

**AFCARS ASSESSMENT REVIEW FINDINGS: General Requirements**

**State: Illinois**

**AFCARS Reporting Period: October 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010 (2010A)**

No.	Requirement	Rating Factor	Findings
<b>Foster Care Population</b>			
<b>45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)/(b)(1) and Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions</b>			
1	<p>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)).</p> <p>The State agency shall transmit semi-annually information on each child in foster care during the reporting period (45 CFR 1355.40 (b)(1)).</p> <p>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).</p>	2	<p>Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the title IV-B/IV-E agency.</p> <p>The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is a separate agency.</p> <p>Note: The State's Department of DCFS and DJJ are in the planning stages of merging together. The State and Federal team discussed implications for AFCARS reporting. The Children's Bureau encourages the State to maintain close communication with Federal partners to ensure that accurate considerations are given to AFCARS reporting and funding issues. The merger will affect the State's foster care reporting population.</p> <p><u>NRC-CWDT TA, 6/2007<sup>1</sup></u>  Children who are in the placement and care responsibility of the State and whose only living arrangement is "runaway" should be reported to AFCARS. These children should be identified as having a current placement setting of "runaway" for FC element #41: Current Placement Setting and zero placement settings in FC element #24: Number of Previous Placement Settings in This Episode. The State is not including these children in the reporting population.</p> <p><u>Program Code CFAF6000</u>  The program code includes all children that are in foster care or have been in foster care during the report period.</p> <p>The extraction code is correctly not including records of children whose only placement is "detention" or "Department of Corrections."</p> <p>As noted in the NRC-CWDT's TA findings, the State is incorrectly excluding children who at the time the agency obtains responsibility for</p>

<sup>1</sup> NRC-CWDT: The National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology provided onsite technical assistance in regard to the State's AFCARS data collection in June, 2007. The sections marked as NRC-CWDT is information from the report the Resource Center provided the State.

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			<p>placement and care are on a runaway status in the AFCARS reporting population. In addition to “runaway,” the following living arrangement types are ignored: Unauthorized Placement, Abducted, Whereabouts Unknown, Unknown Contact, Youth in College, Institution DMH, Armed Service Duty, Youth Emergency Shelters, Hospital/Healthcare Facility, Institution DOC, Unauthorized Home of Parent, and College/University Scholarship.</p> <p>If the agency has responsibility for placement and care of a child/youth, and if at the time the agency is given responsibility the child’s status is “abducted,” “whereabouts unknown,” “unauthorized placement,” or “youth emergency shelter,” the child is to be reported to AFCARS and the extraction code must include the child’s record. See elements #18 - 21, #23, #24, and #41 for additional information.</p> <p><u>Post Site-Visit Corrections</u>                      The State indicated a correction for General Requirement #1 but it is not clear that it will include all the values listed previously as excluded. It seems that it is excluding them as initial placements since the transaction code is not equal to “initiate plac.”</p> <p>The routine that excludes “youth emergency shelter (YES)” has been commented out and these records should now be included in the reporting population.</p> <p>The value “youth in college” has been included in section 4115 so that it is not counted as a removal. This may need to be reassessed once the final decision is made and approved regarding the age of a child.</p>
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)).	4	There are no Federally recognized Tribes in Illinois.
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)).	4	
4	This population includes all children supervised by or under the	4	The Department of Juvenile Justice has an interagency agreement under

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	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).		section 472 of the SSA with some of the counties (approximately eight, including Cook county). These records are identified with a type code of "J" and are correctly included in the reporting population.
<b>Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions</b>			
5	The reporting system includes all children who have or had been in foster care at least 24 hours.	2	<p><u>CYCIS Forms Instructions Form 906/906-1, Placement/Payment Authorization</u> There are instructions to this form to enter the time in which the child entered a placement. The CYCIS screen CM-07 also contains a field for time.</p> <p><u>Program Code</u> The program code does not specifically exclude records of children whose removal episode is less than 24 hours.</p> <p>The State must modify the selection logic to ensure records of children that are in care for 24 hours or less are not included.</p>
6	Foster care does not include children who are in their own homes under the responsibility of the State agency.	4	<p><u>Program Code: CFAF6000, 2500</u> The extract code correctly excludes children whose first and only placement is their own home.</p>
<b>Child Welfare Policy Manual, Section 1, AFCARS</b>			
7	<p>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).</p> <p><u>ACYF-CB-PI-10-11, Issued July 9, 2010</u> <i>Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)</i>. A title IV-E agency that exercises the option to extend assistance to youth age 18 or older must collect and report data to AFCARS on all youth receiving a title IV-E foster care maintenance payment (45 CFR 1355.40).</p>	2	<p><u>Frequency Report</u> The frequency report indicates approximately 10% of the records are of children over age 18. The State is to only include those youth that are 18 and receiving title IV-E. Otherwise, the child should be reported as discharged as of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (foster care element #56) and the reason for discharge as "emancipation" (foster care element #58).</p> <p><u>NRC-CWDT TA, 6/2007</u> Specific questions were raised by Illinois staff regarding youth who turn 18 years of age and are still receiving foster care services. The age of majority in Illinois is 18, and youth in foster care may receive title IV-E funding until they turn 19 years old. These youth may receive services until age 21, and in some cases the State may retain custody up to the age of 21. Youth who are in school and are receiving Chafee funds may continue to receive services, but generally under a voluntary agreement.</p>

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			<p>If a child who has turned 18, but is not yet 19, is still receiving title IV-E funds, he or she should continue to be reported in the AFCARS population. Once the youth either turns 19 or is no longer receiving title IV-E funds, he or she should be reported as discharged with a reason of emancipation.</p> <p><u>Program Code</u> Age is not used as a selection criterion and is only referenced in relation to setting a discharge reason for those situations where the child was discharged during the reporting period and the calculated age is greater than 17. However, based on the frequency report this routine is not being properly executed. Additionally, refer to the notes in the NRC-CWDT's findings. Records of youth should be included if they are 18 and receiving title IV-E funds.</p> <p>As of the onsite AAR, the State is considering exercising the option to extend title IV-E foster care maintenance payments to youth over the age of 18 and possibly up to age 21. If the State modifies the title IV-E plan, and it is approved by the Children's Bureau, the State must ensure that the extraction code includes these youth in the AFCARS reporting population.</p> <p><u>Post Site-Visit Corrections</u> The extraction code (CFS 6000) was modified by setting the child's record as discharged at the time the child is 18 and no longer eligible for title IV-E. It is not clear though that the correction addresses this item as the 2010B data file still includes children over the age of 18 (12% of the records).</p>
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 1.3).	2 3	<p><u>NRC-CWDT TA, 6/2007</u> Illinois requested guidance on reporting requirements for children who have been returned home but remain in the care and placement responsibility of the State. Illinois staff reported there has been some variance across counties regarding whether the State maintains care and placement responsibility of the child for a period of time after being returned home. Recent policy changes in the State will likely lead to more widespread use of this practice, although variations across counties will continue to exist. Currently, in the program code if a child is in a "home of parent" setting for more than 30 days, that child is incorrectly reported as discharged after 30-</p>

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			<p>days. These children should continue to be included in the AFCARS population until they are discharged from the care and placement responsibility of the State. If there is a court order specifying the period of time for which the child is to remain in State custody, the child should continue to be reported to AFCARS until the order is dismissed. If no period of time is specified in the court order, the child should be reported as discharged from foster care after a period of six months, with a discharge reason of “reunification.” During this time frame, the placement setting recorded for the child should be set to “trial home visit.”</p> <p><u>Program Code CFAF6000, 2500</u> If a child is in a “home of parent” setting for more than 30 days, that child is still incorrectly reported as discharged after 30 days.</p> <p>The State staff need to follow-up with the Federal team and notify them if there is a policy or statute regarding the length of time a child can be placed in their own home while the agency maintains responsibility for placement and care.</p> <p><u>Post Site-Visit Corrections</u> The extraction code (CFS 6000) was modified. The logic in section 2500 that sets the discharge date after 30 days has been commented out and will not be executed.</p>
<b>Adoption Reporting Population</b>			
<b>45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3)</b>			
9	<p>[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.</p> <p>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</p>	4	<p><u>NRC-CWDT TA, 6/2007</u></p> <p>There is an issue regarding Illinois’ use of different dates related to a completed adoption. “Finalization” and “legalized” dates are both recorded. State staff indicated these dates are usually the same but that at times they are different. Illinois staff reported that there are rare cases in which the adoption is finalized but the order for care and placement responsibility is not dismissed. This occurs when the adoption has been finalized but the judge keeps the case open to monitor the family’s progress. According to Illinois staff, the State agency’s order for care and placement responsibility may remain in effect for several months following the adoption finalization.</p>

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	1355--Adoption Data Elements, Section II - Definitions).		<p>Illinois staff plan to investigate which date is used to select the AFCARS adoption population, as well as practice in the field for entering the “finalized” versus the “legalized” date. Once the adoption has been finalized in the courts, the child should be reported as discharged from foster care with a reason of “adoption” and the finalized adoption should be reported in the adoption file.</p> <p><u>Program Code, CFAF6150</u>                      Program CFAF6150 creates the pool of adoption cases to be processed for AFCARS. Records are selected from the adoption finalization database if the adoption finalization date is less than the report period end date and the finalization entered date is within the reporting period.</p>
10	For a child adopted out-of-State, the State which placed the child submits the data.	4	
<b>Appendix B to Part 1355--Adoption Data Elements, Section II--Definitions</b>			
11	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• All children adopted for whom an adoption assistance payment or service is being provided based on arrangements made by or through the State agency.</li> </ul>	3	<p><u>NRC-CWDT TA, 6/2007</u></p> <p>Another issue related to the adoption population concerns the reporting of private agency adoptions in which there is an adoption assistance agreement between Illinois and the adoptive family. This generally occurs if the adopted child is identified as having special needs. Illinois does enter into such agreements but these adoptions are not currently reported to AFCARS. These adoptions are required to be reported to AFCARS. The Federal guidance regarding this requirement is available in 45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3): <i>“For the purposes of adoption reporting, data 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.”</i></p>

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			<p><u>Program Code</u> See the specific notes in the adoption data elements. The State team indicated that if the information is entered into the CYCIS<sup>2</sup> screens, then it will be reported into AFCARS.</p> <p>The State team also indicated it would be possible to have an agreement with a family living in Illinois who adopts a child from a private agency in another State. These two situations would be considered a “non-ward” case and should be reported to AFCARS.</p>
	Reports on all other adoptions are encouraged but are voluntary.		The State will only report adoptions in which they have involvement.
<b>Technical Requirements</b>			
<b>45 CFR 1355.40, sections (b)(1) and (b)(2); Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts Section A.1.b(5)</b>			
12	<p>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 45 CFR 1355 and in record layouts as delineated in appendix D to 45 CFR 1355 (45 CFR 1355.40(b)(1)).</p> <p>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)).</p>	2	<p><u>Program Code:</u> CFAF6000</p> <p>When evaluating living arrangements for inclusion as foster care placements, the extract code bypasses all records that have a date greater than the report period end date. So, no data should be reported that occurs after the end of the reporting period for a “regular” file.</p> <p>There are certain data fields that do not store the data in a history table. Consequently, data submitted for prior report periods will not accurately reflect the child’s circumstances for that time frame. One example is the information that is to be reported for a child’s diagnosed condition. Changes/updates to this information overwrites the previous information. The State needs to modify its system to ensure that data are maintained in a history table. Additional information is provided in related adoption and foster care data elements.</p>
<b>45 CFR 1355.40(b)(1) and section (b)(3) (Adoption)</b>			
13	<p>The State agency shall transmit semi-annually information on each child adopted during the reporting period.</p> <p>Adoption data are to be reported during the reporting period in which the adoption is legalized or, at the State's option, in the</p>	4	Program CFAF6150 creates the pool of adoption cases to be processed for AFCARS. This program attempts to account for potentially missing adoptions during the reporting period by looking at foster care cases that have closed with a reason code of adoption. These are compared to the cases on the adoption finalization table for the reporting period and if one is found

<sup>2</sup> Child and Youth Centered Information System

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	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.		that has not been entered in this table, it is included in the AFCARS adoption report. Records are selected from the adoption finalization database if the adoption finalization date is less than the report period end date and the finalization entered date is within the reporting period.
<b>45 CFR 1355.40(b)(4) and Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts Sections A.2 and B.2</b>			
14	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	4	
<b>Appendix C, 45 CFR 1355 Electronic Data Transmission Format</b>			
15	Data file must be in ASCII format.	4	
16	Elements must be comprised of integer (numeric) value(s).	4	
17	All records must be a fixed length.	4	
<b>Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts</b>			
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 (Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts Section A.1.b(5)).	3 4	
<b>ACYF-PI-CB-95-09, Reissued May 23, 1995 and Technical Bulletin #13, AFCARS File Extraction</b>			
19	<p>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.</p> <p>The data submitted to AFCARS should be extracted based on removal episodes and not on placement information.</p> <p>The selection logic should check:</p>	2 4	<p><u>NRC-CWDT TA, 6/2007</u></p> <p>According to information provided by Illinois staff and our review of the program code, it appears the date that is used as the basis for the foster care population does not meet the AFCARS requirement. AFCARS requires that foster care element #57, Foster Care Discharge Transaction date, is a non-modifiable date that reflects when the date of discharge was entered into CYCIS. The date currently used is an "effective" date, which may or may not be the date that the discharge was entered. Use of the discharge transaction date prevents instances of "dropped" records. A record is</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a transaction date of discharge for a record that occurs during the reporting period.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>		<p>“dropped” when it is reported to AFCARS in one report period but not in the subsequent report period, but no discharge information has been entered. The transaction date accounts for data entry of a discharge that occurred in a previous report period.</p> <p><u>Program Code CFAF6000</u> The State does not have a discharge transaction date per se. The extract code uses the date of the last foster care living arrangement to populate the discharge date and it uses the segment entered date (computer generated) as the discharge transaction date. It does use this date in selecting the records that qualify for foster care reporting during the current reporting period.</p>
<b>Technical Bulletin #2, File Format</b>			
20	State must use correct file name for transmission.	4	
<b>Data Quality – Conversion</b>			
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.	4	
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.	3 4	