

AFCARS ASSESSMENT REVIEW FINDINGS – General Requirements

State: North Carolina

Report Period Under Review: October 1, 2007 - March 31, 2008 (2008A)

No.	Requirement	Findings/Notes	Rating Factor
Foster Care Population			
1	<p>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>All children in foster care under the responsibility of the State agency administering or supervision 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)(8) of the Social Security Act (the Act) (Appendix A – SECTION II).</p>	<p>The Division of Social Services (DSS) is one of 30 Divisions and Offices in the North Carolina (NC) Department of Health and Human Services. DSS is the designated title IV-B/E State agency. The State is correctly including in its AFCARS only those children in the responsibility for care and placement of DSS.</p> <p><u>Program Code (Pqa847 LNs 84700-84900):</u> The program code correctly excludes children from the reporting population whose only living arrangement type is “50, home of parents,” “51, home of legal guardian,” “54, division of youth services residential facility, or “69, jail, lock-up, detention facility, or facility administered by the State department of corrections.”</p> <p>However, the program code incorrectly includes children whose only living arrangement in the removal episode is a hospital. <i>Post Site-Visit Finding:</i> The program code has been modified to exclude a child whose only living arrangement type is "53, therapeutic home." “Therapeutic homes” are to be included even if it is the first placement setting. The program code still incorrectly includes records of children whose only living arrangement type is "63, hospital" (pqa847, LN 84840)</p>	2
2	<p>All children supervised by or under the responsibility of another public agency with which the title IV-B/E agency has an agreement under title IV-E and on whose behalf the State makes title IV-E foster care maintenance payments (Appendix A - SECTION II).</p>	<p>The State does not have agreements under title IV-E with other public agencies or Tribes.</p>	4
3	<p>Includes American Indian children covered under section 422(b)(8) of the Act, on the same basis as any</p>	<p>Indian Tribes in NC do not have a Tribal child welfare system. All Tribal children that are removed from home</p>	4

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	other child (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)).	are in the State agency’s responsibility for placement and care.	
4	For children in out-of-State placements, the State placing the child submits and continually updates the data (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)).	<p>The State is correctly excluding from its reporting population children that are placed in NC from another State public agency.</p> <p>The State is correctly including in its reporting population children it places in other States.</p>	4
5	Includes all children who have been in foster care at least 24 hours (Appendix A - SECTION II).	<p>State staff indicated that the data collection system will not accept cases with the same removal date and discharge date (Legal Authority). This meets the AFCARS requirement that same-day removals are not being reported to AFCARS.</p> <p>The program should also exclude removal episodes that are 24-hours or less. <i>Post site-visit:</i> The program code has been modified to explicitly exclude cases in the extraction selection logic where the begin date for placement authority and the termination date are the same day. (LNs 67401-67470.)</p>	4
6	Does not include children who are in their own homes under the responsibility of the State agency (Appendix A - SECTION II).	<p><u>Program Code:</u></p> <p>The program code correctly excludes children from the reporting population whose only living arrangement type is “50, home of parents” or “51, home of legal guardian.”</p>	4
7	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, AFCARS Reporting Population).	<p>The State can return a child to his/her own home and retain responsibility for placement and care. Based on State policy, if a child is in this living arrangement for six months, the agency must submit a petition to the court to dismiss their responsibility. Generally the petition is accepted and the case is discharged. Otherwise, the judge will order the agency to review the case in court at time specified by the judge. Often times</p>	4

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		the case is reviewed earlier and may be discharged sooner than six months.	
8	Includes youth over the age of 18 if a payment is being made on behalf of the child (Child Welfare Policy Manual, Section 1, AFCARS).	<p>In North Carolina, the age of majority is 18. North Carolina staff indicated that according to State law, youth in foster become ineligible to receive title IV-E funds upon turning 18 years old. Youth who meet certain requirements are able to enter into a voluntary agreement for services until they reach the age of 21 years.</p> <p>The 2008A report period data indicates the State is incorrectly reporting youth that are over the age of 18. The State is to report the youth as discharged for AFCARS purposes as of the youth's 18th birthday. See foster care elements #6, 56, and 58 for additional notes regarding changes.</p>	3
Adoption Reporting Population			
9	<p>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. (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3)).</p> <p>Report on all children 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 adoptions after 10/1/94 that meet the criteria below must be reported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who had been in foster care under the responsibility and care of the State child welfare 	<p>The State is correctly reporting those records in which the child had been in the State's foster care system and had an outcome of adoption.</p> <p>The selection logic checks for a petition date and a final decree date within the report period.</p> <p>The status of "dismissed," "set aside," and "transferred" are to be excluded from the reporting population. The State currently incorrectly includes these in the selection logic.</p>	2

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	agency and who were subsequently adopted whether special needs or not and whether subsidies are provided or not (Appendix B – Section II, paragraph (a)).		
10	<p>Report on all children 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 adoptions after 10/1/94 that meet the criteria below must be reported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All special needs children, whether or not they were in the public foster care system prior to their adoption and for whom non-recurring expenses were reimbursed. • Children adopted for whom an adoption assistance payment or service is being provided based on arrangements with the State agency. (Appendix B – Section II, paragraphs (b) and (c)). 	<p>The State enters into adoption assistance agreements with families adopting from a private agency.</p> <p>It is possible the agency may enter into an adoption agreement with a family that adopted a special needs child that was being placed by a private agency in another State.</p> <p><u>Program Code</u> The State’s value “E, private out-of-state of agency” is incorrectly excluded from the reporting population.</p>	2
11	For children adopted out-of-State, the placing State reports the adoption data (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3)).	The State correctly reports children it places out-of-State for adoption. (Placement types of “B, public out-of-State agency.”)	4
12	Voluntarily reports on all other adoptions. (Appendix B – Section II).	North Carolina voluntarily reports all adoptions that occur in the State to AFCARS.	
Technical Requirements			
45 CFR 1355.40(b)(2)			
13	For foster care information, the child-specific data to be transmitted must reflect the data in the information system when the data are extracted.	<p>There are a couple of issues related to the storage of data. One is related to the issued of the lack of Statewide unique record numbers that are maintained for each individual regardless of where in the State they reside. Another issue relates to the storage of information on foster parents. Lastly, some fields do not have a history table associated with them.</p>	2

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45 CFR 1355.40(b)(3)			
14	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.		
Appendix A, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care Data Elements and Appendix B, 45 CFR 1355 Adoption Data Elements			
15	State uses sequential numbering of the case record number or encrypts the record number.	<u>Program Code (pqa847 LNs 71000-71100):</u> The program code applies a simple one-step encryption operation on the client ID. The State needs to add at least one more, simple encryption operation, different than the current operation. See AFCARS Technical Bulletins #4 & #5 for further guidelines.	4
Appendix C, 45 CFR 1355 Electronic Data Transmission Format			
16	Data file must be in ASCII format.		4
17	Elements must be comprised of integer (numeric) value(s).		
18	All records must be a fixed length.		4
19	Inform the Department, in writing, of the method of transfer intended to be used by the State.		
Appendix D, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care and Adoption Record Layouts			
20	Report the status of all children in foster care as of the last day of the reporting period (Section A.1.b(5)).	Due to issue that not all date elements are set to be extracted on the report period, inaccurate and invalid dates can be reported to AFCARS. See individual date elements for corrections.	3
21	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)).		

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ACYF-PI-CB-95-09, Reissued May 23, 1995			
Technical Bulletin #13, AFCARS File Extraction			
22	State extracts all records based on the transaction date of discharge or the date of latest removal (foster care element #21), if the child has not been discharged.	<p>The State has had issues with records being dropped from one reporting period to the next. This has impacts on the Child and Family Services Data Profile.</p> <p>In the period under review, there was one record with a date of removal of April 15, 2008.</p> <p>The State's methodology does not fully meet the requirements of Technical Bulletin #13.</p>	2
Technical Bulletin #2, File Format			
23	State must use correct file name for transmission.		4
Data Quality - Conversion			
24	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.		N/A
25	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.		
Data Quality - Subsequent Submissions			
26	The data must be reflective of the time period being submitted, not new information applying to a different time frame.	The methodology used by the State to extract its files does not correctly pull the data for subsequent files. The data for subsequent submissions must reflect the activities and conditions for the report period being submitted. <i>Post site-visit changes:</i> The program code	2

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		has been updated to restrict the selection logic to records for which the placement authority begin date is no later than the last day of the reporting period. Changes to history tables must still be implemented before subsequent files can be correctly extracted for submission (pqa847).	