

**Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan**  
**Date of Title IV-E PIP Submission: December 19, 2008**

Goals	Action Steps	Method of Measuring Improvement	Estimated Date of Achievement	Actual Date of Achievement	Unit Responsible (Lead Person)	Description of Progress Evaluation By DHR	Description of Progress Reported To ACF
1. Title IV-E Policy and Procedure Manual will be aligned with current federal requirements and act as the official policy governing IV-E implementation for the State of Maryland.	a. Write and submit a proposed draft of the Title IV-E Policy and Procedural Manual to DHR Administration for review and approval.	Copy of the e-mail sent to DHR Administration (OAG) regarding the proposed draft IV-E Manual.	March 31, 2009	March 20, 2009	Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		Electronic copy of the e-mail sent to OAG regarding the draft Title IV-E Policy and Procedure Manual.
	b. DHR Administration review and approve IV-E manual.	Copy of approved draft IV-E Manual.	April 30, 2009		Office of Attorney General/OAG (Kathy Crosby), Deputy Secretary of Operations (Brian Wilbon)		
	c. Provide all IV-E Eligibility Specialists with approved IV-E policy and procedural manual. The electronic distribution will be the effective date of the approved IV-E Policy and Procedure Manual.	Copy of electronic distribution of approved IV-E policy and procedural manual to statewide eligibility specialists.	May 15, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		

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	d. Semi-annual review of state and federal regulations and update Title IV-E Policy and Procedure Manual.	Copy of semi-annual "State and Federal Regulation Review Worksheet" as well as copies of updates/amendments to the IV-E Policy and Procedure Manual when applicable.	June 30, 2009 and ongoing		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
2. Title IV-E Eligibility determination forms will be aligned with current federal requirements for administering the title IV-E program	a. Write and submit a proposed draft of the Title IV-E Eligibility determination forms for DHR Administration for review and approval.	Electronic copy of the e-mail sent to DHR Administration regarding the proposed draft forms.	April 15, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	b. DHR Administration review and approval of IV-E forms.	Electronic version of the approved IV-E eligibility forms.	April 30, 2009		Office of Attorney General/OAG (Kathy Crosby), Deputy Secretary of Operations (Brian Wilbon)		
	c. Provide all IV-E Eligibility Specialists with electronic copy of the approved IV-E eligibility forms. The electronic distribution will be the effective date of the approved forms.	Copy of electronic distribution of approved forms to statewide eligibility specialists.	May 15, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		

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	d. Semi annual review of state and federal regulations and update Title IV-E eligibility forms.	Copy of semi-annual "State and Federal Regulation Review Worksheet" as well as copies of updates/amendments to the IV-E Policy and Procedure Manual when applicable.	June 30, 2009 and ongoing (semi-annually)		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
3. IV-E Eligibility Specialists will have a comprehensive understanding of current policies and revised forms.	a. Provide training to IV-E Eligibility Specialists on the approved eligibility forms, policy and procedure manual and new regulations.	Training date, materials, agenda, and attendance log	October 31, 2009 and ongoing (semi-annually)		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
4. Maryland's Title IV-E State Plan Amendment will be in compliance with Federal requirements.	a. Write and submit draft of the Maryland Title IV-E State Plan Amendment citing State regulations that implements the Social Security Act for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance.	Copy of the draft Title IV-E State Plan Amendment sent to DHR Administration.	April 30, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie). Social Service Administration SSA Director of Child Welfare Practice and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		
	b. DHR Administration review and approval of Maryland Title IV-E State Plan Amendment.	Copy of DHR Document Approval Sign-off (DHR-01) requesting State Plan Amendment Certification.	May 31, 2009		Office of Attorney General/OAG (Kathy Crosby), Deputy Secretary of Operations (Brian Wilbon)		
	c. Submit Maryland Title IV-E State Plan Amendment for Certification.	Copy of letter to the Secretary requesting certification of Maryland Title IV-E State Plan Amendment.	June 30, 2009		DHR Secretary (Brenda Donald)		

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5. COMAR Regulation 07.02.11.06 will meet current federal requirements for children placed in foster care through voluntary placement agreements.	a. Write and submit proposed COMAR Regulation to reflect the correct VPA timeline of 180 calendar days.	Copy of "DHR COMAR Approval For Final Promulgation" routing slip regarding the proposed COMAR regulation submitted to Office of Attorney General (OAG) for review and approval.	March 31, 2009	February 25, 2009	Social Service Administration, Director, Child Welfare Practice and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		Submitted a copy "DHR COMAR Approval For Final Promulgation" routing slip.
	b. Review and approve proposed COMAR Regulation by DHR Administration.	Copy of Title 07 DHR COMAR Approval for final Promulgation and Regulation Authorization Sheet and the proposed draft COMAR regulation.	April 30, 2009		Office of Attorney General/OAG (Kathy Crosby)		
	c. Submit approved proposed regulation change to COMAR 07.02.11.06 to reflect that a judicial determination of best interests should be made within 180 calendar days vs. the currently stated 6 months.	Copy of Maryland Electronic Filing System (ELF) submission to Maryland Department of State Documents (DSD).	July 31, 2009		Government, Corporate and Community Affairs (Lavonne Oliver)		
	d. Adopt approved COMAR Regulation.	Copy of the adopted COMAR Regulation.	September 30, 2009		Maryland Department of State Documents (DSD) (Dennis Schnepfe).		
	e. Provide all IV-E Eligibility Specialists with a copy of the revised COMAR Regulation regarding VPA.	Signed documentation of receipt of the approved COMAR Regulation.	October 31, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
6. Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) judicial determinations will occur within 180 calendar days of the child's placement in foster care in 100% of all VPA cases.	a. Write and submit program directive to Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) management, supervisors and caseworkers to clarify the timeline for filing Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) petitions.	Electronic carbon copy of the draft program directive to DHR Administration for review and approval.	April 30, 2009		Social Service Administration, Director, Child Welfare Practice and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		

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	b. Review and approve program directive.	Copy of approved program directive.	May 31, 2009		Social Services Administration Acting Executive Director (Carnitra White)		
	c. Disseminate program directive to Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) management, supervisors and caseworkers to clarify the timeline for filing Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) petitions. Effective date would be the date of the directive.	Electronic carbon copy of the finalized program directive from SSA. Copy of e-mail sent to LDSS Directors and Assistant Directors and copy of acknowledgement signed by LDSS Directors certifying that all staff have been provided with the finalized program directive.	June 30, 2009		Social Services Administration Acting Executive Director (Carnitra White)		
	d. Provide training to LDSS casework supervisors on the timeline for filing VPA petitions and obtaining "Best interest" judicial finding.	Training materials, agenda, sign-in sheet/attendance list, and list of all LDSS supervisors.	July 31, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	e. Provide training to LDSS caseworkers on the on the timeline for filing VPA petitions and obtaining "Best interest" judicial finding.	Training materials, sign-in sheet/attendance list, and list of all caseworkers.	September 30, 2009		Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) supervisors and Social Service Administration, Director, Child Welfare Practice and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		
7. Improve accuracy of information as related to 45 CFR 1356.21 regarding living with and removed from a specified relative.	a. Write and submit program directive to Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) management, supervisors and caseworkers and legal staff to clearly identify in removal petitions, who the child was living with at the time of removal, his/her relationship to the child, and the date the child began living with that person; and the person from whom the child was legally removed, the person's relationship to the child and the date the child last lived with that individual.	Electronic carbon copy of draft program directive submitted to DHR Administration for review and approval.	April 30, 2009		Social Service Administration, Director, Child Welfare and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		

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	b. Review and approve program directive.	Copy of approved program directive.	May 31, 2009		Social Services Administration Acting Executive Director, Carnitra White		
	c. Disseminate program directive to Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) management, supervisors and caseworkers and legal staff. Effective date would be the date of the directive.	Electronic carbon copy of the finalized program directive from SSA. Copy of e-mail sent to LDSS Directors and Assistant Directors and copy of acknowledgement signed by LDSS Directors certifying that all staff have been provided with the finalized program directive.			Social Services Administration Acting Executive Director (Carnitra White)		
	d. Provide training to LDSS casework supervisors regarding living with and removed from a specified relative.	Training materials, agenda, sign-in sheet/attendance list, and list of all LDSS supervisors.	July 31, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	e. Provide training to LDSS caseworkers regarding living with and removed from a specified relative.	Training materials, sign-in sheet/attendance list, and list of all caseworkers.	September 30, 2009		Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) supervisors and Social Service Administration, Director, Child Welfare Practice and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		

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8. Improve removal language in court orders to provide clarification when determining IV-E eligibility as related to living with and removal from a specified relative.	a. Provide the Foster Care Court Improvement Project with data identifying the areas needing court improvement as well as court docket numbers of sample cases that were an error due to court orders.	Electronic copy of the correspondence with the Court Improvement Program.	December 4, 2008 February 24, 2009	December 4, 2008 February 24, 2009	Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		Forward electronic mail sent to Foster Care Court Improvement Project staff of the court findings and a list of sample cases that had court order issues. (March 27, 2009)
	b. Issue a memorandum to all Administrative Judges, Juvenile Court Judges, Masters, and other Court Officials regarding court order language as related to identification of who the child was living with at the time of removal, his/her relationship to the child, and the date the child began living with that person; and the person from whom the child was legally removed, the person's relationship to the child and the date the child last lived with that individual.	Electronic copy of the memorandum sent to Administrative Judges, Juvenile Court Judges, Masters, and other Court Officials.	December 11, 2008	December 11, 2008	Administrative Office of the Courts, Foster Care Court Improvement Project, Maryland Courts (Hope Gary, Deputy Director)		Electronic attachment of the memo from Chief Judge of Maryland Court of Appeals, Judge Robert Bell. (March 27, 2009)
	c. Submit recommendations of required court order language to OAG.	Electronic carbon copy of the required court recommendation.	March 31, 2009	March 12, 2009	Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		Forward electronic mail sent to Leslie Ridgway, OAG regarding removal language in court orders. (March 27, 2009)

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	d. Present removal language to the Model Court Order Work Group to request those areas are addressed.	Sign-in sheet and list of Work Group participants; minutes from meeting.	April 30, 2009		DHR Office of Attorney General/OAG ( Leslie Ridgway, Assistant Attorney General), Administrative Office of the Courts, Foster Care Court Improvement Project, Maryland Courts (Hope Gary, Deputy Director)		
	e. Modify Model Court Shelter Care and Adjudication Orders.	Electronic submission of final court order template.	September 30, 2009 and ongoing		Administrative Office of the Courts, Foster Care Court Improvement Project, Maryland Courts (Hope Gary, Deputy Director)		
	f. Provide training to Juvenile Court Judges, Masters, and other court personnel on modified model court orders.	Training date, materials, agenda, and attendance log.	December 30, 2009		Administrative Office of the Courts, Foster Care Court Improvement Project, Maryland Courts (Hope Gary, Deputy Director)		
9. COMAR 07.02.11.27 to be aligned with federal eligibility requirements for AFDC.	a. Write and submit proposed COMAR to reflect the AFDC language rather than Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). COMAR currently discusses financial eligibility criteria for IV-E using TCA as a standard for determining eligibility.	Copy of "DHR COMAR Approval For Final Promulgation" routing slip regarding the proposed COMAR regulation submitted to Office of Attorney General (OAG) for review and approval.	March 31, 2009	February 25, 2009	Social Service Administration, Director, Child Welfare Practice and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		Submitted a copy "DHR COMAR Approval For Final Promulgation" routing slip.
	b. Review and approve proposed COMAR Regulation by DHR Administration.	Draft copy of proposed approved COMAR submission to DHR Government, Corporate and Community Affairs.	April 30, 2009		Office of Attorney General/OAG (Kathy Crosby)		
	c. Submit proposed approved regulation change to COMAR 07.02.11.27.	Copy of Maryland Electronic Filing System (ELF) submission to Maryland Department of State Documents (DSD).	July 31, 2009		Government, Corporate and Community Affairs (Lavonne Oliver)		

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	d. Adopt approved COMAR Regulation.	Copy of the adopted COMAR Regulation.	September 30, 2009		Maryland Department of State Documents (DSD) (Dennis Schnepfe).		
	e. Provide all IV-E Eligibility Specialists with a copy of the revised COMAR Regulation regarding AFDC language.	Signed documentation of receipt of the approved COMAR Regulation.	October 31, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
10. IV-E Eligibility Specialists will have a comprehensive understanding of AFDC policy IV-E payments for eligible children, eligible providers, and allowable services.	a. Provide training to all IV-E Eligibility Specialists.	Title IV-E training material - revised eligibility worksheets, income calculation sheet, schedule H, revised Title IV-E manual, and participation log.	October 31, 2009 and ongoing (semi-annually)		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
Caseworker and Supervisors will have a comprehensive understanding of IV-E payments for eligible children, eligible providers, and allowable services.	b. Provide training to LDSS casework supervisors on Title IV-E allowable and unallowable services.	Agenda, sign-in sheets, and training materials.	July 31, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	c. Provide training to LDSS caseworkers on Title IV-E allowable and unallowable services.	Training materials, sign-in sheet/attendance list, and list of all caseworkers.	September 30, 2009		LDSS Casework Supervisors and Social Service Administration, Director, Child Welfare Practice and Policy (Debbie Ramelmeir)		

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11. Ensure that approved family foster homes and licensed facilities are in compliance with COMAR provisions regarding safety checks for employees and foster parents.	a. Write and submit program directive to Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) management, supervisors and caseworkers on mandating full compliance with COMAR provisions for approving foster homes.	Electronic carbon copy draft program directive to SSA executive director for review and approval.	April 30, 2009		Social Service Administration, Director, Resource Development, Placement & Support Services (Kevin Keegan)		
	b. Review and approve program directive.	Copy of approved program directive.	May 31, 2009		Social Services Administration Acting Executive Director (Carnitra White)		
	c. Disseminate approved program directive to Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) management, supervisors, home resource supervisors and caseworkers to on mandating full compliance with COMAR provisions for approving homes. Effective date would be the date of the directive.	Electronic carbon copy of the approved program directive from SSA. Copy of e-mail sent to LDSS Directors and Assistant Directors and copy of acknowledgement by LDSS Directors certifying that all staff have been provided with the approved program directive.	June 30, 2009		Social Services Administration Acting Executive Director (Carnitra White)		
	d. Provide training to LDSS home resource supervisors on mandating full compliance with COMAR provisions for approving homes.	Training date, materials, agenda, and attendance log.	July 31, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	e. Provide training to LDSS home resource workers on mandating full compliance with COMAR provisions for approving homes.	Training materials, sign-in sheet/attendance list, and list of all caseworkers.	September 30, 2009		LDSS home resource supervisors and SSA Director, Resource Development, Placement and Support Services (Kevin Keegan)		

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	f. Complete a 100% review of all approved family foster homes records at annual reconsideration.	Copy of reported findings of the Foster Family Home Annual Reconsideration.	October 31, 2009 and ongoing (annually)		SSA Director, Resource Development, Placement and Support Services (Kevin Keegan)		
	g. Write and submit program directive to Child Placement Agencies (CPA) and Residential Child Care (RCC) Agencies mandating compliance with COMAR provisions for safety check requirements.	Draft program directive from OLM.	April 30, 2009		Office of Licensing and Monitoring (OLM) Manager (Bill Lee)		
	h. Review and approve program directive.	Copy of approved program directive.	May 31, 2009		Office of Licensing and Monitoring (OLM) Director (Carmen Brown)		
	i. Disseminate approved program directive to Child Placement Agencies (CPA) and Residential Child Care (RCC) Agencies mandating compliance with COMAR provisions for safety check requirements. Effective date would be the date of the directive.	Copy of the finalized program directive from OLM. Copy RCC and CPA Directors acknowledgement certifying that all staff have been provided with the approved program directive.	June 30, 2009		Office of Licensing and Monitoring (OLM) Director (Carmen Brown)		

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	j. Develop a quality assurance instrument for contracted RCCs and CPAs to review their records to ensure that existing employees and approved treatment foster parents meet COMAR requirements as well as document that all criminal background clearances have been completed. Contracted providers will report status of meeting safety requirements to OLM.	Copy of review instrument.	June 30, 2009		Office of Licensing and Monitoring (OLM) Director (Carmen Brown)		
	k. OLM completes quarterly review of RCC and CPA provider personnel records to ensure that the provider are meeting Federal and State safety requirements.	Report of RCC and CPA findings.	October 31, 2009 and ongoing (quarterly)		Office of Licensing and Monitoring (OLM) Director (Carmen Brown)		
	l. OLM will report quarterly findings from providers whose personnel failed to meet safety requirements to CARM to complete retro adjustment to discontinue IV-E payment to providers that are not in compliance with Federal and State safety requirements.	Copy documenting adjustments.	November 30, 2009 and ongoing (quarterly)		Office of Licensing and Monitoring (OLM) Director (Carmen Brown)		
12. Implement a quality assurance system that will monitor compliance and payments at regular intervals to ensure that title IV-E were not claimed for ineligible children, providers and unallowable services.	a. Generate a Management Report showing reason for ineligible family foster care provider because of safety checks, criminal background, etc.	Electronic copy of report.	July 31, 2009 and ongoing (semi-annually)		Office of Technology and Human Services, (MDCHESSIE Project Manager (Carolyn Blagmon)		
	b. Generate a Management report showing the eligibility status of children over the age 18.	Electronic copy of report.	July 31, 2009 and ongoing (semi-annually)		Office of Technology and Human Services, (MDCHESSIE Project Manager (Carolyn Blagmon)		

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	c. Generate a management report of VPA cases that entered care after January 2009, where the agency did not obtain "best interest" language within 180 calendar days from the date the child is considered to have entered foster care.	Electronic copy of quarterly report.	April 30, July 31 and October 31, 2009, January 31, 2010 and ongoing (quarterly)		Office of Technology and Human Services, (Carolyn Blagmon, MDCHESSIE Project)		
	d. Analyze the management reports and complete retroactive adjustment to discontinue improper IV-E payment.	Electronic copy of documented adjustments.	October 31, 2009 & ongoing (semi-annually)		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	e. Conduct 100% QA on all VPA cases before January 2009 and discontinue IV-E reimbursement claims for ineligible cases.	Electronic carbon copy of Management reports from MD CHESSIE and summary of review analysis.	July 31, 2009		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	f. Analyze OLM reports of findings of providers that are not in compliance with COMAR provisions regarding safety requirements and complete retroactive adjustment to discontinue improper IV-E payment.	Documentation of adjustments.	December 19, 2009 and ongoing (annually)		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		
	g. Semi-annual review of sample cases and services to identify improper IV-E payments using the ACF Title IV-E foster care eligibility checklist.	Copy of review findings with improper payments.	November 30, 2009 and ongoing (semi-annually)		Budget and Finance, Cost Allocation & Revenue Management/CARM Agency Grants Supervisor (Emmanuel Okororie)		