

## **Case File Summary Report**

### **State: Ohio**

#### **Background**

The purpose of the case file review is to assess the accuracy of the data reported to AFCARS by comparing what was reported to what is found in the child's paper file. A sample of 80 foster care records and 30 adoption records is selected from the most recent AFCARS report period prior to the onsite review. The AFCARS data submitted to the Children's Bureau for each record is then compared to information found in the paper case file. The process involved all members of the State and Federal teams, technical and program. Additionally, the State incorporated field staff, including supervisors and staff from training units, etc., as part of the State team for the purpose of reviewing cases.

For States that have converted from an older information system (or a paper recordkeeping method) to a new electronic case file, the case file review process identifies any issues with the accuracy of the data due to conversion. The information that is submitted to AFCARS should reflect what is in the paper case records. The case file review is the only means for the Federal team to assess the accuracy and the level of completeness of the State's conversion process from a paper or legacy system to its new information system.

The Children's Bureau recognizes for those States that chose to implement a statewide case management system (both SACWIS and non-SACWIS models) there will be far less data in the paper file since the electronic case management system is the official record. However, there are some documents that may not be part of the State's information system, such as medical reports, court reports, home studies, etc. These documents usually provide a significant amount of the information for the case file reviewers. Additionally, this process identifies issues related to timely data entry as well as how well the system is being used to record information on each case.

The Children's Bureau has found that while there may be challenges to identifying the information in the paper file, the process provides very valuable information to the review teams. The findings often provide additional information that increases the Federal team's understanding of the data reported to AFCARS. Also, this process allows the review team to assess how well records are being kept up-to-date, the accuracy of the AFCARS data, and usage of the State's information system. Typically, this process does not identify new problems, but confirms findings from the other components of the AAR.

Since the case file review is the only means to assess conversion, the cases selected for the review were primarily those in which the most recent removal date, or the first removal date, precedes the date the State's system went operational. If the State phased in its operational status, then the sample may reflect these dates.

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**Summary**

This summary report provides information on the number of cases selected in the sample, the number of cases reviewed, and any relevant general information regarding the analysis of the results. The matrices that follow provide detailed findings. There are six columns in the matrices, they are:

- AFCARS Element - This is the name of each AFCARS element with the corresponding values.
- Data in AFCARS Matches Paper File - The number of records in which the reviewer found that the data submitted to AFCARS matched what was found in the paper file.
- Data in AFCARS Does Not Match Paper File - The number of records in which the reviewer found that the data submitted to AFCARS did not match what was found in the paper file.
- Questionable - The number of records where either the reviewer was not sure whether the data were the correct or based on final analysis there was some type of inconsistency between what was reported and what was noted by the reviewer. Comments are provided in the comment column for these situations.
- Not Found - Indicates that the reviewer was not able to locate the information pertaining to the element in the paper file. This can either be due to a missing file or sections of the file, or the data are now only recorded in the information system and there are no paper documents with the data. This is not considered a negative finding.
- Comments - This column includes findings regarding the errors that were identified in the column "Data in AFCARS Does Not Match Paper File" as well as any other pertinent information pertaining to the element and the findings.

Foster Care

Number of Cases in Sample	80
Number of Cases Reviewed	72
Number of Cases Analyzed	72

Periodic Review (FC 5)

The majority of the errors were due to the program code selecting and reporting reviews that do not meet the requirements for a periodic review.

Circumstances associated with a child's removal from home (FC 26 – 40)

In all but two of the elements the reviewers found errors. The majority of the errors were due to the item not being selected as a condition that contributed to the child's removal from home.

Date of first removal from home (FC 18)

The errors were related to the findings noted in the General Requirements and the program code. In one case, the date reported for this element was when the agency received responsibility of a child who was placed in a hospital. The child did enter foster care. Another was related to an infant of a teen mother. The infant had not been removed from his mother at the time. Later as a

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teenager, the child did enter foster care. This would be the child's only removal episode at this time. One error was due to the inclusion of an episode that was less than 24 hours in duration. There were two of the error cases an earlier date should have been reported.

Total Number of Removal Episodes (FC 19)

The error cases were the same cases noted above for element #18. There was one error case where it appears the child had one continuous episode and not two removal episodes. It appears that a placement in detention was reported as a discharge.

Date of Discharge from a Prior Removal Episode (FC 20)

Two of the error cases were related to the infant in foster care with his teen parent, the case that was not a removal episode because it was less than 24 hours in duration, and a third where the child had one continuous removal episode. In one error case, based on the reviewer's findings the child's current removal episode began prior to the date that was reported in this element.

Case Plan Goal (FC 43)

There were three errors related to the reporting of emancipation" and "long-term foster care." In two records the child did have a connection to an adult and the goal should have been "emancipation" instead of "long-term foster care." In the other case, the child did not have a connection to an adult and the goal should have been "long-term foster care." In one error case, the response should have been "reunification" instead of "case plan goal not yet established." There were two records reported as blanks but the reviewer found an active case plan goal. In one case, the case plan goal should have been "emancipation." The youth had been in foster care for eight years. In the other case, the response should have been "reunification."

Foster Parent Information (FC 49 – 55)

The error cases do not include those in which the response was left blank instead of indicating "not applicable" for those elements that this is a valid response (#49, 53 and 55). This is a technical error and not a data entry error and is noted in the findings of the extraction code in the foster care findings matrix.

Of the 44 records where the child was living in a foster home, there were records reported with missing information for these elements. Three records were reported as blank for foster parent family structure, for the foster parent's year of birth two were missing the information, seven were missing the race information of the first foster parent, three for the first foster parent's Hispanic/Latino origin, four for the second foster parent's race, and three for the second foster parent's Hispanic/Latino origin.

Note: There was one record that was reported as the child living in a non-relative foster family home and all of the elements #49 – 55 were reported as blank. The reviewer found that the child's placement setting as of the end of the report period was a group home.

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Adoption

Number of Cases in Sample	30
Number of Cases Reviewed	25
Number of Cases in Analyzed	25

Was child determined to be special needs and the primary basis for the need (AD 9 – 10) and if medical circumstances was the need, the diagnosed conditions (AD 11 – 15)

There was one record reported as a blank for element #10, but elements 11 – 15 were not blank. Element #14, emotional disability was correctly reported as “applies.” Two records were incorrectly reported as “medical conditions or mental, physical or emotional disabilities.” One record should have been reported as “medical conditions or mental, physical or emotional disabilities. In one case the response should have been sibling group and in the other the child had been diagnosed as being at risk of future medical issues. This should have been reported as “other.”