	Indicate as appropriate. If "other" or "unknown" are State values, must be mapped to blank.
#8 Child's Race 0 = Does not apply 1 = Apply	In general, a person's race is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. In the case of young children, parents determine the race of the child. Indicate all races (a through e) that apply with a "1." For those that do not apply, indicate a "0." Indicate "f. unable to determine" with a "1" if it applies and a "0"' if it does not.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	If at least one of the race categories "a-e" is selected (coded as 1) then "f" cannot also apply.

A combination of a "1" in any category "a-e" and a "1" in "f" will result in an error. In addition, if all race categories "a-f" are all zeros, this will result in an error.

Every relevant State code must map to an AFCARS value.

State's method of collecting race information must allow for all possible combinations. There should not be a "primary" race identified.

Must be treating Hispanic as an ethnicity not race.

This field should not be initialized to zero. If data are missing, each race category should be blank. |
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
b. Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
c. Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
e. White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
f. Unable to Determine	The specific race category is "unable to determine" because the child is very young or is severely disabled and no person is available to identify the child's race.

"Unable to determine" is also used if the parent, relative or guardian is unwilling to identify the child's race. |
| #9 Hispanic/Latino Origin

1 = Yes
2 = No
3 = Unable to Determine | Answer "yes" if the child is of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American origin, or a person of other Spanish cultural origin regardless of race. Whether or not a person is Hispanic or Latino is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. In the case of young children, parents determine the ethnicity of the child.

"Unable to Determine" is used because the child is very young |

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	or is severely disabled and no person is available to determine whether or not the child is Hispanic or Latino. "Unable to determine" is also used if the parent, relative or guardian is unwilling to identify the child's ethnicity.
#10 Has the child been clinically diagnosed as having a disability(ies)? 1=Yes 2=No 3=Not yet Determined If yes, indicate each type of a disability with a "1."	"Yes" indicates that a qualified professional has clinically diagnosed the child as having at least one of the disabilities listed below. "No" indicates that a qualified professional has conducted a clinical assessment of the child and has determined that the child has no disabilities. "Not Yet Determined" indicates that a clinical assessment of the child by a qualified professional has not been conducted. Does the State have a policy regarding a timeframe for medical and psych evaluations? Standard for determination of disability must be a diagnosis by a qualified professional. The system contains this as a question. Does the State's information system contain a module for health information? Is there a date associated with when the child was diagnosed with a condition? If not, how does the State ensure the accuracy of subsequent submissions?
#11 Mental Retardation[1] Mental Retardation-- [0 = Does not apply] 1 = Applies	Significantly subaverage general cognitive and motor functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior manifested during the developmental period that adversely affect a child's/youth's socialization and learning. Is there a date associated with when the child was diagnosed with a condition? If not, how does the State ensure the accuracy of subsequent submissions?
#12 Visually/Hearing Impaired [0 = Does not apply]	Having a visual impairment that may significantly affect educational performance or development; or a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects educational performance.

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[1] For additional information on mapping diagnosed conditions see AFCARS TB #14, Disability Information

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
1 = Applies	Is there a date associated with when the child was diagnosed with a condition? If not, how does the State ensure the accuracy of subsequent submissions?
#13 Physically Disabled [0 = Does not apply] 1 = Applies	A physical condition that adversely affects the child's day-to-day motor functioning, such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, orthopedic impairments, and other physical disabilities. Is there a date associated with when the child was diagnosed with a condition? If not, how does the State ensure the accuracy of subsequent submissions?
#14 Emotionally Disturbed [0 = Does not apply] 1 = Applies	A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree: An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal problems. The term includes persons who are schizophrenic or autistic. The term does not include persons who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they are also seriously emotionally disturbed. The diagnosis is based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Is there a date associated with when the child was diagnosed with a condition? If not, how does the State ensure the accuracy of subsequent submissions?
#15 Other Medically [0 = Does not apply] 1 = Applies	Conditions other than those noted above which require special medical care such as chronic illnesses. Included are children diagnosed as HIV positive or with AIDS. Is there a date associated with when the child was diagnosed with a condition? If not, how does the State ensure the accuracy of subsequent submissions?
#16 Has this child ever been adopted? 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Unable to Determine	If this child has ever been legally adopted, enter "yes." If the child has never been legally adopted, enter "no." Enter "Unable to Determine" if the child has been abandoned or the child's parent(s) are otherwise not available to provide the information. Should only be answered "yes" if child has been adopted before the current/most recent removal episode.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	This is to be a question the worker responds to and not a system created response.
	The system must be able to report the information regardless of whether the adoption was public or private.
	The system must be able to report regardless of whether the adoption was in-State or in another State or country.
#17 If yes, how old was the child when the adoption was legalized? [0 = Not Applicable] 1 = less than 2 years old 2 = 2-5 years old 3 = 6-12 years old 4 = 13 years or older 5 = Unable to Determine	Enter the number which represents the appropriate age range. If uncertain, use an estimate. If no one is available to provide the information, enter "Unable to Determine." Not applicable should only be used if child is known to have not been previously adopted (response to element #16 is "no"). If the child was previously adopted, but the age is unknown, this element must be left blank. The responses for "unable to determine" in elements #16 and #17 should be equal.
Removal Episodes	The removal of the child from his/her normal place of residence resulting in his/her placement in a foster care setting. A removal is either the physical act of a child being taken from his or her normal place of residence, by court order or a voluntary placement agreement and placed in a substitute care setting, or the removal of custody from the parent or relative guardian pursuant to a court order or voluntary placement agreement which permits the child to remain in a substitute care setting (CWPM). The system must be able to identify an episode according to the AFCARS definition (i.e., from the time of removal from the home and placement in an out of home setting to when the agency no longer has responsibility for placement, care or supervision.
#18 Date of First Removal from Home ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Month, day and year the child was removed from home for the first time for purpose of placement in a foster care setting. If the current removal is the first removal, enter the date of the current removal. For children who have exited foster care, "current" refers to the most recent removal episode and the most recent placement setting. Must include historical information prior to a conversion from a legacy system (or paper file) to a new information system.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	Must include historical information on cases closed prior to a conversion to a new information system that have since re-opened.
	Must include dates of removal that occurred in another county within the State.
	The State includes children that are on runaway status at the time the agency obtained responsibility for placement and care, and who are still on runaway status at the end of the report period.
	If the first ever removal from home is an episode that was 24-hours or less in duration, the date of that episode is never included as a first removal date.
	If in the first ever removal the child's only placement was a hospital or a locked facility, this episode date is never to be selected as the first removal date.
	If in the first ever removal the child's first placement was a detention facility or a hospital and the child subsequently enters a foster care setting within the scope of title IV-E, the date of the foster care placement is to always be the first removal from home date.
#19 Total Number of Removals from Home	The number of times the child was removed from home, including the current removal.
	Must include historical information prior to a conversion from a legacy system to a new information system.
	Removal episodes that are less than 24-hours are never included in the removal count.
	In instances where the child's only living arrangement is a hospital or detention at the time the title IVB/IVE agency obtains responsibility for placement and care, is the program code excluding these records from the number of removal episodes?
#20 Date Child was Discharged from last foster care episode (if applicable) ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	For children with prior removals, enter the month, day and year they were discharged from care for the episode immediately prior to the current episode. For children with no prior removals, leave blank.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	If foster care element #19 is ≥ 2, then this field must not be blank.
	If this field is not blank, it must be a date prior to foster care element #21 (Date of Latest Removal From Home).
	The date of discharge must reflect the date the agency no longer has "care, placement, or supervision" of the child.
	Must not include the date the child entered a "trial home visit."
	If a child re-enters care from a "trial home visit" that was for a non-specified period of time, and a discharge date is entered that equals six months from the date of placement, then that date must be entered for element #20.
	Must include historical information prior to a conversion from a legacy system (or paper files) to a new information system.
	If there was a prior removal episode that was 24 hours or less, and the child later re-enters foster care, the end date of the previous 24-hour episode is not to be reported for this element.
	If the child's prior removal episode only contained a placement that was a hospital or detention, the end date of this episode is not to be reported for this element.
#21 Date of Latest Removal ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Month, day and year the child was last removed from his/her home for the purpose of being placed in foster care. This would be the date for the current episode or, if the child has exited foster care, the date of removal for the most recent removal. Must be the date of the current removal from home (not necessarily the date of case opening). This date must be equal to or prior to foster care element #23 (Date of Placement in Current Foster Care Setting). Must include information prior to a conversion from a legacy system to a new information system. How does the State handle a situation of a child on runaway status at the time the agency obtains responsibility for care and placement?

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	If a child is on runaway status at the time the IVB/IVE agency obtains responsibility for placement and care, the child is to be included in the AFCARS reporting population. If at the end of the report period the child is still on runaway status, the date of removal and placement date (#23) will be the same, element #41 will reflect "runaway," and the number of placements will be zero.

If the child's only placement was a hospital stay or a detention facility, this is not a removal for AFCARS reporting purposes.

If the child's first placement was a detention facility or a hospital and then the child enters a foster care setting within the scope of title IV-E, the date of removal is the start date of this placement. |
| #22 Date of Latest Removal Transaction Date

___(mo) ___ (day)____(year) | A computer generated date that accurately indicates the month, day and year the response to "Date of Latest Removal From Home" was entered into the information system.

Must be a non-modifiable, computer-generated date that reflects when element #21 was first entered into system. |
| #23 Date of Placement in Current Foster Care Setting
___(mo) ___ (day)____(year) | Month, day and year the child moved into the current foster home, facility, residence, shelter, institution, etc. for purposes of continued foster care.

Date must not change when there is a change in the status of placement setting (e.g., foster home that becomes pre-adoptive home) (CWPM).

The State must indicate the date the child was placed on the trial home visit, or known to have run away from the last placement setting as the "Date of placement in current foster care setting" (foster care element 23) (CWPM).

If a child's only "placement" in the removal episode is as a "runaway," then the date of removal and placement date will be the same. |
| #24 Number of Previous Placement Settings in This Episode | Enter the number of places the child has lived, including the current setting, during the current removal episode.

Placement occurs after removal and is the physical setting in which a child finds himself or herself, that is, the resultant foster care setting. A new Placement setting results when the foster care setting changes, for example, when a child moves |

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	from one foster family home to another or to a group home or institution (CWPM).
	Must not include change in status of placement setting (e.g., foster home that becomes pre-adoptive home) (CWPM).
	There are certain temporary living conditions that are not placements, but rather represent a temporary absence from the child's ongoing foster care placement. As such, the State must exclude the following temporary absences from the calculation of the number of previous placement settings for foster care element 24. - Visitation with a sibling, relative, or other caretaker (i.e., preplacement visits with a subsequent foster care provider or preadoptive parents) - Hospitalization for medical treatment, acute psychiatric episodes or diagnosis - Respite care - Day or summer camps - Trial home visits - Runaway episodes (CWPM)
	Must not include return from trial home visit into same placement setting (CWPM).
	Must not include return from runaway status and entry to same placement setting (CWPM).
	If a child's only "placement" in the removal episode is as a "runaway," the placement count should be zero.
	This element is not to be initialized to zero.
	In regard to institutions with several cottages on their campus, the State is not to count a move from one cottage to another. Only count if the site is at a different address.
#25 Manner of Removal From Home for Current placement Episode 1 = Voluntary 2 = Court Ordered 3 = Not Yet Determined	Voluntary Placement Agreement—An official voluntary placement agreement has been executed between the caretaker and the agency. The placement remains voluntary even if a subsequent court order is issued to continue the child in foster care. Court Ordered—The court has issued an order that is the basis of the child's removal.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	Not Yet Determined—A voluntary placement agreement has not been signed or a court order has not been issued. This will mostly occur in very short-term cases. When either a voluntary placement agreement is signed or a court order issued, the record must be updated to reflect the manner of removal at that time.
	Does the State allow voluntary placements?
Actions or Conditions Associated With Child's Removal (Indicate all that apply with a "1".) [0-Does not Apply] 1-Applies	At least one of the foster care elements #26 through #40 must have a value equal to 1. System must have capacity to report on all AFCARS values for element #26 – 40. System must report only those conditions that existed at the time of removal — it must not report any conditions that are found to exist after the child is removed. Circumstances associated with removal must be checked for voluntary placements as well as court ordered placement.
#26 Physical Abuse	Alleged or substantiated physical abuse, injury or maltreatment of the child by a person responsible for the child's welfare.
#27 Sexual Abuse	Alleged or substantiated sexual abuse or exploitation of a child by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare.
#28 Neglect	Alleged or substantiated negligent treatment or maltreatment, including failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or care. State should map emotional abuse as "Neglect" (CWPM).
#29 Parent Alcohol Abuse	Principal caretaker's compulsive use of alcohol that is not of a temporary nature.
#30 Parent Drug Abuse	Principal caretaker's compulsive use of drugs that is not of a temporary nature. System must be able to differentiate between drug abuse and alcohol abuse (i.e. cannot have simply "substance abuse").
#31 Child Alcohol Abuse	Child's compulsive use of or need for alcohol. This element must include infants addicted at birth. System must be able to differentiate between drug abuse and alcohol abuse (i.e. cannot have simply "substance abuse"). System must include children addicted at birth.
#32 Child Drug Abuse	Child's compulsive use of or need for narcotics. This element should include infants addicted at birth.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	System must be able to differentiate between drug abuse and alcohol abuse (i.e. cannot have simply "substance abuse"). System should include children addicted at birth.
#33 Child Disability	Clinical diagnosis by a qualified professional of one or more of the following: mental retardation; emotional disturbance; specific learning disability; hearing, speech or sight impairment; physical disability; or other clinically diagnosed handicap. Include only if the disability(ies) was at least one of the factors that led to the child's removal. Only disabilities that were diagnosed at the time of removal should be considered and contributed to why the child was removed from his/her home.
#34 Child's Behavior Problem	Behavior in the school and/or community that adversely affects socialization, learning, growth, and moral development. These may include adjudicated or nonadjudicated child behavior problems. This would include the child's running away from home or other placement. Is this being used for children in foster care under a title IV-E agreement with Juvenile Justice?
#35 Death of Parent	Family stress or inability to care for child due to death of a parent or caretaker. Is the date(s) of death included as the termination of parental rights dates, if applicable?
#36 Incarceration of Parent	Temporary or permanent placement of a parent or caretaker in jail that adversely affects care for the child.
#37 Caretaker Inability to Cope Due to Illness or Other Reasons	Physical or emotional illness or disabling condition adversely affecting the caretaker's ability to care for the child. Can be marked "applies" if none of the other conditions apply.
#38 Abandonment	Child left alone or with others; caretaker did not return or make whereabouts known.
#39 Relinquishment	Parent(s), in writing, assigned the physical and legal custody of the child to the agency for the purpose of having the child adopted. If the State operates a Safe Haven program indicate "applies" for this element for those children entering under the Safe Haven program.
#40 Inadequate Housing	Housing facilities were substandard, overcrowded, unsafe or otherwise inadequate resulting in their not being appropriate for

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	the parents and child to reside together. Also includes homelessness.
#41 Current Placement Setting 1 = Pre-Adoptive Home 2 = Foster Family Home-Relative 3 = Foster Family Home-Non-Relative 4 = Group Home 5 = Institution 6 = Supervised Independent Living 7 = Runaway 8 = Trial Home Visit	Identify the type of setting in which the child currently lives. Pre-Adoptive Home - A home in which the family intends to adopt the child. The family may or may not be receiving a foster care payment or an adoption subsidy on behalf of the child. Foster Family Home (Relative)--A licensed or unlicensed home of the child's relatives regarded by the State as a foster care living arrangement for the child. Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)--A licensed foster family home regarded by the State as a foster care living arrangement. Group Home—A licensed or approved home providing 24-hour care for children-in a small group setting that generally has from seven to-twelve children. Institution—A child care facility operated by a public or private agency and providing 24-hour care and/or treatment for children who require separation from their own homes and group living experience. These facilities may include: Child care institutions; residential treatment facilities; maternity homes; etc. Supervised Independent Living—An alternative transitional living arrangement where the child is under the supervision of the agency but without 24 hour adult supervision, is receiving financial support from the child welfare agency, and is in a setting which provides the opportunity for increased responsibility for self care. Runaway—The child has run away from the foster care setting. Trial Home Visit—The child has been in a foster care placement, but, under State agency supervision, has been returned to the principal caretaker for a limited and specified period of time. If a time period is not specified the child must be identified as having been returned home at the point at which the trial home visit exceeds six months (CWPM).

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	Multi-service agencies should not be coded as "Institution" — the actual setting should be used.
	Licensed relative foster homes are mapped as relative foster homes.
	Non-paid placements must be included.
	If at the time the agency obtains responsibility for care and placement of the child, and the child is on runaway status and remains a runaway as of the end of the report period, then report "runaway" for this element.
#42 Is Current Placement Out-of-State? 1=Yes (Out of State placement) 2=No (In-State placement)	"Yes" indicates that the current placement setting is located outside of the state making the report. "No" indicates that the child continues to reside within the state making the report. Note: Only the State with placement and care responsibility for the child should include the child in this reporting system.
#43 Most recent case plan goal 1 = Reunify With Parent(s) Or Principal Caretaker(s) 2 = Live With Relative(s) 3 = Adoption 4 = Long Term Foster Care 5 = Emancipation 6 = Guardianship 7 = Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	Indicate the most recent case plan goal for the child based on the latest review of the child's case plan—whether a court review or an administrative review. If the child has been in care less than six months, enter the goal in the case record as determined by the caseworker. Reunify With Parents or Principal Caretaker(s)--The goal is to keep the child in foster care for a limited time to enable the agency to work with the family with whom the child had been living prior to entering foster care in order to reestablish a stable family environment. Live With Other Relatives—The goal is to have the child live permanently with a relative or relatives other than the ones from whom the child was removed. This could include guardianship by a relative(s). Adoption—The goal is to facilitate the child's adoption by relatives, foster parents or other unrelated individuals. Long Term Foster Care—Because of specific factors or conditions, it is not appropriate or possible to return the child home or place her or him for adoption, and the goal is to maintain the child in a long-term foster care placement.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	Emancipation—Because of specific factors or conditions, it is not appropriate or possible to return the child home, have a child live permanently with a relative or have the child be adopted; therefore, the goal is to maintain the child in a foster care setting until the child reaches the age of majority. Guardianship—The goal is to facilitate the child's placement with an agency or unrelated caretaker, with whom he or she was not living prior to entering foster care, and whom a court of competent jurisdiction has designated as legal guardian. Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established—No case plan goal has yet been established other then the care and protection of the child. If State defaults missing data to "not yet established," then this information should be mapped to blank after 60 days from the date of latest removal. Is the State mapping a goal of reunification to a non-custodial parent to "reunification?" If State does not list "long term foster care" on the case screen, then the program code must list the alternative living arrangement plans that are mapped to it. If the youth will be in foster care until the age of 18 and no other goal is currently applicable, and the youth has a permanent connection with an adult use the goal "emancipation." If there is no adult with a permanent connection to the child, use "long-term foster care." Is State placing youth that have a long-term foster care plan into independent living services and planning for emancipation?
Principal caretaker(s) information	Provide information on the person(s) from whom the child was removed. This may include biological parents, grandparents, or others.
#44 Caretaker Family Structure 1 = Married Couple 2 = Unmarried Couple 3 = Single Female 4 = Single Male 5 = Unable to Determine	Select from the four alternatives—married couple, unmarried couple, single female, single male—the category which best describes the type of adult caretaker(s) from whom the child was removed for the current foster care episode. Enter "unable to determine" if the child has been abandoned or the child's caretakers are otherwise unknown. "Separated" must be mapped to "married."

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
#45 1st Primary Caretaker's Birth Year ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Enter the year of birth for up to two caretakers. If the response to data element #44, Caretaker Family Structure, was 1 or 2, enter data for two caretakers. If the response was 3 or 4, enter data only for the first caretaker. If the exact year of birth is unknown, enter an estimated year of birth.
#46 2nd Primary Caretaker's Birth Year (if applicable) ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Required if foster care element #44 (Caretaker Family Structure) has a value of 1 or 2. (May leave blank if foster care element #44 equals 5.)
#47 Mother's Date of TPR ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Enter the month, day and year that the court terminated the parental rights. If the parents are known to be deceased, enter the date of death. Is there a goal of adoption and a date of TPR? If the discharge reason is adoption, is the TPR date missing? Is the most recent mother's TPR date used? TPRs that occurred prior to a State's conversion to a new system must be included.
#48 Legal or Putative Father's TPR ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Enter the month, day and year that the court terminated the parental rights. If the parents are known to be deceased, enter the date of death. Legal or most recent putative father's TPR date (i.e. the last impediment to freeing the child) must be used. Is there a goal of adoption and dates of TPR? If the discharge reason is adoption, is the TPR date missing? TPRs that occurred prior to a State's conversion to a new system must be included.
Foster family home - parent(s) data	Provide information only if the response to element #41, current placement setting, is 1, 2, or 3. System must have capacity to report #49 - 55 if child is in purchased foster home.
#49 Foster Family Structure 0 = Not Applicable 1 = Married Couple 2 = Unmarried Couple	Foster Family Structure—Select from the four alternatives—married couple, unmarried couple, single female, single male—the category which best describes the nature of the foster parents with whom the child is living in the current foster care episode.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
3 = Single Female 4 = Single Male	If foster care element #41 (current placement setting) has a value = 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 (indicating that the child is not in a foster family or pre-adoptive home), foster care element #49 must be 0, not applicable.
#50 1st Foster Caretaker's Birth Year	Enter the year of birth for up to two foster parents. If the response to element #49, foster family structure, was 1 or 2, enter data for two caretakers. If the response was 3 or 4, enter data only for the first caretaker. If the exact year of birth is unknown, enter an estimated year of birth. If foster care element #41 (current placement setting) has a value = 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 (indicating that the child is not in a foster family or pre-adoptive home), foster care element #50 should be blank. Are there system edits to verify the accuracy of the foster parent's date? For example, if the date of birth entered would result in the foster parent being 18 or younger.
#51 2nd Foster Caretaker's Birth Year	If the response to element #49, foster family structure, was 1 or 2, enter a date for the second foster caretaker. If foster care element #41 (current placement setting) has a value = 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 (indicating that the child is not in a foster family or pre-adoptive home), then foster care element #51 must be blank. Are there system edits to verify the accuracy of the foster parent's date? For example, if the date of birth entered would result in the foster parent being 18 or younger.
#52 1st Foster Caretaker's Race	Indicate the race for each of the foster parent(s). Use "f. unable to determine" only when the individual is unwilling to identify his or her race. If foster care element #41 (Current Placement Setting) has a value = 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 (indicating that the child is not in a foster family or pre-adoptive home), then foster care race categories must be blank. If at least one of the race categories "a-e" is selected (coded as 1) then f cannot also apply. A combination of a "1" in any category "a-e" and a "1" in "f" will result in an error. In addition, if all race categories "a-f" are all "0"s, this will result in an error.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	This field should not be initialized to zero.
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
b. Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
c. Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
e. White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
f. Unable to Determine	The specific race category is "unable to determine" because the individual is unwilling to identify a race.
#53 1st Foster Caretaker's Hispanic or Latino Origin [0 = Not applicable] 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Unable to Determine	Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity—Indicate the ethnicity for each of the foster parent(s). Answer "yes" if the individual is of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American origin, or a person of other Spanish cultural origin regardless of race. Whether or not a person is Hispanic or Latino is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. Use "unable to determine" only when a person is unwilling to identify his or her ethnicity. If foster care element #41 (current placement setting) has a value = 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 (indicating that the child is not in a foster family or pre-adoptive home), then this element must be "0."
#54 2nd Foster Caretaker's Race (if applicable)	Indicate the race for each of the foster parent(s). Use "unable to Determine" only when a foster parent is unwilling to identify his or her race. If foster care element #41 (current placement setting) has a value = 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 (indicating that the child is not in a foster family or pre-adoptive home), then the race categories must be blank. If at least one of the race categories "a-e" is selected (coded as 1) then "f" cannot also apply. A combination of a "1" in any category "a-e" and a "1" in "f" will result in an error. In

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	addition, if all race categories "a-f" are all zeros, this will result in an error. This field should not be initialized to zero.
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
b. Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
c. Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
e. White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
f. Unable to Determine	The specific race category is "unable to determine" because the person unwilling to identify his/her race.
#55 2nd Foster Caretaker's Hispanic Origin [0 = Not Applicable] 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Unable to Determine	Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity—Indicate the ethnicity for each of the foster parent(s). Answer "yes" if the individual is of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American origin, or a person of other Spanish cultural origin regardless of race. Whether or not a person is Hispanic or Latino is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. Use "3. Unable to Determine" only when a person is unwilling to identify his or her ethnicity. If foster care element #41 (Current Placement Setting) has a value = 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 (indicating that the child is not in a foster family or pre-adoptive home), then foster care elements #53 must be 0.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
Outcome information	Enter data only for children who have exited foster care during the reporting period. A discharge represents that point in time when the child is no longer in foster care under the care and responsibility or supervision of the State agency. For AFCARS purposes, situations in which the State retains supervision of a child and the child returns home on a trial basis, for an unspecified period of time, are considered a discharge from foster care after a six month period (CWPM).
#56 Date of Discharge from foster care ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	Enter the month, day and year the child was discharged from foster care. If the child has not been discharged from care, leave blank. If this foster care element is applicable, the date entered must be later then the Date of Last Removal From Home (foster care element #21). If this element is applicable, there must be a reason provided in element #58.
#57 Date of Discharge Transaction Date ___(mo) ___ (day)____(year)	A computer generated date which accurately indicates the month, day and year the response to "Date of Discharge from Foster Care" was entered into the information system. Must be a non-modifiable computer-generated date that reflects the date element #56 was first entered into system.
#58 Reason for Discharge [0 = Not Applicable] 1 = Reunification with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s) 2 = Living with Other Relative(s) 3 = Adoption 4 = Emancipation 5 = Guardianship 6 = Transfer to Another Agency 7 = Runaway 8 = Death of Child	Reunification With Parents or Primary Caretakers—The child was returned to his or her principal caretaker(s) home. Living With Other Relatives—The child went to live with a relative other than the one from whose home he or she was removed. Adoption—The child was legally adopted. The numbers reported for an outcome of adoption should closely reflect the number of adoptions reported in the adoption file. Emancipation—The child reached majority according to State law by virtue of age, marriage, etc. Guardianship—Permanent custody of the child was awarded to an individual.

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	Transfer to Another Agency—Responsibility for the care of the child was awarded to another agency—either in or outside of the State. Runaway—The child ran away from the foster care placement. Death of Child—The child died while in foster care. If this element has a response, then a date must be in element #56. "Runaway" should only be indicated if the agency has been dismissed of responsibility for care and placement.
Source(s) of Federal financial support/assistance for child 0-Does not apply 1-Applies	Indicate all that apply with a "1." At least one of the foster care elements #59 through #65 must have a value of 1. Include all that applied at any time during the six-month reporting period. The payment/benefit can be for less than a full month and still qualify as "applies" for any one of these benefits.
#59 Title IV-E (Foster Care)	Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments are being paid on behalf of the child.
#60 Title IV-E (Adoption Subsidy)	Title IV-E adoption subsidy is being paid on behalf of the child who is in an adoptive home, but the adoption has not been legalized.
#61 Title IV-A (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)	Child is living with relative(s) whose source of support is an AFDC payment for the child. Must only include title IV-A payments. Must not include emergency assistance payments. Includes payments that occur after the child entered foster care.
#62 Title IV-D (Child Support)	Child support funds are being paid to the State agency on behalf of the child by assignment from the receiving parent.
#63 Title XIX (Medicaid)	Child is eligible for and may be receiving assistance under title XIX. Must be included if child is eligible for Medicaid payments.
#64 SSI or other Social Security Act Benefits	Child is receiving support under title XVI or other Social Security Act titles not included in this section.
#65 None of the Above	Child is receiving support only from the State or from some

Foster Care Data Elements	
Data Element	**Checklist Item**
	other source (Federal or non-Federal) which is not indicated above. The program code checks for other sources of State, Federal, or non-Federal regardless of the responses to #59 - 64.
#66 Amount Of Monthly Foster Care Payment (regardless of source)	Amount of the monthly foster care payment (regardless of sources)-- Enter the monthly payment paid on behalf of the child regardless of source (i.e., Federal, State, county, municipality, tribal, and private payments). If title IV-E is paid on behalf of the child the amount indicated should be the total computable amount. If the payment made on behalf of the child is not the same each month, indicate the amount of the last full monthly payment made during the reporting period. If no monthly payment has been made during the period, enter all zeros. Should include all payments made on behalf of the child. If no payment was made, State uses zeros. Should be amount of last full monthly payment paid in the AFCARS report period. A blank in this field indicates that the State does not have the information for this foster care element or that a payment was not made.

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
#1 State FIPS Code	Postal Service two letter abbreviation for the State submitting the report. Best if system hard-coded.
#2 Report Period End Date	The last month and the year for the reporting period.
#3 Record Number	The sequential number which the State uses to transmit data to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or a unique number which follows the child as long as he or she is in foster care. The record number cannot be linked to the child's case I.D. number except at the State or local level. Must not be actual case number. State must be using a unique identifier that remains the persons identifier statewide.
#4 State Agency Involvement 1 = Yes 2 = No	Indicate whether the State Title IV-B/IV-E agency had any involvement in this adoption, that is, whether the adopted child belongs to one of the following categories A child who had been in foster care under the responsibility and care of the State child welfare agency and who was subsequently adopted whether special needs or not and whether a subsidy was provided or not; A special needs child who was adopted in the State, whether or not he/she was in the public foster care system prior to his/her adoption and for whom non-recurring expenses were reimbursed; or A child for whom an adoption assistance payment or service is being provided based on arrangements made by or through the State agency.
#5 Child Date of Birth	Month and year of the child's birth. If the child was abandoned or the date of birth is otherwise unknown, enter an approximate date of birth. Are there system edits to verify the accuracy of the child's date of birth in comparison to other factors, such as child is 18 or younger when entered care, child is not older then the primary caregiver(s) or the foster parents?
#6 Child Sex 1 = Male 2 = Female	Indicate as appropriate
#7 Child's Race	In general, a person's race is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. In the case of young children, parents determine the race of the child. Indicate all

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
	races (a through e F that apply with a ``1." For those that do not apply, indicate a ``0." Indicate `` G. Unable to Determine" with a ``1" if it applies and a ``0" if it does not.
	If at least one of the race categories "a-e" is selected (coded as 1) then "f" cannot also apply.
	A combination of a 1 in any category "a-e" and a 1 in "f" will result in an error. In addition, if all race categories "a-f" are all zeros, this will result in an error.
	Every relevant State code should map to an AFCARS value
	State's method of collecting race information must allow for all possible combinations.
	Must be treating Hispanic as an ethnicity not race
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
b. Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
c. Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
e. White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
f. Unable to Determine	The specific race category is ``unable to determine" because the child is very young or is severely disabled and no person is available to identify the child's race. ``Unable to determine" is also used if the parent, relative or guardian is unwilling to identify the child's race.
#8 Child Hispanic Origin 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Unable to Determine	Answer ``yes" if the child is of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American origin, or a person of other Spanish cultural origin regardless of race. Whether or not a person is Hispanic or Latino is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. In the case of young children, parents determine the ethnicity of the child. Unable to Determine is used because the child is very young or is severely disabled and no person is available to determine

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
	whether or not the child is Hispanic or Latino. ``Unable to determine'' is also used if the parent, relative or guardian is unwilling to identify the child's ethnicity.
#9 Has Agency Determined Special Needs 1 = Yes 2 = No	Use the State definition of special needs as it pertains to a child eligible for an adoption subsidy under title IV-E. Is the number of "yes" responses for this element equal to or greater then the number reported as "yes" in element #35, child receiving monthly subsidy?
#10 Primary Basis for Determining Special Needs 0 = Not Applicable 1 = Racial/Original Background 2 = Age 3 = Membership in a Sibling Group 4 = Medical Conditions or Mental, Physical or Emotional Disabilities 5 = Other	Adoption element #10 (Primary basis...special needs) must be completed with a value of 1-5 if adoption element #9 (State Agency...special needs) equals 1 (Yes). Must be primary basis for determination. Should be worker determined and not system determined. For #11 - 15: Space must be available to accommodate all AFCARS disabilities. Elements #11 - 15 are only reported if the response to this element is "4, medical conditions or mental, physical or emotional disabilities." If adoption element #10 (Primary basis...special needs) equals 4 (Medical conditions or Mental, Physical or Emotional Disabilities), then at least one of adoption elements #11-#15 must equal 1 (yes). 1=Primary condition or factor for special needs is racial/original background as defined by the State 2=Primary factor or condition for special needs is age of the child as defined by the State. 3=Primary factor or condition for special needs is membership in a sibling group as defined by the State. 4=Primary factor or condition for special needs is the child's medical Condition as defined by the State, but clinically diagnosed by a qualified professional. When this is the response to question B, then item 1 below must be answered. 5= A specific factor or condition not listed above.

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
	Does the State have its own defined reasons for special needs? If yes, are these included?
#11 Mental Retardation	Significantly subaverage general cognitive and motor functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior manifested during the developmental period that adversely affect a child's/youth's socialization and learning.
#12 Visually/Hearing Impaired	Having a visual impairment that may significantly affect educational performance or development; or a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating that adversely affects educational performance.
#13 Physically Disabled	A physical condition that adversely affects the child's day-to-day motor functioning, such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, orthopedic impairments, and other physical disabilities. Should not include visually/hearing impaired
#14 Emotionally Disturbed	A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree: An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal problems. The term includes persons who are schizophrenic or autistic. The term does not include persons who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they are also seriously emotionally disturbed. Diagnosis is based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Third Edition) (DSM III) or the most recent edition. Note: See Technical Bulletin #14 for guidance regarding Autism.
#15 Other Diagnosed Condition	Conditions other than those noted above which require special medical care such as chronic illnesses. Included are children diagnosed as HIV positive or with AIDS.
#16 Mother's Birth Year	Enter the year of birth for both parents, if known. If the child was abandoned and no information was available on either one or both parents, leave blank for the parent(s) for which no information was available. If the parent was legal or adoptive parent, is her birth year reported for this element?
#17 Father's Birth Year	Enter the year of birth for both parents, if known. If the child was abandoned and no information was available on either one

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
	or both parents, leave blank for the parent(s) for which no information was available. If the parent was legal or adoptive parent, is his birth year reported for this element?
#18 Mother Married at Time of Birth 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Unable to Determine	Indicate whether the mother was married at time of the child's Birth; include common law marriage if legal in the State. If the child was abandoned and no information was available on the mother, enter ``Unable to Determine.'' "Unable to determine" should only be used if child was abandoned; missing data should be mapped as blank. This always applies to the birth mother.
#19 Date of Mother's TPR	Enter the month, day and year that the court terminated parental rights. If the parents are known to be deceased, enter the date of death. Adoption element #19 (Date of Mother's termination of parental rights) must be prior to or equal to adoption element #21 (Date adoption legalized). Is the extraction code checking for a legal parent, if applicable?
#20 Date of Father's TPR	Enter the month, day and year that the court terminated parental rights. If the parents are known to be deceased, enter the date of death. If there are multiple fathers, the one who represented the last barrier to the child's adoption should be used Adoption element #20 (Date of Father's termination of parental rights) must be prior to or equal to adoption element #21 (Date adoption legalized). Is the extraction code checking for a legal parent, if applicable?
#21 Date Adoption Legalized	Enter the date the court issued the final adoption decree.
#22 Adoptive Family Structure 1 = Married Couple 2 = Unmarried Couple 3 = Single Female 4 = Single Male	Select from the four alternatives--married couple, unmarried couple, single female, single male--the category which best describes the nature of the adoptive parent(s) family structure.
#23 Adoptive Mother's Year of Birth	Enter the year of birth for up to two adoptive parents. If the response to data element #22, Family Structure, was 1 or 2,

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
	enter data for two parents. If the response was 3 or 4, enter data only for the appropriate parent. If the exact year of birth is unknown, enter an estimated year of birth. If adoption element #22 (Adoptive parents' family structure) is either 1, 2 or 3 (Married couple, Unmarried couple or Single female), adoption element #23 (Adoptive Mother's year of birth) must be completed.
#24 Adoptive Father's Year of Birth	Enter the year of birth for up to two adoptive parents. If the response to data element "family structure," was 1 or 2, enter data for two parents. If the response was 3 or 4, enter data only for the appropriate parent. If the exact year of birth is unknown, enter an estimated year of birth. If adoption element #22 (Adoptive parents' family structure) is either 1, 2 or 4 (Married couple, Unmarried couple or Single male), adoption element #24 (Adoptive Father's year of birth) must be completed.
#25 Adoptive Mother's Race	In general, a person's race is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. Indicate all races (a through e F that apply with a ``1." For those that do not apply, indicate a ``0." Indicate `` G. Unable to Determine" with a ``1" if it applies and a ``0" if it does not. If at least one of the race categories "a-e" is selected (coded as 1) then "f" cannot also apply. A combination of a 1 in any category "a-e" and a 1 in "f" will result in an error. In addition, if all race categories "a-f" are all zeros, this will result in an error. Every relevant State code should map to an AFCARS value. State's method of collecting race information must allow for all possible combinations. Must be treating Hispanic as an ethnicity not race
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
b. Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
c. Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
e. White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
f. Unable to Determine	The specific race category is ``unable to determine'' because the person is unwilling to identify his/her race.
#26 Adoptive Mother's Hispanic Origin 0 = Not Applicable 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Unable to Determine	Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity—Indicate the ethnicity for each adoption parent. Answer ``yes'' if the individual is of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American origin, or a person of other Spanish cultural origin regardless of race. Whether or not a person is Hispanic or Latino is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. Use ``3. Unable to Determine'' only when a person is unwilling to identify his or her ethnicity.
#27 Adoptive Father's Race	In general, a person's race is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them. Indicate all races (a through e F that apply with a ``1.'' For those that do not apply, indicate a ``0.'' Indicate `` G. Unable to Determine'' with a ``1'' if it applies and a ``0'' if it does not. If at least one of the race categories "a-e" is selected (coded as 1) then "f" cannot also apply. A combination of a 1 in any category "a-e" and a 1 in "f" will result in an error. In addition, if all race categories "a-f" are all zeros, this will result in an error. Every relevant State code should map to an AFCARS value. State's method of collecting race information must allow for all possible combinations. Must be treating Hispanic as an ethnicity not race
a. American Indian or Alaska Native	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
b. Asian	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
c. Black or African American	A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
	Africa.
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
e. White	A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
f. Unable to Determine	The specific race category is ``unable to determine'' because the person is unwilling to identify his/her race.
#28 Adoptive Father's Hispanic Origin 0 = Not Applicable 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Unable to Determine	Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity—Indicate the ethnicity for each adoption parent. Answer ``yes'' if the individual is of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American origin, or a person of other Spanish cultural origin regardless of race. Whether or not a person is Hispanic or Latino is determined by how they define themselves or by how others define them.  Use ``3. Unable to Determine'' only when a person is unwilling to identify his or her ethnicity.
#29 –32 0 = Does not Apply 1 = Applies	Indicate the prior Relationship(s) the child had with the adoptive parent(s). Should be a response of "applies" for at least one of #29- 32.
#29 Relationship of Adoptive Parent to Child - Stepparent	Spouse of the child's birth mother or birth father.
#30 Relationship of Adoptive Parent to Child - Other Relative	A relative through the birth parents by blood or marriage.
#31 Relationship of Adoptive Parent to Child - Foster Parent	Child was placed in a non-relative foster family home with a family which later adopted him or her. The initial placement could have been for the purpose of adoption or for the purpose of foster care.
#32 Relationship of Adoptive Parent to Child - Other Non-Relative	Adoptive parent fits into none of the categories above.
#33 Child Was Placed from 1 = Within State 2 = Another State 3 = Another Country	1=Responsibility for the child resided with an individual or agency within the State filing the report. 2=Responsibility for the child resided with an individual or agency in another State or territory of the United States. 3=Immediately prior to the adoptive placement, the child was residing in another country and was not a citizen of the United States.

Adoption Data Elements	
Element	**Checklist**
#34 Child Was Placed by 1 = Public Agency 2 = Private Agency 3 = Tribal Agency 4 = Independent Person 5 = Birth Parent	1=A unit of State or local government. 2=A for-profit or non-profit agency or institution. 3=Tribal Agency--A unit within one of the Federally recognized Indian Tribes or Indian Tribal Organizations. 4=A doctor, a lawyer or some other individual. 5=The parent(s) placed the child directly with the Adoptive parent(s). Private agencies under contract to the State agency are considered "public" agencies.
#35 Receiving Monthly Subsidy 1 = Yes 2 = No	This child was adopted with an adoption assistance agreement under which regular subsidies (Federal or State) are paid. This element is to indicate "yes" if the only subsidy is Medicaid.
#36 Monthly Amount	Indicate the monthly amount of the subsidy. The amount of the subsidy should be rounded to the nearest dollar. Indicate "0" if the subsidy includes only benefits under titles XIX or XX of the Social Security Act. If adoption element #35 (Monthly subsidy) equals 2 (No), then adoption element #36 (Monthly amount) must equal 00000. The response to this element must be padded with zeros if the amount is less than five digits.
#37 Adoption Assistance - title IV-E	If #35, "is child receiving Title IV-E Adoption Subsidy?" is "yes" indicate whether the subsidy is claimed by the State for reimbursement under title IV-E. Do not include title IV-E non-recurring costs in this item.

APPENDIX D

STATE ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

Important Dates to Remember

Date of the onsite review: _____

Date to submit system documents: _____

Date test case extraction due: _____

Period Under Review (PUR): _____

STATE ACTIVITIES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DATE DUE	COMPLETED
AAR Initiation Phase			
Initiate Review (State Requests an AAR or Respond to Federal Request)			
Confirmation Letter Received by State			
Pre-site Visit Phase (Minimum12-16 weeks prior to on-site)			
Identify State AAR Team Coordinator			
Provide list of State Team Members to Federal Review Team Coordinator			
Reserve a room large enough to accommodate the size of the State and Federal review teams combine for the on-site review*			
*Reserve additional space for reviewing the case files (if necessary)			
Gather documentation to be sent to Federal team *See Exhibit 4: State Documentation List*			
Submit documentation to Federal team			
Identify staff member who is familiar with system and/or practice to enter the test cases (approx 40 working hours)			
Enter the Test Cases *See Appendix E: Instructions for Entering Test Case Scenarios*			
After test cases entered, contact the Federal Technical Coordinator for instructions on transmitting test files			
Decrypt case record numbers sent by Federal team			
Arrange for paper case files to be pulled and sent to the State office where the review will be held			
Petition the court to open adoption records (if necessary)			
Ensure that case records are as complete and up-to-date as possible			
Identify and schedule staff to participate in the case file review typically held on day two of the on-site			
Identify person to conduct the overview of the State's System			
Identify person that will demonstrate the case scenario entry and person to extract cases.			
Ensure State staff have copies of State documentation			
Provide State team with copies (1 week before onsite visit)			

STATE ACTIVITIES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DATE DUE	COMPLETED
On-site Visit Phase (5 business days)			
Ensure that copies of the State policy manual are in the on-site meeting room			
Ensure Access to the State information system all week (particularly on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday)			
Ensure that State team members attend the on-site review meetings			
Conduct Overview of the State's System			
System Demonstration using a sample case scenario			
Access the Test Cases Entered in the Pre-site visit phase for discussion			
Ensure that the case file review takes place in a room large enough for reviewers to be in one room. If this is not possible, than a smaller second room can be designated for the group that will review the adoption files.			
Ensure that State team member have copies of the Frequency Report for the period under review for day three and four			
Ensure that all staff members that were involved with the AAR during the week and senior management staff attend the exit conference			
Post-Site Visit State (90 Business Days Following Onsite)			
Develop estimated due dates for each action item listed in the draft findings matrices provided by the Federal team at the exit conference			
Begin making corrections to the system or the extraction code based on the preliminary on-site findings			
Submit changes/correction to the program code or system screens to the Children's Bureau (CB) within 45 business days after the completion of the on-site review to ensure they are incorporated into the final report. Include all related technical documentation. Note location of changes within the program code.			
Final Report Received by the State (90 Business Days Following Onsite)			

STATE ACTIVITIES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DATE DUE	COMPLETED
AFCARS Improvement Phase (2 years from final report date)			
Request electronic copy of the AIP from CB upon receipt of the final report			
Submit the initial AIP electronically to the Children's Bureau with dates for completing each action item within 30 days of final report			
First AIP update is due three months after CB approves the initial AIP (each subsequent updated AIP is due generally on a quarterly basis)			
Submit AIP updates			
Notify CB if there are changes in personnel that may affect the implementation of the AIP			
Include State's plan for implementing changes to the system and for caseworker training in the State's title IV-B Annual Progress and Services Report due by June 30th of each year			

APPENDIX E

ON-SITE AGENDA

AFCARS Assessment Review Only

	Day 1 (Monday)	Day 2 (Tuesday)	Day 3 (Wednesday)	Day 4 (Thursday)	Day 5 (Friday)
A.M.	9:00 A.M Entrance Meeting (1 hour) Break Following Break System Demonstration with Sample Case Scenario	8:30 Case File Review	8:30 – 5:00 Review of Foster Care Elements	8:30 – 12:00 Review of Adoption Elements	8:30 Review of Draft Findings with State Review Team 11:00 Exit Briefing with Administrators
P.M.	Demo., Con't	Debriefing of case file review (Approximately 4:00 p.m.)	Review of Foster Care Elements, Con't.	Extra time if needed for data element review or questions OR Preparation of Findings – Federal Team – Depending on progress of the review.	

The start times for the activities are estimates to assist the State and Federal teams in planning.

AFCARS/SACWIS CONCURRENT REVIEW

Date & Time	SACWIS		AFCARS
Monday			
8:30 – 9:30	Entrance Meeting		
9:30–12:00	System Demonstration Using an AFCARS Demo Case		
12:00-1:00	Lunch		
1:00-5:30	System Demo Continues		

Tuesday 8:00-12:00	SACWIS Demonstration Continues (Some of these items will have been covered on Monday)
	• Intake Management
	   Intake
	   Screening
	   Assessment
	   Investigation
	• Eligibility
	Financial Management
	• Case Management –
	   Service/Case Plan.
	   Case Review/Evaluation
	      Monitoring
			State & Federal Teams Review Case Records

12:00-5:30	• Resource Management
	   Facilities Support
	   Foster/Adoptive Homes
	   Resources Directory
	   Contract Support
	• Court Processing
	• Administration
	   Staff Management
	   Reporting
	   Admin Support
	• Interfaces
	• Quality Assurance
	   Alerts
	   Edits
	   Tracking
	• Security		

Wednesday			
8:00	Central Office Interviews		Foster Care Element Review
3:00	Some of the SACWIS Team Will Visit Central Intake	Central Office Interviews Continue	Foster Care Element Review
Thursday	Local Office Interviews		Adoption Element Review
Friday	Exit Conference		

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE CASE FILE REVIEW FORM

This form will be generated automatically by ACF with all information submitted for the record by the participating State. This is an example of only one page. A report is generated for both Adoption and Foster Care.

Foster Care Case Review Report **Report Period: October 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010**			
State: Bliss **AFCARS Record Number: <u>XN5000001235</u>**		**State Client Identifier: _____**	
AFCARS Element	**Data from AFCARS**	**Data from Paper File**	**Data Do Not Match** (*X*)
#3 Local FIPS Code	Clinton		
#5 Date of Most Recent Periodic Review	July 08, 2009		
#6 Child Birth Date	August 22, 2008		
#7 Child Sex	Male		
#8 Child Race			
a. American Indian/Alaska Native	Yes		
b. Asian	Yes		
c. Black/African American	Yes		
d. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Yes		
e. White	Yes		
f. Unable to determine	No		
#9 Child Hispanic Origin	Yes		
#10 Has Child Been Diagnosed with Disability?	No		
#11 Mental Retardation	Condition does not apply		
#12 Visually/Hearing Impaired	Condition does not apply		
#13 Physically Disabled	Condition does not apply		
#14 Emotionally Disturbed	Condition does not apply		
#15 Other Diagnosed Condition	Condition does not apply		
#16 Has Child Ever Been Adopted	No		
#17 Age at Adoption	Not Applicable		
#18 Date of First Removal from Home	April 10, 2009		
#19 Total Number of Removals from Home	01		
#20 Date of Discharge from Last Episode	-		
#21 Date of Latest Removal	April 10, 2009		
#23 Date of Placement in Current Setting	October 24, 2009		
#24 Number of Previous Placement Settings in Episode	03		

Foster Care Case Review Report
Report Period: October 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010

State: Bliss
AFCARS Record Number: <u>XN5000001235</u> **State Client Identifier: _____**

AFCARS Element	Data from AFCARS	Data from Paper File	Data Do Not Match (*X*)
#25 Manner of Removal from Home	Court Ordered		
#26 Condition Associated with Removal - Physical Abuse	Condition Applies		
#27 Sexual Abuse	Condition Applies		
#28 Neglect	Condition Applies		
#29 Parent Alcohol Abuse	Condition Applies		
#30 Parent Drug Abuse	Condition Applies		
#31 Child Alcohol Abuse	Condition Does not Apply		
#32 Child Drug Abuse	Condition Does not Apply		
#33 Child Disability	Condition Does not Apply		
#34 Child's Behavior Problem	Condition Applies		
#25 Death of Parent	Condition Does not Apply		
#36 Incarceration of Parent	Condition Applies		
#37 Caretaker Inability to Cope Due to Illness or Other Reasons	Condition Applies		
#38 Abandonment	Condition Does not Apply		
#39 Relinquishment	Condition Does not Apply		
#40 Inadequate Housing	Condition Applies		
#41 Current Placement Setting **[These are not listed on the form]** 1 = Pre-Adoptive Home 2 = Foster Family Home-Relative 3 = Foster Family Home-Non-Relative 4 = Group Home 5 = Institution 6 = Supervised Independent Living 7 = Runaway 8 = Trial Home Visit	Foster Family Home (non-relative)		
#42 Is Current Placement Out-of-State?	No		
#43 Most recent case plan goal **[These are not listed on the form.]** 1 = Reunify With Parent(S) Or Principal Caretaker(S)	Adoption		

Foster Care Case Review Report
Report Period: October 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010

State: Bliss
AFCARS Record Number: <u>XN5000001235</u>   **State Client Identifier: _____**

AFCARS Element	Data from AFCARS	Data from Paper File	Data Do Not Match (*X*)
2 = Live With Relative(S) 3 = Adoption 4 = Long Term Foster Care 5 = Emancipation 6 = Guardianship 7 = Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established			
#44 Caretaker Family Structure **[These are not listed on the form.]** 1 = Married Couple 2 = Unmarried Couple 3 = Single Female 4 = Single Male 5 = Unable to Determine	Single Female		
#45 1st Primary Caretaker's Birth Year	1971		
#46 2nd Primary Caretaker's Birth Year (if applicable)	-		
#47 Mother's Date of TPR	April 23, 2009		
#48 Legal or Putative Father' TPR	June 30, 2009		
#49 Foster Family Structure	Single Female		
#50 1st Foster Caretaker's Birth Year	1972		
#51 2nd Foster Caretaker's Birth Year	-		
#52 1st Foster Caretaker's Race			
a. American Indian/Alaska Native	No		
b. Asian	No		
c. Black/African American	No		
d. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	No		
e. White	Yes		
f. Unable to determine	No		
#53 1st Foster Caretaker's Hispanic or Latino Origin	Yes		
#54 2nd Foster Caretaker's Race (if applicable)			
a. American Indian/Alaska Native	-		
b. Asian	-		

Foster Care Case Review Report
Report Period: October 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010

State: Bliss

AFCARS Record Number: <u>XN5000001235</u>   **State Client Identifier: _____**

AFCARS Element	Data from AFCARS	Data from Paper File	Data Do Not Match (*X*)
c. Black/African American	-		
d. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-		
e. White	-		
f. Unable to determine	-		
#55 2nd Foster Caretaker's Hispanic Origin	Not Applicable		
#56 Date of Discharge from foster care	-		
#58 Reason for Discharge **[These are not listed on the form]** 1 = Reunification with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s) 2 = Living with Other Relative(s) 3 = Adoption 4 = Emancipation 5 = Guardianship 6 = Transfer to Another Agency 7 = Runaway 8 = Death of Child	Not Applicable		
#59 Title IV-E (Foster Care)	Condition Applies		
#60 Title IVE (Adoption Subsidy)	Condition Does Not Apply		
#61 Title IVA (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)	Condition Does Not Apply		
#63 Title XIX (Medicaid)	Condition Applies		
#64 SSI or other Social Security Act Benefits	Condition Applies		
#65 None of the Above	Condition Does Not Apply		
#66 Amount of monthly foster care payment (regardless of source)	0435		

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE AFCARS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Sample 1, Initial AIP

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
Race Foster Care: #8 Child's; #52 1st Foster Caretaker's #54 2nd Foster Caretaker's (if applicable) Adoption: #7 Child #25 Adoptive Mother's #27 Adoptive Father's a. American Indian or Alaska Native b. Asian c. Black or African American d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander e. White f. Unable to Determine	2	Screen: Person Profile Program code: 732Nn LNs 0945, 3960-4025, 4090-4100, 4135; and 800A, LNs 1180-1570 1) The worker can enter a race and "unable to determine." 2) Case file review findings: For the category "American Indian or Alaska Native" there were eight (14%) error cases. The reviewers found that it was an additional race that should have been reported.	1) Modify the data entry fields so that a race and "unable to determine" cannot both be selected. One option is to remove "unable to determine" from the five additional selection boxes and only list it on the first selection list. Supervision/Training 2) Implement supervisory oversight to ensure workers enter all applicable races. 3) Provide ongoing training/guidance that race is to be self-identified by the client. 4) ACF will review the data to ensure accuracy.	1) 10-2006 12-2006 3-2007 9-2007 2) 8-2006 3-2007 to 9-2007 3) 9-2007 to 12-2007	1) Work authorization #58095 Business Requirements. See Appendix A for details. System Analysis and Design Development and Testing Implementation & Training 2) Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual Revisions and Updates Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage 3) Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices 4) No state action required.

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
#10 Has the child been clinically diagnosed as having a disability(ies)? 1=Yes 2=No 3=Not yet Determined If yes, indicate each type of a disability with a "1."	2	<u>Screens</u>: Health Exam Profile; Health Diagnosis Profile; Education Evaluation Profile <u>Program code</u>: 731N, LN 3360; and, 733N, LNs 1115, 1380, 1670,1955, 2150, 6075-6155 <u>Frequency Report</u> (n=2,563): Yes = 723 (28%); No = 0; Not yet determined = 1,840 (72%) <u>Frequency Report 2006A</u> (n=2,622): Yes = 752 (29%); No = 1,221 (47%); Not yet determined = 246 (9%) 1a) Review of the screen for disability information indicates there is no field to input "yes," "no," or "not yet determined." 1b) If there is a date, and there are no diagnosed conditions selected, this element is mapped to "no." The State's design of the input screens for the entry of this information may be contributing to the underreporting of this information.	 1a) Consider a way to incorporate the question and the responses into an appropriate screen in the system. 1b) Ensure that a response of "no" means the child has been seen by a medical professional and determined to have <u>no</u> disabilities. 2) Submit revised screen prints to ACF for review. 3) Make appropriate changes to the program code.	 1a) 10-2006 12-2006 1b) 8-2006 9-2007 9-2007 to 12-2007 2) 10-2006 3) 3-2007 to 9-2007	 1a) Work Authorization and business requirements document created. System Analysis and Detail Design Document 1b) Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual Revisions and Updates Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices and Field offices 2)Documents included for review 3) Development, Testing and implementation

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
		Case file review findings: 17 (29%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In six of the error cases, the child was diagnosed with a condition that is to be reported to AFCARS, but the AFCARS data indicated "not yet determined." In nine of the error cases, the AFCARS response was "not yet determined" but the reviewer found the child had been examined by a medical professional and had no health issues. In two error cases, the child had been in care for a year and the AFCARS response was "not yet determined."	4) Submit revised program code to ACF. Supervision/Training 5) Develop a method to ensure that once the evaluation reports are received from the medical personnel the data are entered and the record is updated. 6) Provide training on new field(s), if implemented. 7) Implement supervisory oversight to ensure workers enter this information. 8) ACF will review the data to ensure accuracy.	4) 9-2007 5) 9-2007 to 12-2007 6) 9-2007 to 12-2007 7) 8-2006 to 12-2007 12-2007 9-2007 to 12-2007	5) Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices 6) Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices 7) Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual Revisions and Updates Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices 8) No state action required..
Foster Care and Adoption: #11 Mental Retardation #12 Visually/Hearing Impaired #13 Physically Disabled [0 = Does not apply] 1 = Applies	3	Based on the reporting for element #10, the accuracy of data entry for these elements needs to improve.	Implement a process to ensure timely and accurate entry of this information.	8-2006 to 12-2007 12-2007 9-2007 to 12-2007	Training Issue Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual Revisions and Updates Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage Create Central Office Training Central Office team to deliver

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
					training to staff in Regions and Field offices
			ACF will review data for accuracy.		No State action required.
#44 Caretaker Family Structure 1 = Married Couple 2 = Unmarried Couple 3 = Single Female 4 = Single Male 5 = Unable to Determine	3	Case file review findings: 7 (12%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In most instances, "single female" was reported to AFCARS, but the reviewer found the child was removed from a married couple.	Implement a process to ensure timely and accurate entry of this information. ACF will review data for accuracy.	10-2006 12-2006 3-2007 to 9-2007 8-2006 to 12-2007 12-2007 9-2007 to 12-2007	Work Authorization #58112 business requirements. See Appendix A for details System analysis and detail deign documents. Development, Testing and Implementation. <u>Training Issue</u> Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual Revisions and Updates Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices

Sample 2, AIP Working Document

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
#10 Has the child been clinically diagnosed as having a disability(ies)? 1=Yes 2=No 3=Not yet Determined If yes, indicate each type of a disability with a "1."	2	Screens: Health Exam Profile; Health Diagnosis Profile; Education Evaluation Profile Program code: 731N, LN 3360; and, 733N, LNs 1115, 1380, 1670,1955, 2150, 6075-6155 Frequency Report (n=2,563): Yes = 723 (28%); No = 0; Not yet determined = 1,840 (72%) Frequency Report 2006A (n=2,622): Yes = 752 (29%); No = 1,221 (47%); Not yet determined = 246 (9%) 1a) Review of the screen for disability information indicates there is no field to input "yes," "no," or "not yet determined."	1a) Consider a way to incorporate the question and the responses into an appropriate screen in the system.	1a) 10-2006 12-2006	1a) Work Authorization and business requirements document created. WA #54857 System Analysis and Detail Design Document **XX, 3/2007:** Copy of WA #54857 included for ACF review. (revised document) CB, 8/2007: WA 54857 does not address this element. It addresses adoption elements 9 and 10. **XX, 11-2007:** Completed August 2007 Sprint Backlog: Has the child been clinically diagnosed as having a disability(ies)? Screen print and Program Code included for ACF review. CB, 1/2008: The State added a field with a check box on the "removal episode" screen. It indicates "Is there any indication this child has been diagnosed with a disability?" Why is this on the removal screen? What incentive is there for the worker to update the

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
					information at a later stage of the case? It is not clear from the training materials how "not yet determined" would be entered.
		1b) If there is a date, and there are no diagnosed conditions selected, this element is mapped to "no." The State's design of the input screens for the entry of this information may be contributing to the underreporting of this information.	1b) Ensure that a response of "no" means the child has been seen by a medical professional and determined to have <u>no</u> disabilities.	1b) 8-2006 3-2007 ~~9-2007~~ 11-2007	1b) Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual Revisions and Updates **XX, 3-2007** Training document and Initial eManual completed and posted on FOCUS website copies included for ACF review Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage **XX, 11-2007** Hard copy of Final eManual included for ACF review.
				9-2007 to 12-2007	Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices and Field offices
			2) Submit revised screen prints to ACF for review.	2) 10-2006	2)Documents included for review CB, 8/2007: No documents for foster care element #10 have been received. **XX, 11-2007:** Completed August 2007 Sprint Backlog: Has the child been clinically diagnosed as having a disability(ies)? Screen print included for ACF review. CB, 1/2008: See note for item 1.
			3) Make appropriate changes to the program code.	~~3) 3-2007 to 9-2007~~	3) Development, Testing and implementation

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
			4) Submit revised program code to ACF.	4) 9-2007	**XX, 11-2007** Completed August 2007. Sprint Backlog item: Has the child been clinically diagnosed as having a disability(ies)? Program code included for ACF review. CB, 3/2008: The State added a new section of program code that checks the new "diagnosed with disability indicator" field. If the value is "Y," this element is set to "yes." If the value is "N," this element is set to blank. This section of code overrides the values that may have been set to "yes," "no," or "not yet determined" earlier in the code only when checking the wellness exam flag and days in care. Why does the State value of "N" get mapped to AFCARS blank and not to AFCARS "no?" HWSG733N LNs 7020-7310.
		Case file review findings: 17 (29%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In six of the error cases, the child was diagnosed with a condition that is to be reported to AFCARS, but the AFCARS data indicated "not yet determined." In nine of the error cases, the AFCARS response was "not yet determined" but the reviewer found the child had been examined by a medical professional and had no health issues. In two error cases, the child had been in care for a year and the AFCARS response was	Supervision/Training 5) Develop a method to ensure that once the evaluation reports are received from the medical personnel the data are entered and the record is updated.	5) 9-2007 to 12-2007	5) Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices
			6) Provide training on new field(s), if implemented.	6) 9-2007 to 12-2007	6) Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices
			7) Implement supervisory oversight to ensure workers	7) 8-2006 to 12-2007	7) Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
		"not yet determined."	enter this information.	3-2007 12-2007 11-2007 9-2007 to 12-2007	Revisions and Updates **XX, 3-2007** Training document and Initial eManual completed and posted on FOCUS website copies included for ACF review Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage **XX, 11-2007** Hard copy of Final eManual included for ACF review. Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices
			8) ACF will review the data to ensure accuracy.		8) No state action required.
Race Foster Care: #8 Child's; #52 1st Foster Caretaker's #54 2nd Foster Caretaker's (if applicable) Adoption: #7 Child #25 Adoptive Mother's #27 Adoptive Father's a. American Indian or Alaska Native b. Asian c. Black or African American d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander e. White f. Unable to Determine	2 3	Screen: Person Profile Program code: 732Nn LNs 0945, 3960-4025, 4090-4100, 4135; and 800A, LNs 1180-1570 1) The worker can enter a race and "unable to determine."	1) Modify the data entry fields so that a race and "unable to determine" cannot both be selected. One option is to remove "unable to determine" from the five additional selection boxes and only list it on the first selection list.	1) 10-2006 12-2006	1) Work authorization #58095 Business Requirements. See Appendix A for details. System Analysis and Design **XX, 3-2007** Business Requirements and Detail Design Document #58095 included for ACF Review CB, 8/2007: Based on text in the design detail document, the approach should meet the task. Unable to make full assessment without seeing drop down list for all boxes. If "unable to determine" is only in the first list, this will be fine.

AFCARS Data Element	Rating Factor	Findings	Tasks	Estimated/ Completed Date	State/ACF's Comments/Notes ACF's Sign-off Notes
				3-2007 9-2007 4/2007 C, 1/2008	Development and Testing Implementation & Training **1) XX, 11-2007** Completed April 2007. Do not include "unable to determine" as a "multiple" race value. Screen print provided for ACF review.
		2) Case file review findings: For the category "American Indian or Alaska Native" there were eight (14%) error cases. The reviewers found that it was an additional race that should have been reported.	Supervision/Training 2) Implement supervisory oversight to ensure workers enter all applicable races.	2) 8-2006 3-2007 3-2007 to 9-2007 11-2007 C, 1/2008	2) Drafted AFCARS FOCUS Standard eManual **XX, 3-2007** Training document and Initial eManual completed and posted on FOCUS website copies included for ACF review. Revisions and Updates Final eManual posted on FOCUS webpage. **XX, 11-2007** Hard copy of Final eManual included for ACF review.
			3) Provide ongoing training/guidance that race is to be self-identified by the client.	9-2007 to 12-2007 C, 1/2008	3) Central Office team to deliver training to staff in Regions and Field offices
			4) ACF will review the data to ensure accuracy.		4) No state action required.