

**Case File Summary Report**  
**State: Illinois**  
**Report Period Under Review: October 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010 (2010A)**

## **Background**

The purpose of the case file review is to assess the accuracy of the data entered into the State's information system. 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. The process involved all members of the State and Federal teams, technical and program.

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 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.

## **Summary**

This summary report provides information on the number of cases selected in the sample, the number of cases reviewed, and any relevant general information regarding the analysis of the results. The matrices that follow provide detailed findings. There are six columns in the matrices, they are:

- AFCARS Element - This is the name of each AFCARS element with the corresponding values.
- Data in AFCARS Matches Paper File - The number of records in which the reviewer found that the data submitted to AFCARS matched what was found in the paper file.
- Data in AFCARS Does Not Match Paper File - The number of records in which the reviewer found that the data submitted to AFCARS did not match what was found in the paper file.
- Questionable - The number of records where either the reviewer was not sure whether the data were the correct or based on final analysis there was some type of inconsistency between what was reported and what was noted by the reviewer. Comments are provided in the comment column for these situations.
- Not Found - Indicates that the reviewer was not able to locate the information pertaining to the element in the paper file. This can either be due to a missing file or sections of the file, or the data are now only recorded in the information system and there are no paper documents with the data. This is not considered a negative finding.
- Comments - This column includes findings regarding the errors that were identified in the column "Data in AFCARS Does Not Match Paper File" as well as any other pertinent information pertaining to the element and the findings.

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Foster Care

- Of the cases reviewed, there were seven cases where the individual should not have been in the AFCARS reporting population. There was:
  - One case where the child was born in 1988.
  - One case where the child was born in 1989.
  - Four cases where the child was born in 1990.
  - One case where the child was born in 1991 and the youth was not receiving title IV-E foster care funds.

Note that there was one record of a child that had been adopted from the State's foster care system and then re-entered foster care. This child had experienced three removal episodes at the time of the adoption but the AFCARS file only indicates the child has experienced one removal episode. AFCARS requires information on all removals that a child has experienced.

- There were records reported where the case plan goal was "not yet established" but the child had been in care for several years.
- In the Cook county cases, it appears that information is not reported on foster parent elements foster parents that become the pre-adoptive parents.
- There were two cases where an additional race was found by the reviewer that was not reported in AFCARS.
- If the foster parents were relatives, there were cases in which the AFCARS file did not contain the demographic information on the foster parents.
- It appears the State is either not counting placements moves to detention, or not counting the setting that follows the detention placement.
- Cases where the status of the foster home change but the child did not move were counted as a change in placement.

Adoption

- There were several errors for the element "primary basis for special needs." In all error cases the basis reported to AFCARS was age.
- As expected, the cases all reported "unable to determine" for adoption element #18, was mother married at time of child's birth? In nearly all cases the reviewers were able to answer the question.
- It appears that case workers are mixing up "other relative" and "other non-relative." There were several errors and each was reversed, the child was adopted by a relative instead of an "other non-relative."