

ACF

Administration
for Children
and Families

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

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3. Originating Office: Children's Bureau

4. Key Words: Caseworker Visits; Data Collection and Reporting

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: State and Territorial Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Title IV-B, subpart 1 of the Social Security Act (Act)

SUBJECT: Monthly Caseworker Visit Data and Target Adjustments

LEGAL AND RELATED: Title IV-B, subpart 1, Sections 422 and 424 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622 and 624); ACYF-CB-PI-08-03, issued April 18, 2008; ACYF-CB-PI-09-06, issued June 3, 2009.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Program Instruction (PI) is to provide guidance to State title IV-B agencies on available options to address situations where data relating to monthly caseworker visits (MCV) or visits in the home (VIH) of the child provided to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau (CB) are subsequently discovered to be in error or where other circumstances are determined to have a material impact on achievement of MCV targets previously established by the State.

BACKGROUND: In accordance with Sections 424(e)(1) and (e)(2) of the Social Security Act (the Act), States must, beginning with Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, provide data on the percentage of children in foster care under the responsibility of the State who were visited on a monthly basis by the caseworker responsible for the case of the child; and the percentage of visits that occurred in the residence of the child. The goal of this statutory provision is to achieve at least a 90 percent threshold of children in foster care being visited monthly by their caseworker and ensure that the majority of the visits will be in the child's residence by October 1, 2011. States were required to develop yearly improvement target percentages towards meeting the 90 percent MCV threshold. These targets were, in accordance with ACYF-CB-PI-07-08 to be developed in consultation with ACF for each of the Federal FYs 2008 through 2011 and presented to ACF by June 30, 2008 in the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). The target for FY 2011 was set at 90 percent for all States to ensure that appropriate efforts will be taken to achieve the statutory goal. As specified in Section 424(e)(2)(B) of the Act, any State that fails to make the "requisite progress" specified by these targets is subject to a reduction in its Federal financial participation (FFP) rate for Child Welfare Services under title IV-B,

subpart 1 of the Act of from 1 to 5 percent depending on the degree by which the target level was not achieved.

It has come to the attention of CB that some States have determined that either or both the reported FY 2007 (baseline) and the FY 2008 MCV percentage are in error. The resulting corrected information or changes in program operations may also affect the ability of the State to achieve the established annual targets.

INSTRUCTIONS: Corrections to MCV and VIH Data

Should a State identify that its reported MCV data or the related data on visits in the residence (home) of the child (VIH) data for one or more FYs are in error, the State must promptly notify CB of the corrected data. The CB is available to provide technical assistance to all States on any questions regarding these data. States are also reminded that unless a specific sampling plan is approved by CB, MCV and VIH data must be assembled from the universe of all children in foster care for at least one calendar month during the FY.

Adjustments to MCV Targets

States may wish to review and propose revisions to the targets established in their APSR that was submitted in accordance with the June 30, 2008 due date. Any proposed MCV target adjustments will be accepted in accordance with the following parameters:

1. Completed FYs (currently FY 2008) –The purpose of a target is to assure appropriate progress towards achievement of a desired goal. Adjustments to a target set for a FY that has already been completed are normally not acceptable since actual results for that FY are available. The CB will make an exception to this policy in the instance where a State can establish that inappropriate targets were set due to an erroneous determination of its FY 2007 baseline MCV percentage and the corrected baseline is lower. In this instance, the CB will calculate a revised target for a completed FY that maintains the proportional level of improvement towards meeting the 90 percent threshold that the State established in its original target for that FY.

For example, if a State calculated an FY 2007 MCV of 50 percent and proposed a FY 2008 target of 60 percent, it indicated that one-quarter of the gap between its baseline performance and the goal level (90 percent) would be eliminated in FY 2008. Should it be established from corrected information that the actual FY 2007 baseline for this State is 30 percent, the State may wish to request assignment of a revised target for one or more FYs. In this example, the CB will, if requested, revise the State's FY 2008 target from 60 percent to 45 percent (one-quarter of the gap between the corrected baseline and the goal).

2. Current and Future FYs (currently FYs 2009 & 2010) – Any proposed change affecting the FY 2009 target must be provided in writing to the appropriate CB Regional Program Manager (see Attachment A) **by**

Should a State subsequently determine (after September 15, 2009) that a change in the FY 2010 target is appropriate or that a change for an earlier FY is needed due to the discovery of erroneous data (see parameters above), this request must be submitted as part of the State's APSR that will be due on June 30, 2010. Each request for an adjusted MCV target should be explained and supported by appropriate documentation.

INQUIRIES: Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers
ACF Regional Grants Officers

/s/

Maiso L. Bryant
Acting Commissioner

Attachment A – Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

ATTACHMENT A– Children’s Bureau Regional Program Managers

Region I - Boston

Bob Cavanaugh

bob.cavanaugh@acf.hhs.gov

JFK Federal Building Rm. 2000

Boston, MA 02203

(617) 565-1020 (p)

States

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Region II - New York City

Junius Scott

junius.scott@acf.hhs.gov

26 Federal Plaza Rm. 4114

New York, NY 10278

(212) 264-2890 (p)

States and Territories

New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Region III - Philadelphia

Lisa Pearson

lisa.pearson@acf.hhs.gov

150 S. Independence

Mall West—Suite 864

Philadelphia, PA 19106-3499

(215) 861-4000 (p)

States

Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

Region IV - Atlanta

Ruth Walker

ruth.walker@acf.hhs.gov

Atlanta Federal Center

61 Forsyth Street SW Suite 4M60

Atlanta, GA 30303

(404) 562-2900 (p)

States

Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee

Region V - Chicago

Carolyn Wilson-Hurey
carolyn.wilson-hurey@acf.hhs.gov

233 N. Michigan Avenue
Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 353-4237

States

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Region VI - Dallas

June C. Lloyd
june.lloyd@acf.hhs.gov

1301 Young Street - Suite 945
Dallas, TX 75202
(214) 767-8466 (p)

States

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Region VII - Kansas City

Rosalyn Wilson
rosalyn.wilson@acf.hhs.gov

Federal Office Building
Room 276
601 E 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106
(816) 426-3981 (p)

States

Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

Region VIII - Denver

Marilyn Kennerson
marilyn.kennerson@acf.hhs.gov

Federal Office Building
1961 Stout Street 9th Floor
Denver, CO 80294-3538
(303) 844-3100(p)

States

Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Region IX - San Francisco

Sally Flanzer
sally.flanzer@acf.hhs.gov

90 7th St., 9th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 437-8400 (p)

States and Territories

Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Outer Pacific—American Samoa, Commonwealth of the

Northern Marianas, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap) Guam, Marshall Islands,
Palau

Region X - Seattle

John Henderson

john.henderson@acf.hhs.gov

2201 Sixth Avenue Suite 300, MS-70

Seattle, WA 98121

(206) 615-2482

States

Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington