

CHILD FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR)

Background

The Social Security Act (SSA) authorized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to review state child and family services programs to monitor conformity with the requirements in Title IVB (Child and Family Services) and Title IVE (Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) of the SSA. The Children's Bureau (CB), of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the HHS, implements the CSFRs.

The purpose of the CSFRs is to help states improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families who receive services through the child welfare systems. The CSFR assesses state performance on seven outcomes and seven systematic factors. The outcomes focus on key items measuring safety, permanency, and well-being. The seven systematic factors focus on key state plan requirements of titles IV-B and IV-E that provide a foundation for child outcomes.

The Children's Bureau (CB) completed two rounds of review of all states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico 2001 - 2004 and again 2007 - 2010. The third round is scheduled to begin in FFY 2015. Nevada's review is scheduled for 2018.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Since the first and second rounds of the CSFRs, states have been required to use the CSFR tool for self-monitoring, using "Continuous Quality Improvement" (CQI) methods.

CQI is, "The complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. It relies on an organizational culture that is proactive and supports continuous learning. CQI is firmly grounded in the overall mission, vision, and values of the agency. Perhaps most importantly, it is dependent upon the active inclusion and participation of staff at all levels of the agency, children, youth, families, and stakeholders throughout the process." ("Using Continuous Quality Improvement to Improve Child Welfare Practice-A Framework for Implementation", Casey Family Programs and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, May 2005).

Integrating CQI into daily business begins with engaging child welfare staff and gradually expands to include community partners/external stakeholders and consumers as partners on the quality improvement team. The plan to accomplish this inclusion is through team building, training and short/long-term goal setting.

NV SQIC Case Review Subcommittee

The Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) has a Case Review (CR) Subcommittee that has been reviewing activities specific to the case review process. Case reviewer capacity building is an essential component to this process.

Currently, the reviewer pool consists of staff from DCFS-Family Program's Office (FPO) and jurisdictional child welfare agencies. The SQIC Committee is requesting a more consistent and structured process which includes expanding the reviewer pool.

The committee members are in agreement with DR and NV Partnership for Training (NVP) staff participating in child welfare case reviews because of their established relationships and agreements with child welfare agencies.

In early November 2014, case reviews will be conducted in Clark and Washoe Counties. This could be a training opportunity for designated DR and NVP staff reviewers.

NV Case Record Review Data and Process

In addition to collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, the case review process involves a complete case record read (UNITY and hard copy case file) of children served by child welfare agencies under the title IV-B and IV-E plans and interviewing parties involved in those cases.

A total of 65 cases are reviewed statewide – 17 (twice a year) in CC, 14 in WCC, and 14 in the Rural Regions.

(1) Cases selected for review are based on a sampling universe of children statewide who are/were recently in foster care and children statewide who are/were served in their own homes.

(2) Case reviews are conducted on a schedule that takes into consideration representation of the populations served, including the largest metropolitan area (Clark County), and the significance of other demographic and practice issues.

(3) Case reviewers collect specific case-level data that provides context and addresses agency performance. Cases are reviewed for events/actions occurred in the Period Under Review (PUR).

(4) Policies, written manuals, and instructions exist to assist in standardizing completion of the instruments and the implementation of the case review process.

Additionally, the SQIC Committee will likely develop a process for conducting ad hoc/special reviews targeting specific domains when analysis and other data warrant such reviews.

Selection Process for Case Reviewers (Current Practice)

Child welfare agency decision-makers determine who from their agency is qualified to conduct reviews, with a preference for staff and stakeholders with direct service experience.

This process prevents reviewer conflict-of-interest and promotes third-party (unbiased) review of cases, i.e. cases are not reviewed by caseworker or supervisor responsible for cases or who had previous involvement in the cases, as well as those who may have a personal interest in the case.

Participants receive a one-day training, followed by 2 weeks of examining the case files and interviewing case workers, supervisors, children/youth, parents, foster parents, and other relevant providers related to the case.