

ACF

Administration for
Children and Families

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families

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Family First Prevention Services Act; and Interstate electronic case
processing system

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: State Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Title IVB and IV-E of the Social Security Act

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 funding for state title IV-E/IV-B agencies to develop an electronic interstate case processing system for the orderly and timely interstate placement of children

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES: Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, as amended by Public Law 115-123, enacted February 9, 2018

PURPOSE: To notify states that the Children's Bureau is disbursing funding provided under section 437(g) of the Act as an increase in the title IV-B subpart 2 Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program allocation to support an electronic interstate case-processing system to expedite interstate placements of children in foster, guardianship or adoptive homes, and to provide an example of such an electronic interstate system.

BACKGROUND: The President signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, [Public Law \(P.L.\) 115-123](#) into law on February 9, 2018. P.L. 115-123 includes the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) in Division E, Title VII. FFPSA made a number of changes to [titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act \(the Act\)](#), including a modification to the title IV-E plan requirement for the orderly and timely interstate placement of children to require that state title IV-E agencies have a centralized electronic interstate case processing system by 10/1/2027 (section 471(a)(25) of the Act). The amendment is effective 10/1/2018, however, states do not have to implement it until 10/1/2027. Tribal title IV-E agencies are exempt from this requirement (section 479B(c)(4) of the Act). FFPSA also amended Title IV-B, subpart 2 to authorize a \$5,000,000 set aside from the discretionary appropriation for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program for discretionary grants for states to develop an electronic interstate case-processing system to expedite interstate placements of children in foster, guardianship, or adoptive homes (section 437(g) of the Act).

INFORMATION:

Due to the timing and language of the \$5,000,000 authorization and appropriation, the Children's Bureau does not have the correct statutory authority to disburse the funds as discretionary grants as written in section 437(g) of the Act. Our authority to implement the program does not go into effect until FY 2019, by which time the funds appropriated in FY 2018 will no longer be available. Therefore, the Children's Bureau will disburse this funding as an increase in the FY 2018 allocation to states under the title IV-B, subpart 2 Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Consistent with Congresses' intent, the Children's Bureau encourages states to use these funds to facilitate development of an electronic interstate case-processing system for the exchange of data and documents to expedite interstate placements of children in foster, guardianship or adoptive homes consistent with the authorized purposes of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Specifically, developing an electronic interstate case-processing system to expedite interstate placements of children in foster care is a family preservation service that can more quickly return children to their families from which they have been removed (sections 430(a)(3) and 431(a)(1) of the Act. In addition, developing electronic interstate case-processing systems to expedite interstate placements is an Adoption Promotion and support service that supports adoptive families by more quickly moving the child to permanency (sections 430(a)(4) and 431(a)(8) of the Act).

One example of an electronic interstate case-processing system that states may use the increase in appropriations for is the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) that allows state-to-state transfer of data on children who need placements across state lines as part of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). The NEICE was developed through an innovation grant from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and administered by the Children's Bureau. Following a 17-month pilot period, the Children's Bureau then provided a 3-year grant to expand the project across the nation and evaluate the results. These results confirmed that the NEICE contributes to shorter ICPC case processing times and lower copying and mailing expenses, facilitates communication and tracking of cases within and between states, improves data integrity and accuracy, and improves the ability of states to comply with ICPC requirements. Additional information about NEICE, including a link to evaluation results, can be found here: <https://aphsa.org/AAICPC/AAICPC/NEICE.aspx>. Information related to claiming ongoing costs of NEICE can be found in the Child Welfare Policy Manual (CWPM) [sections 6.6D](#) and [6.13](#).

INQUIRIES TO: Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

/s/
Jerry Milner
Acting Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families