

**AFCARS ASSESSMENT REVIEW FINDINGS: General Requirements**  
**State: South Carolina**  
**AFCARS Reporting Period: October 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010 (2010A)**

oNo	Requirement	Findings	Rating Factor
<b>Foster Care Population</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>	<p>The Department of Social Services (DSS) is the title IV-B/IV-E single State agency. The Department does not include juvenile justice or mental health.</p> <p><u>Policy/Practice</u> DSS does not have the authority to enter into joint custody of youth with the Department of Juvenile Justice.</p> <p><u>Program Code<sup>1</sup>, lines 767 - 826</u> The extract code selects children based on whether they have a foster care service during the report period.</p> <p>The extraction code correctly does not select records of children whose only placement setting is a hospital or locked facility.</p> <p>The selection logic is not dependent on foster care payments being made.</p> <p>The State is correctly including the records of children on runaway status if it is the only placement.</p> <p>There are instances where the agency receives responsibility for care and placement of children that enter through Emergency Protective Custody (EPC) and the State has 24 hours to determine if there is abuse or neglect. However, they do not consider these records as foster care cases because the child did not enter care as a "traditional abuse and neglect" case and the child may not be a resident of SC. In general, these children are in care for several days. The State must enter these records and include these children as part of the foster care population if they are in the agency's responsibility for care and placement for</p>	3

<sup>1</sup> The main AFCARS FC extract routine is usp\_Batch\_SWF600MP\_HSW500P0\_Extract

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		more than 24 hours.	
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)).	There is one Federally recognized Tribe in South Carolina but there are no interagency agreement between the State and the Tribe.	4
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 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).	DSS does not have title IV-E agreements (section 472(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the SSA) with other public agencies or Tribes.	4
5	The reporting system includes all children who have or had been in foster care at least 24 hours. (Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions)	<p><u>Program Code, lines 767 - 826</u></p> <p>The extract code selects records where there is at least one day of foster care service recorded for the reporting period (i.e., the start and end date are the same). This approach does not capture all removal episodes that last 24 hours or less. A problem occurs if the start and end date are on two consecutive days but the length of stay in foster care is less than 24 hours. If the child were to later re-enter foster care and the episode is longer than 24 hours, the AFCARS data will reflect two removal episodes instead of one. In order to accurately reflect the total number of removals that meet the AFCARS standards, the State needs to find a method to exclude all removal episodes that are 24 hours or less. One example would be to add a time field to both the removal status and legal status. The program code would use these fields to determine whether the child's removal was for less than 24 hours and exclude these records.</p> <p>The selection logic will also need to be modified to set the dates of first removal from home episode to the correct start and end dates for children whose first removal episode was 24 hours or less. This would affect the table that is used for elements #18 and #20.</p>	2
6	Foster care does not include children who are in their own	The State is correctly excluding records of children that are in their	4

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	homes under the responsibility of the State agency. (Appendix A to Part 1355--Foster Care Data Elements, Section II--Definitions)	own home receiving in-home services.	
7	<p>A title IV-E agency that takes the option to extend assistance to youth age 18 or older must collect data and report data to the AFCARS on such youth receiving a title IV-E foster care maintenance payment (Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351), 45 CFR 1355.40, ACYF-CB-PI-10-11)</p> <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>The State's age of majority is 18.</p> <p>The State does provide services to youth over the age of 18. The policy states: "Youth will be advised of the option to remain in placement with the agency by signing DSS 30136, Agreement for Continued Placement of Persons Eighteen to Twenty-One Years of Age, while continuing to work on further education, job skills, or due to a disabling condition."</p> <p>The State claims title IV-E funds for youth 18 years old that are IV-E eligible. These youth are correctly included in AFCARS. The State is considering expanding the definition of child under title IV-E. If the State extends the definition of a child beyond 18, then these youth must be included in AFCARS. At that time the Children's Bureau will provide additional guidance to the State regarding changes that are required in order to report these youth.</p> <p><u>Program Code, lines 1193 - 1197</u>  The extract code excludes children who have turned 18 before the first foster care service start date. Children who are 18 prior to the begin date of the report period are only included if they are IV-E eligible on the first day of the reporting period.</p>	4
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).	<p>State staff indicated there are instances in South Carolina in which physical custody of the child is returned to the parent(s) but the State retains care and placement responsibility. Currently, the State is not including and reporting the records of these children. These children are to be included in the AFCARS population until the agency is dismissed of responsibility for care and placement. (See foster care elements #23, 24, and 41 for additional findings.)</p> <p><u>Program Code:</u>  There is no logic to account for "trial home visits."</p>	3

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<b>Adoption Population</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). (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3))</p> <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. All adoptions which occurred on or after October 1, 1994 and which meet the criteria set forth in this regulation must be reported. Failure to report on these adoptions will result in penalties being assessed. Reports on all other adoptions are encouraged but are voluntary. Therefore, reports on the following are mandated:</p> <p>(a) 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;</p> <p>(b) 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</p> <p>(Appendix B to Part 1355--Adoption Data Elements, Section II - Definitions).</p>	<p><u>Program Code, lines 252 – 288</u></p> <p>The main adoption program extracts the population for AFCARS adoption from the records previously selected for foster care reporting. It selects those records with a foster care discharge reason of adoption.</p>	4
10	For a child adopted out-of-State, the State which placed the child submits the data. (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3))		4
11	[D]ata are required to be transmitted by the State on all adopted children for whom the State agency is providing adoption assistance (either ongoing or for nonrecurring	<p><u>Program Code<sup>2</sup>, lines 252 – 288</u></p> <p>Currently, the State is only reporting adoptions from the State’s foster care system. The State’s statutes do not allow for State adoption</p>	2

<sup>2</sup> The main AFCARS adoption extract routine is usp\_Batch\_SWF600MP\_HSW510P0\_Extract  
Children’s Bureau  
May, 2011

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	<p>expenses), care or services directly or by contract or agreement with other private or public agencies. (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3))</p> <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. (Section II—Definitions of Instructions for Adoption Data Elements Reporting population)</p> <p>Section II—Definitions of Instructions for Adoption Data Elements Reporting population: (b) 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  (c) All children adopted for whom an adoption assistance payment or service is being provided based on arrangements made by or through the State agency.</p>	<p>subsidies to be paid for special needs children unless the child was in the State agency’s custody.</p> <p>The State does pay non-recurring cost for some private adoptions. Mainly these are adoptions handled by a private attorney. The agreement is for the attorney fees and other legal cost. The State must include these records in the adoption file if the child is a special needs child.</p>	
	<p>Reports on all other adoptions are encouraged but are voluntary.</p>	<p>The State is only reporting those adoptions in which it has involvement.</p>	
<b>Technical Requirements</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 this part and in record layouts as delineated in appendix D to this part.</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> <p>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</p>	<p><u>State’s FC Mapping Form</u>  SQL Server Table Function (udf_tbl_GetDateByPeriod) determines the reporting period dates. The period returned is determined by parameters. For example; <u>A</u>’,0 returns the current reporting period (the one that has started but has not ended), <u>A</u>’;-1” the previous reporting period.</p> <p>Based on the test cases and the review of the case files, the State’s extraction code is incorrectly including dates that occur after the end of report period. Data for a <del>regular</del>” file must include information on the case for that report period. Subsequent data files should also only include information that was relevant for that particular report period and not updated information. (This is not the same as correcting data</p>	3

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	Record Layouts Section A.1.b(5)).	that was entered incorrectly.)  Relevant changes are noted in individual data elements for foster care and adoption.	
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 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.</p>	The State uses a transaction date for the selection of the adoption records.	4
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
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
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 (Section A.1.b(5)).		4
19	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.	South Carolina's AFCARS removal episode determination is based partly on service begin and end dates (which correspond with the AFCARS removal and discharge dates), and the associated discharge transaction date (the date that the service end date was entered into	4

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		<p>CAPSS).</p> <p><u>Program Code: lines 715 – 716 and 1198 – 1204</u>            The State’s selection logic incorporates the transaction date. The program code checks for a transaction date that occurs during the report period being submitted as a “angular” file.</p>	
20	State must use correct file name for transmission.		4
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.	<p>The State had a legacy system prior to CAPSS. There were several systems for finance, CPS, licensing, legal, and foster care. The State converted all information for all cases (open and closed). The process was automated for information that could be brought over. There also was a manual process of conversion and data clean-up.</p> <p>As noted in the findings for foster care elements #26 - 40 there were several errors related to the older cases that were open at the time of conversion. The State needs to review these cases and have case workers review the cases and update the record to reflect all the circumstances that contributed to a child’s removal from home.</p>	3
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.		4