

**STATE
OF
ALASKA
Office of Children's
Services (OCS)
TITLE IV-E PROGRAM
IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)**

ACF Contact: Paula Bentz
 ACF Regional Office: Region X
 Date of Title IV-E Review: September 10, 2012
 Date of Title IV-E PIP DRAFT Submission: February 14, 2014
 Date of Title IV-E PIP Approval:

Outcome 1: Processes are in place to ensure consistency and accuracy of Title IV-E eligibility determinations and claiming
 ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING AREA NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

I. For most error cases, the eligibility determination process incorrectly identified a child as eligible and title IV-E was claimed.

A. GOAL: Develop and implement on-going processs to ensure consistency and accuracy of IV-E claiming.

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
1. Establish and implement a consistent quality assurance system for statewide eligibility. Ongoing QA data will be reviewed and analyzed to identify strengths and needs in the state and each region, and will be utilized to create system changes that improve Title IV-E compliance.	Initial baseline data will be established in order to evaluate outcome changes	August 2013	[No entry]	Katasse/ Bergvall/Blumen shine	[No entry]

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
a) Review ORCA notification system to ensure eligibility staff are automatically notified when there is a licensing status change for a foster home or a placement change.	Review ORCA Topic Paper and submit Incident Request	June 2013	[No entry]	Blumenshine / Pietz / Crondahl	[No entry]
a.1) Review and determine if the language included in a notice requires modifications to provide for timely and accurate eligibility review.	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]
2) Establish and implement a consistent quality assurance system for statewide licensing. Ongoing QA data will be reviewed and analyzed to identify strengths and needs in the state and each region, and will be utilized to create system changes that improve Title IV-E compliance.	Initial baseline data will be established in order to evaluate outcome changes	August 2013	[No entry]	Pietz/Miller /Frisby/Rich	[No entry]
3) Licensing and eligibility teams will be established to meet on a quarterly basis to review results of QA and other reporting data. The teams will discuss problems areas, assess training needs and/or modification and make recommendations.	Comparative analysis to the initial baseline data.	August 2013 and On- going Quarterly	[No entry]	Spartz Campbell /Eligibility & Licensing Managers /Eligibility & Licensing staff	[No entry]

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
4) Licensing and eligibility managers will be identified to participate on a IV-E compliance team. This team will meet on a quarterly basis to review data and discuss identified issues and recommendations from review teams. Information will be analyzed to develop and implement changes as needed.	Comparative analysis to the initial baseline data.	August 2013 and On-going Quarterly	[No entry]	Spartz Campbell /Eligibility & Licensing Management Teams	[No entry]
a) Manager(s) from the IV-E team will participate in the monthly statewide managers meeting to provide IV-E information and updates, address questions and solicit input.	[No entry]	August 2013 and On-going Quarterly	[No entry]	Spartz Campbell / Eligibility & Licensing Management Teams	[No entry]
5) The IV-E program officer will provide quarterly IV-E statistics and analysis to senior leadership regarding eligibility and licensing to allow thoughtful decisions for agency wide needs regarding IV-E.	[No entry]	On-going Quarterly	[No entry]	Blumenshine	[No entry]
6) Update and document the protocols for on- going input into IV-E processes from division staff.	Finalize, distribute and utilize the protocol.	August 2013	[No entry]	Katasse/Bergvall /Blumenshine /Pietz	[No entry]
7) OCS will explore the ability to incorporate the IV-E processes into agency's statewide CQI program	[No entry]	March 2014	[No entry]	Spartz Campbell	[No entry]

D. GOAL: Facilitate clear and on-going communication and training regarding IV-E between licensing, eligibility and field staff.

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
1) Review CPS, Licensing and Title IV-E policy manuals for required updates to provide guidance and facilitate communication between the three units.	Documentation of reviews completed and any necessary updates completed.	November 2013		Bergvall / Pietz / Rich	[No entry]
2) Establish an on-going IV-E training program for division staff.	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]
a) NEW HIRES: Develop a short Introduction to IV-E presentation and provide training to new protective services and social services staff via an interactive method such as GoToMeeting or WebEx during the employee's first six months of employment. Training will be available once a month.	Go-live of the training module & documentation of participation	August 2013	[No entry]	Katasse / Bergvall / Blumenshine / Guay / Pietz	[No entry]
3) Update the annual eligibility and licensing training programs for division staff, to include joint interactive IV-E training for eligibility and licensing staff and regional managers. The CIP and Department of Law will be invited to participate.	Training Agendas	September 2013	[No entry]	Pietz/Bergvall /Katasse	[No entry]

Outcome 2: Policy and Practice are in compliance with federal Title IV-E laws, regulations and policies

ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

II. Based on living with a specified relative policy that is not consistent with the regulatory requirement, a child was incorrectly identified a child as eligible and title IV-E was claimed.

III. In some instances present policy may not be clearly stated to support accurate IV-E eligibility determinations.

A. GOAL: Clarify policy to minimize inaccurate IV-E claiming

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
1) Update eligibility policy to clarify AFDC eligibility requirements pertaining to the "living with" requirement to ensure the accurate definition and use of "home" and "specified relative".	[No entry]	August 2013	[No entry]	Bergvall/Blum enshine	[No entry]
a) Train Eligibility staff	Distribution of final policy and on-going QA	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]
2) Ensure clear policy is in place on the appropriate use of continuing IV-E eligibility for up to 14 days for allowable absences from a foster home.	[No entry]	August 2013	[No entry]	Bergvall/Katasse/ Blumenshine	[No entry]
a) Train all eligibility staff on the policy change, as required.	Distribution of final policy and on-going QA	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
3) Ensure policies in the CPS and IV-E policy manuals clearly reflect the difference between a trial home visit and family visitation and update as necessary.	[No entry]	November 2013	[No entry]	Bergvall / Blumenshine	[No entry]
a) Provide field and eligibility staff with guidance on any policy change.	Distribution of final policy	[No entry]	[No entry]	Bergvall/ Blumenshine	[No entry]
b) Review ORCA placement end reasons and determine if there is an appropriate placement end reason for family visitation or if it requires ORCA modifications.	Submit ORCA incident to request modification, if necessary	May 2013	[No entry]	Blumenshine /Crondahl	[No entry]
c) Train all field staff on the appropriate use of ORCA functionality changes, as necessary	ORCA Release Notes	December 2013	[No entry]	ORCA Staff	[No entry]

Outcome 3: Reduce unnecessary delays to IV-E eligibility determinations and the associated loss of IV-E funding by ensuring Title IV-E requirements for court determinations are met and fully documented in a timely manner

ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING AREA NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

IV. In some instances, court orders were incomplete and findings were not clearly stated, court orders were not drafted in a timely manner for signing by the judge, and not all permanency reports were submitted timely.

A. GOAL: Court documents will contain clearly stated findings and accurately reflect the oral findings made on record, thereby reducing the need for eligibility staff to listen to and transcribe oral audio findings.

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
1) CIP will distribute IV-E review final report to members and discuss the need for written and timely court orders.	Meeting materials and minutes	February 2013	[No entry]	DiPietro	[No entry]
2) The CIP will provide education to the judges of the necessity of specifically verbalizing the required IV-E findings.	Finalization and distribution of a memorandum. Comparative analysis to baseline data.	July 2013	[No entry]	DiPietro	[No entry]
3) The DOL will provide education to the AAG's of the necessity of ensuring that specific IV-E findings are verbalized by the judge, on record.	Finalization and distribution of a memorandum. Comparative analysis to baseline data.	July 2013	[No entry]	Raymond	[No entry]

B. GOAL: OCS, the CIP and DOL will collaborate to ensure that OCS has timely access to court documents.

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
1) In coordination with the CIP and DOL, OCS will develop a court tracking spreadsheet in order to evaluate trends in the timeliness of the filing, service and/or receipt of court orders.	Initial baseline data will be established in order to evaluate outcome changes	May 2013	[No entry]	Spartz Campbell / Katasse / Blumenshine / Raymond / DiPietro	[No entry]
a) OCS will provide monthly notification to the Department of Law and/or the CIP of delays that exceed 30 days.	[No entry]	June 2013 and on-going Monthly	[No entry]	Katasse	[No entry]
b) Statistical data will be provided to the Department of Law and the CIP on a quarterly basis to assist the agencies in evaluating current practice and protocols to affect more positive outcome.	[No entry]	August 2013 and On-going Quarterly	[No entry]	Katasse / Blumenshine	[No entry]
d) Establish quarterly teleconference with between OCS, DOL and CIP to discuss and analyze data to identify areas needing improvement.	Comparative analysis to the initial baseline data.	August 2013 and On-going Quarterly	[No entry]	Spartz Campbell / Bergvall / Katasse / Blumenshine / DiPietro / Raymond	[No entry]
2) Dept of Law has recently implemented a new system (ProLaw) that now includes reminders to prompt AAGs' regarding the timely creation and filing of all orders.	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]
a) DOL will verify timelines and/or deadlines are clearly outlined for filing orders.	Memorandum and/or policy distribution.	July 2013	[No entry]	Raymond	[No entry]

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
b) DOL staff will distribute relevant court orders directly to designated OCS staff within one week of receipt of signed copy.	Memorandum and/or policy distribution.	July 2013	[No entry]	Raymond	[No entry]
3) OCS will be provided with read-only access to Alaska court system CourtView for child welfare cases in order to determine if and when orders have been filed and hearing dates.	Documented access to CourtView	March 2013	[No entry]	DiPietro / Katasse / Eligibility Supervisors	[No entry]
4) CIP Director will distribute a memo to clerks of court, judicial assistants, and judges about the importance of timely signing of orders.	Distribution of memo.	July 2013	[No entry]	DiPietro	[No entry]
5) Streamline processes to ensure eligibility staff receive all court documents in a timely manner.	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]	[No entry]
a) OCS, in coordination with the Department of Law, has established a centralized electronic repository, accessible to OCS for court documents. The electronic account is to be used statewide.	Finalization of ProLaw Guide and Go-live of the repository statewide.	July 2013	[No entry]	Raymond / Katasse / Blumenshine	[No entry]

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
b) Based on the success in two of the five regions that have a successful process for the receipt and distribution of court documents, OCS will review and develop similar procedures for statewide implementation.	Documentation of established processes	July 2013	[No entry]	Erickson / Regional PSM II's / Katasse / Blumenshine	[No entry]

Outcome 4: Title IV-E requirements regarding licensing and safety are clearly documented in a timely manner to allow IV-E claiming
ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

IV. There is concern that licenses sometime do not clearly reflect if a home is "fully licensed" or "not fully licensed"

V. The updated form used for monitoring a residential child care providers' compliance with IV-E safety requirements is not used statewide.

A. GOAL: Establish easily identifiable status of a foster home's licensing

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
1) Review Licensing Policy manual to ensure fully licensed standards are clearly defined and provide guidance to licensing staff to ensure understanding.	Policy finalization and distribution	August 2013	[No entry]	Pietz / Bergvall	[No entry]
2) Review the licensing template to determine what modifications can be made to clearly reflect if a foster home's provisional license is fully licensed or not fully licensed.	Submission of ORCA incident request and ORCA release	December 2013	[No entry]	Pietz / Blumenshine / Crondahl	[No entry]

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
3) OCS will review ORCA functionality to determine if an edit is available to prevent a license from being reflected as fully licensed if the appropriate conditions are not met.	Submission of ORCA incident request and ORCA release	December 2013	[No entry]	Pietz / Blumenshine / Crondahl	[No entry]

B. GOAL: Ensure the correct updated form used for monitoring the provider's compliance with IV-E safety requirements is used for reviewing the completion of staff criminal background checks.

Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Est Compl.Date	Actual Compl. Date	Staff/Unit Responsible	Quarterly Progress Report / Comments (Delays/Barriers) /Attachments/Percentage Complete
1) Provide training and education for the Divisions of Health Care Services (HCS) and Behavioral Health (DBH) staff who license residential facilities or manage grants for these facilities. Annual training may be coordinated with the joint OCS training.	Training Agendas and/or training documents	July 2013	[No entry]	HCS Licensing Coordinator / DBH RCCY Coordinator / Pietz / Bergvall	[No entry]
2) Ensure HCS utilizes the most recent tracking tool to document that employee fingerprints meet licensing requirements.	Annual file review	On-going Quarterly	[No entry]	HCS Licensing Coordinator / Pietz / Bergvall	[No entry]

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