

Case File Summary Report
State: South Carolina
Report Period Under Review: October 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010

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. Additionally, the State incorporated field staff, including supervisors and staff from training units, etc., as part of the State team for the purpose of reviewing cases.

For States that have converted from an older information system (or a paper recordkeeping method) to a new electronic case file, the case file review process identifies any issues with the accuracy of the data due to conversion. The information that is submitted to AFCARS should reflect what is in the paper case records. The case file review is the only means for the Federal team to assess the accuracy and the level of completeness of the State's conversion process from a paper or legacy system to its new information system.

The Children's Bureau recognizes for those States that chose to implement a statewide case management system (both SACWIS and non-SACWIS models) there will be far less data in the paper file since the electronic case management system is the official record. However, there are some documents that may not be part of the State's information system, such as medical reports, court reports, home studies, etc. These documents usually provide a significant amount of the information for the case file reviewers. Additionally, this process identifies issues related to timely data entry as well as how well the system is being used to record information on each case.

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.

Since the case file review is the only means to assess conversion, the cases selected for the review were primarily those in which the most recent removal date, or the first removal date, precedes the date the State's system went operational. If the State phased in its operational status, then the sample may reflect these dates.

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:

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- 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.

Foster Care

Number of Cases in Sample	80
Number of Cases Reviewed	76
Number of Cases Analyzed	75

- There were several errors for the date of the most recent periodic review (element #5). In 13 error cases, the date reported in AFCARS was after the end of the report period. In an additional 13 records, the reviewer found a review date that was later than the one reported to AFCARS. In two error cases, the AFCARS file was blank but the reviewer did find a review date. In two error cases, the date reported to AFCARS was more than six months prior to the end of the report period.
- There were several errors for the date of placement and the number of placements. Many of these errors were due to the program code incorrectly setting the date of a temporary placement. The program code also seems to be counting as a placement move those situations in which the foster home status changed but the child never moved from the placement.
- While there were several errors for the group of elements that reflect the reasons a child entered foster care (#26 - 40), the majority of errors were in records that had a date of latest removal prior to 1999. The elements that appear to still need addressing are: parent drug abuse, child drug abuse, and caretaker inability to cope.

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- The errors in the case plan goal mostly seem to be related to the reporting of “long-term foster care” and “emancipation.” The State’s revised method of developing the case plan should help address this issue.
- There were several errors related to data conversion and indicates a need for additional data clean-up on older cases. Much of the data could be found in the paper file, it just had not been entered into CAPSS.

Adoption

Number of Cases in Sample	30
Number of Cases Reviewed	30
Number of Cases in Analyzed	30

- There were several errors related to data conversion and indicates a need for additional data clean-up on older cases. Much of the data could be found in the paper file, it just had not been entered into CAPSS.