

AFCARS ASSESSMENT REVIEW FINDINGS: General Requirements

State: Alaska

Report Period Under Review: April 1, 2006 - September 30, 2006 (2006B)

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)(10) of the Social Security Act (the Act) (Appendix A – SECTION II).</p>	<p>Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children Services is the title IV-B/IV-E single State agency.</p> <p>The State correctly includes all foster care children under their responsibility for care and placement.</p> <p>The State correctly includes those children in which no foster care payments are made.</p>	4
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 has no title IV-E agreements with other public agencies.</p>	4
3	<p>Includes American Indian children covered under section 422(b)(10) of the Act, on the same basis as any other child (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(2)).</p>	<p>There are 228 Federally recognized Tribes in Alaska. Tribal children will generally be placed in the agency’s responsibility for care and placement if a removal from home is necessary. These records are treated as any other record in AFCARS.</p>	4
4	<p>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>	<p>The State correctly reports children placed out-of-State and does not include children placed in Alaska from other States.</p>	4
5	<p>Includes all children who have been in foster care at least 24 hours (Appendix A - SECTION II).</p>	<p>The State correctly does not include records of children whose only removal episode was 24 hours or less.</p> <p>However, if the child has additional removal episodes, or if the State does a subsequent submittal, the program code will incorrectly count removal episodes that are less than 24 hours. See elements #18 and #19 in the foster care matrix.</p>	3
6	<p>Does not include children who are in their own homes under the responsibility of the State agency (Appendix A - SECTION II).</p>	<p>The agency can have custodial supervision of a child and the child is never removed from his/her home. The State</p>	4

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		correctly does not include these records for AFCARS reporting.	
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).	The State does return children to their own home while maintaining care and placement responsibility of the child. There may be instances of both “specified” and “unspecified” periods of time. The State correctly includes these children in the AFCARS reporting population.	4
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>The State’s age of legal majority is 18.</p> <p>The State does claim title IV-E funds for youth over 18 up to their 19th birthday, or graduation from high school, whichever comes first.</p> <p>The State is incorrectly including youth over the age of 19. The State must develop a means to ensure that youth at age 18 (or age 19) are reported as discharged for AFCARS reporting purposes with a discharge reason of “emancipation.” See elements #56 and #58 in the foster care matrix.</p>	3
Adoption 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 agency and who were 	The State is correctly reporting all children in the adoption file that were in the Alaska foster care system that had an outcome of adoption.	4

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	subsequently adopted whether special needs or not and whether subsidies are provided or not (Appendix B – Section II, paragraph (a)).		
10	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. <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)). 	The State does have adoption agreements with families that adopt through private agencies. However, these records are not reported to AFCARS. The State needs to add functionality that will allow the recording of these records in ORCA, and revise the extraction code to report them to AFCARS.	2
11	For children adopted out-of-State, the placing State reports the adoption data (45 CFR 1355.40(a)(3)).	Alaska reports children adopted out-of-State in the adoption file and does not include children placed in Alaska from other States for purposes of adoption in the adoption file.	4
12	Voluntarily reports on all other adoptions. (Appendix B – Section II)	The State does not include other adoptions.	
Technical Requirements			
45 CFR 1355.40(b)(1)			
13	The data must be extracted from the data system as of the last day of the reporting period.	The person executing the program can choose to run the extraction program code with the default calculation of the end date of the most recent reporting period if it is run during the regular submission period. Alternatively, the operator can override the default reporting period calculation for subsequent submissions.	4
14	The data must be submitted in electronic form as described in Appendix C.	The State submits the file in the correct electronic format.	4
15	The data must be in record layouts as delineated in Appendix D.	The State's foster care submissions often have inconsistent	2

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		summary files for all ages. The State and Federal team discussed options for the cause of the file inconsistency and ways to correct the problem. One solution may be to have the summary file executed after the detail file.	
45 CFR 1355.40(b)(2)			
16	For foster care information, the child-specific data to be transmitted must reflect the data in the information system when the data are extracted.		4
45 CFR 1355.40(b)(3)			
17	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.	The State needs to develop a method to ensure that records previously submitted are not re-submitted and to ensure that an adoption is not missed during an extraction.	2
Appendix A, 45 CFR 1355 Foster Care Data Elements and Appendix B, 45 CFR 1355 Adoption Data Elements			
18	State uses sequential numbering of the case record number or encrypts the record number.	The State reports an encrypted version of the client identifier in the AFCARS data. The State uses the same encryption routine for NCANDS.	4
Appendix C, 45 CFR 1355 Electronic Data Transmission Format			
19	Data file must be in ASCII format.		4
20	Elements must be comprised of integer (numeric) value(s).		4
21	All records must be a fixed length.		4
22	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			
23	Report the status of all children in foster care as of the last day of the reporting period (Section A.1.b (5)).		4
24	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
ACYF-PI-CB-95-09, Reissued May 23, 1995			

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25	State extracts all records based on the transaction date of discharge or removal.	The State follows the guidance provided in ACYF-PI-CB-95-09.	4
Technical Bulletin #2, File Format			
26	State uses correct file name for transmission.		4
Data Quality - Conversion			
27	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's initial process for data conversion was not complete. The State has identified a process to convert the data from the legacy database to ORCA. This will include ensuring that all discharges from care and placement are included, and placements such as detention.</p> <p>Findings from the SACWIS review and the AFCARS case file review indicate there are several records missing information on all prior removal episodes. The State has been adding the removal information to open and closed cases as indicated by the decrease in the number of cases reported with missing dates of latest removal. Also, there are placements for the current removal episode, which was open when the State converted, that were not entered into ORCA.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #18 Case File Review Findings:</u> 14 (28%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of the error cases, the reviewers found earlier dates than what were reported in AFCARS. In four of these cases, the child actually had multiple removals that were not reported to AFCARS. In each case the AFCARS data indicated the child only had one removal.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #19 Case File Review Findings:</u> 9 (18%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of error cases, the</p>	3

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		<p>reviewers found more removals than what were reported in AFCARS. The AFCARS data indicated only one removal episode.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #20 Case File Review Findings:</u> 10 (20%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of error cases, the reviewers found more removals than what were reported in AFCARS. There was one record with a date reported for this element, but element #19 indicated only one removal. The reviewer confirmed the child had only one removal episode.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #21 Case File Review Findings:</u> 10 (20%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of error cases, the reviewers found earlier dates of removal than what were reported in AFCARS.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #24 Case File Review Findings:</u> 8 (16%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In six of the error cases, the reviewers found more placements than what were reported in AFCARS. All were placements that occurred prior to the implementation of ORCA.</p> <p><u>Foster care elements #47 and #48 Case File Review Findings:</u> The significant issue found in the case file review was that this element was reported as blank, but the reviewers found a TPR or a deceased date.</p>	
28	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-	<p>The system will not allow entry of historical data.</p> <p>Findings from the SACWIS review: <i>Alaska has developed</i></p>	2

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	<p>open after conversion and must be entered into the system.</p>	<p><i>screens so that workers may manually enter missing historical information into ORCA, but the system lacks edit checks and other controls to ensure this historical data is entered.</i></p> <p>The State's initial process for data conversion was not complete. The State has identified a process to convert the data from the legacy database to ORCA. This will include ensuring that all discharges from care and placement are included, and placements such as detention.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #18 Case File Review Findings:</u> 14 (28%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of the error cases, the reviewers found earlier dates than what were reported in AFCARS. In four of these cases, the child actually had multiple removals that were not reported to AFCARS. In each case the AFCARS data indicated the child only had one removal.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #19 Case File Review Findings:</u> 9 (18%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of error cases, the reviewers found more removals than what were reported in AFCARS. The AFCARS data indicated only one removal episode.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #20 Case File Review Findings:</u> 10 (20%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of error cases, the reviewers found more removals than what were reported in AFCARS. There was one record with a date reported for this element, but element #19 indicated only one removal.</p>	

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		<p>The reviewer confirmed the child had only one removal episode.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #21 Case File Review Findings:</u> 10 (20%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In the majority of error cases, the reviewers found earlier dates of removal than what were reported in AFCARS.</p> <p><u>Foster care element #24 Case File Review Findings:</u> 8 (16%) of the records analyzed did not match what was reported in AFCARS. In six of the error cases, the reviewers found more placements than what were reported in AFCARS. All were placements that occurred prior to the implementation of ORCA.</p> <p><u>Foster care elements #47 and #48 Case File Review Findings:</u> The significant issue found in the case file review was that this element was reported as blank, but the reviewers found a TPR or a deceased date.</p>	