

<h1>ACF</h1> <p>Administration for Children and Families</p>	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration on Children, Youth and Families	
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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

- TO:** State and Territorial Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Titles IV-B and IV-E the Social Security Act, ACF Regional Offices.
- SUBJECT:** Measuring Round One Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Improvement for Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) Using Round Two Revised National Standards
- LEGAL AND RELATED:** Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, 45 CFR 1355.34(a) and (b), 45 CFR 1355.35(a) and (e), 45 CFR 1355.36 (d), ACYF-CB-IM-00-11, ACYF-CB-IM-07-05 and ACYF-CB-IM-01-01 and 71 FR 32969-32987(June 7, 2006), 72 FR 2881-2890 (January 23, 2007)
- PURPOSE:** To provide guidance for use by States and Regional Offices for determining the amount of improvement necessary toward meeting the national standards through an approved program improvement plan (PIP) for the first round of CFSRs using revised national data composites and measures developed for the round two CFSR.
- INFORMATION:** In accordance with 45 CFR 1355.34(a) and (b), a State must, in part, meet national standards for certain statewide data indicators and achieve certain outcomes for children and families to be determined in substantial conformity in a CFSR. In the 72 FR 2881-2890 (January 23, 2007), ACF replaced the six data measures used for the first round of the CFSR with four data composites and two single measures in order to enhance the quality of the information used for the second round of CFSRs and to determine if States are operating in substantial conformity with Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act). If a State is determined not to be in substantial conformity because the State's data did not meet the national standards, the State is required to develop a PIP (45 CFR 1355.35(a)) that sets forth the amount of progress the State will make toward meeting the national standards for the statewide data indicator(s). In ACYF-CB-IM-07-05 we provided guidance for use by States and Regional Offices in determining the minimal amount of improvement that States must make toward meeting the standards through the implementation of a PIP for the second round of CFSRs. This IM addresses the extent that we will allow

States to replace the round one six national standard data indicators with the revised four data composites and two single measures to determine if States are operating in substantial conformity through a round one PIP.

INSTRUCTIONS: In situations where a State does not meet a national standard data indicator, the regulations require that the PIP, which is jointly developed by the Children's Bureau and the State, set forth the amount of progress the statewide data will make toward meeting the national standards (45 CFR 1355.35(a)(1)(i) and (iv)). The PIP must also specify a period in which ACF can measure a State's progress in achieving the negotiated amount of improvement (45 CFR 1355.35(e)(1)).

At the conclusion of States' PIPs, if States have not attained their negotiated amount of improvement with regard to any of the round one applicable data indicators we will consider their performance for any associated round two replacement national standard indicators or relevant data components and individual measures to determine goal attainment. We want to provide round one PIP States that have not been able to sufficiently demonstrate improvement on the round one national standard data indicators the opportunity to consider their performance on the enhanced national standard measures for attainment of negotiated improvement goals. ACF will recalculate negotiated baselines using the associated replacement national standard indicators or components. If a State achieves the established minimal improvement for any of the associated round two national standard indicators or relevant data components or measures, we will consider the State to have satisfied the improvement requirement for their national standard indicator and we will determine that the State has successfully completed that portion of the PIP. This IM addresses the extent of improvement that will be required of States through a round one PIP due to determinations that States are not operating in substantial conformity based in whole or in part on the failure of the State to meet the national standards, and does not address States' failure to achieve substantial conformity due to other reasons. If the State does not meet or exceed the approved amount of improvement specified in the PIP, the applicable penalties for the outcome associated with the data indicator will be withheld as specified in 45 CFR 1355.36.

Our detailed rationale for adopting the revised national standard data indicators is explained in 72 FR 2881-2890 (January 23, 2007). We made improvements to the six national standard data indicators after we determined that making the changes would enhance the quality of the CFSR by expanding the scope of the data pertaining to a particular child welfare domain. We also made adjustments to the national percentiles because of improved national data that no longer required the elimination of some states from the normal distribution curve.

As detailed in ACYF-CB-IM-07-05, the minimal amount of improvement for the round two national standard measures will be based on the national sampling error adjusted for the level of the individual State's baseline year performance. In actual practice, States will multiply their baseline performance by an improvement factor to obtain their PIP goal for a particular round two national standard data indicator. The round one national standard indicators and the corresponding round two enhanced data indicator with improvement factors are displayed in table A below.

Table A

Round One National Standard	Revised Associated National Standard Indicator	Improvement Factor
Recurrence of maltreatment	Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence	1.006
Incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care	Absence of Child Abuse or Neglect in Foster Care	1.001
Length of time to achieve reunification	Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification	1.029
Foster care re-entries	Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification	1.029
Length of time to achieve adoption	Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of Adoptions	1.041
Stability of foster care placements	Permanency Composite 4: Placement Stability	1.030

We will apply a similar process to State performance on some composite data components that are closely associated with the round one national standard measures. The round one national standard indicator and the round two components with the contributing individual measures that we will consider for round one goal attainment are displayed in table B.

Table B

Round One National Standard	Associated Round Two Components and Individual Measures	Improvement Factor
Length of time to achieve reunification	Permanency Composite 1 - Component A: Timeliness of Reunification	
	Measure C1 - 1: Exits to reunification in less than 12 months	1.026
	Measure C1 - 2: Exits to reunification, median stay	.0956
	Measure C1 - 3: Entry cohort reunification in < 12 months	1.039
Foster care re-entries	Permanency Composite 1 - Component B: Permanency of Reunification	
	Measure C1 - 4: Re-entries to foster care in less than 12 months:	0.955
Length of time to achieve adoption	Permanency Composite 2 - Component A: Timeliness of Adoptions of Children Discharged From Foster Care.	
	Measure C2 - 1: Exits to adoption in less than 24 months	1.049
	Measure C2 - 2: Exits to adoption, median length of stay	0.969

If a state does not meet minimal improvement on their round one or the above identified round two national standards for a round one PIP, some relevant composite data components and contributing individual measures will be considered for measurement of performance. Some data components have been identified because of their close association with the original national standard data indicators. In order to satisfy improvement for the associated national standard indicator, a state must meet the minimal improvement for individual measures in the component. For permanency composite 1, component A, with 3 individual measures, we will require

that 2 of 3 individual measures achieve minimal improvement for a determination of goal attainment. For permanency composite 1, component B, the 1 individual measure must meet minimal improvement. For permanency composite 2, component A, both individual measures must meet minimal improvement. Minimal amount of improvement for the identified individual measures associated with the data components will be based on the national sampling error for each of the 6 individual measures adjusted for the level of an individual State's baseline year performance. The improvement factor that will be used for determining a State's minimum PIP improvement regarding the individual measures is displayed for each of the six individual measures in table B. States will multiply their baseline performance by the improvement factor to determine if minimal improvement is achieved at the individual measure level.

States using these revised indicators and improvement factors may request ACF to assist with determining revised baselines using State submitted AFCARS and NCANDS data. States and ACF will verify the accuracy and consistency of these data with the definitions as outlined in the 72 FR 2881-2890 (January 23, 2007). Revised baseline time periods will be individually negotiated by the Children's Bureau and States when a revision will result in higher quality data resulting in more accurate measurement of state performance during their PIP implementation period.

INQUIRIES: Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

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