

2012 Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Program Improvement Plan

Section I: AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) Eligibility Criteria

Strategy 1: Implement the 100% AFDC standard as a second test of financial eligibility after the test at the 185% level.

ACF Finding: Six (6) cases in the 2012 Title IV-E Foster Care Review had this error.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Create and release instructional memo for Foster Care Eligibility staff on use and immediate application of "two- step" income test worksheet.	Max Villarreal	July 2012		July 27, 2012	DFPS will provide a copy of the instructional memo and attachments that were provided to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors on July 27, 2012.
b. Provide initial and ongoing guidance via conference call to regional Foster Care Eligibility staff regarding "two-step" income test and implementation of manual process.	Max Villarreal	July 2012		July 27, 2012	DFPS held a conference call with Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors on July 27, 2012 regarding "two-step" income test and implementation of manual process. DFPS will provide a copy of the meeting notice.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
c. Implement the manual 100% AFDC standard test process after the test at the 185% level. The "two-step" income test worksheet will be processed manually, offline, until it is incorporated into the eligibility determination module in IMPACT.	Max Villarreal	August 2012		August 1, 2012	DFPS will provide a copy of the instructional memo and attachments that were provided to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors on July 27, 2012 that were used to implement the manual process.
d. Include in the Annual Title IV-E Eligibility Training, instruction on the "two step" income test determination required for Title IV-E eligibility.	Max Villarreal	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the Title IV-E training agenda and any supporting document.
e. Add the "two-step" income test algorithm to the Title IV-E eligibility determination module in IMPACT.	Max Villarreal	February 2013			DFPS will provide ACF with the release notes for the IMPACT system change.

Strategy 2: AFDC Income Assistance Unit/ AFDC Certified Group - Max Villarreal

ACF Finding: Two (2) cases in the 2012 Title IV-E Foster Care Review had this error.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Provide guidance via conference call to regional Foster Care Eligibility staff on proper income consideration for the AFDC income tests.	Max Villarreal	February 2012		February 28, 2012	DFPS held a conference call with Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors on February 28, 2012 regarding proper income consideration for the AFDC income test. DFPS will provide a copy of the meeting notice.
b. Create and release instructional memo to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors prior to the Annual Title IV-E Eligibility Training, regarding the mandatory members of the AFDC income assistance unit/AFDC certified group and the consideration of special household situations with a parent(s) not meeting the AFDC citizenship requirement, adoptive parents and unemployed or underemployed parent.	Max Villarreal	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the instructional memo that was provided to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
c. Include in the Annual Title IV-E Eligibility Training, instruction on the mandatory members of the AFDC income assistance unit/AFDC certified group and the consideration of special household situations with a parent(s) not meeting the AFDC citizenship requirement, adoptive parents and unemployed or underemployed parent.	Max Villarreal	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the Title IV-E training agenda and the supporting documentation that relates to Strategy 2 item c.
d. Add new policy to the Child Protective Services Handbook regarding the consideration of a parent or parents not meeting the AFDC citizenship requirement for the AFDC income assistance unit/AFDC certified group. Strengthen policy to remind staff to review the foster care application and supporting documentation for consistency regarding AFDC requirements with emphasis on situations involving an adoptive parent, underemployed or unemployed parent's income.	Max Villarreal	May 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of the PSA and the updated CPS Handbook policy section.

Strategy 3: AFDC Home of Removal - Max Villarreal

ACF Finding: Two (2) cases in the 2012 Title IV-E Foster Care Review had this error.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Provide guidance via conference call to regional Foster Care Eligibility staff on title IV-E requirements regarding living with and removal from a specified relative and Home of Removal identification.	Max Villarreal	February 2012		February 28, 2012	DFPS held a conference call with Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors on February 28, 2012 regarding Domicile requirement and Home of Removal identification. DFPS will provide a copy of the meeting notice.
b. Create and release instructional memo to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors prior to the Annual Title IV-E Eligibility Training, reinforcing the "living with" and "removal from" requirements and their linkage to the AFDC home of removal for Title IV-E eligibility.	Max Villarreal	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the instructional memo that was provided to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors.
c. Include in the Annual Title IV-E Eligibility Training instruction on the "living with" and "removal from" requirements and their linkage to the AFDC home of removal for Title IV-E eligibility.	Max Villarreal	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the Title IV-E training agenda and the supporting documentation that relates to Strategy 3 item c..
d. Strengthen policy regarding the "living with" and "removal from" requirements and their linkage to the AFDC home of removal for Title IV-E eligibility in the Child Protective Services Handbook.	Max Villarreal	May 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of the PSA and updated CPS Handbook policy section.

Strategy 4: Judicial Determinations - Max Villarreal

ACF Finding: Two (2) cases in the 2012 Title IV-E Foster Care Review had this error.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Provide guidance via conference call to regional Foster Care Eligibility staff on required judicial determinations and documentation of the determinations needed for initial Title IV-E eligibility certification and continued Title IV-E eligibility.	Max Villarreal	February 2012		February 28, 2012	DFPS held a conference call with Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors on February 28, 2012 regarding judicial determinations for Title IV- E eligibility and continued Title IV-E eligibility. DFPS will provide a copy of the meeting notice.
b. Create and release instructional memo to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors prior to Annual Title IV-E Training, on required judicial determinations and documentation of the determinations needed for initial Title IV-E eligibility certification and continued Title IV-E eligibility.	Max Villarreal	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the instructional memo that was provided to Foster Care Eligibility staff and supervisors.
c. Include at the Annual Title IV-E Eligibility Training, instruction on the required judicial determinations and documentation of the determinations needed for initial Title IV-E eligibility certification and continued Title IV-E eligibility.	Max Villarreal	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the Title IV-E training agenda and the supporting documentation related to Strategy 4 item c.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
d. DFPS will collaborate with the Court Improvement Program (CIP) managed by The Texas Supreme Court's Children's Commission in efforts to improve child and family specificity in court orders, and will include this matter on the CPS Judge Conference agenda. DFPS will collaborate with CIP to develop a Jurist in Residence letter that will be distributed to	Max Villarreal Tina Amberboy	July 2013			DFPS will provide agenda and training dates and copy of Jurist in Residence letter.

Section II: Safety Requirements

Strategy 1: Residential foster care facilities complete timely background checks for employees.

ACF Finding: Five (5) cases in the 2012 Title IV-E Foster Care Review had this error.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Add to the residential child care contracts (contracts for residential facilities and child placing agencies), language that clarifies the requirements related to background checks, including, but not limited to, the timeliness of initial and ongoing 24-month background checks.	Heather Shiels	September 2012			DFPS will provide contract language as it is represented in the residential child care contract for residential facilities.
b. Add to the residential child care contracts language regarding new DFPS remedies for a contractor's failure to comply with background check requirements, including but not limited to reimbursement to DFPS for disallowed costs as a result of an audit.	Heather Shiels	September 2012			DFPS will provide contract language as it is represented in the residential child care contract for residential facilities.
c. Provide additional educational information to residential child care facilities regarding background check requirements and financial remedies related to failure to perform timely background checks.	Heather Shiels	September 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the document(s) provided to residential child care contractors of residential facilities.
d. Enhance quality assurance for timeliness of background checks by enhancing monitoring protocols of contracted residential child care facilities.	Heather Shiels	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the materials utilized for the monitoring.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
e. Review of operation compliance reports every thirty days by CBCU to identify staff with pending fingerprint-based checks and work with providers to complete fingerprint checks or close those fingerprint checks that are not required. (e.g. employee no longer works at the facility)	Lisa Kanne	January 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of a process memorandum provided to CBCU staff.
f. Provide training materials to CBCU staff to reinforce the directive that they must follow up with the operation and resolve all fingerprint based "TO DO" reminders on their caseload within the CLASS system.	Lisa Kanne	January 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of a process memorandum provided to CBCU staff.
g. Send email from licensing to all RCCL and Child Placing Agencies reminding them of the requirement for background checks, to include fingerprint check requirements, initial checks at time of hire or verification, and the ongoing 24 month check requirement.	Jean Shaw	May 2012		April 10, 2012	DFPS will provide ACF with a copy of the email that was sent to all RCCL Providers.
h. Send annual reminder from licensing to all RCCL providers regarding continued compliance with the requirements.	Jean Shaw	May 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of the email that was sent to all RCCL Providers.

Strategy 2: Child Placement Agency requirements related to timely background checks for foster parents

ACF Finding: Three (3) cases in the 2012 Title IV-E Foster Care Review had this error.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Add to the residential child care contracts (contracts for residential facilities and child placing agencies), language that clarifies the requirements related to background checks, including, but not limited to, the timeliness of initial and ongoing 24-month background checks.	Heather Shiels	September 2012			DFPS will provide contract language as it is represented in the residential child care contract for child placing agencies.
b. Add to the residential child care contracts language regarding new DFPS remedies for a contractor's failure to comply with background check requirements, including but not limited to reimbursement to DFPS for disallowed costs as a result of an audit.	Heather Shiels	September 2012			DFPS will provide contract language as it is represented in the residential child care contract for child placing agencies
c. Provide additional educational information to child placing agencies regarding background check requirements and financial remedies related to failure to perform timely background checks.	Heather Shiels	September 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the document(s) provided to residential child care contractors of child placing agencies.
d. Enhance quality assurance for timeliness of background checks by enhancing monitoring protocols of contracted child placing agencies.	Heather Shiels	December 2012			DFPS will provide a copy of the materials utilized for the monitoring.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
e. Review of operation compliance reports every thirty days by CBCU to identify foster or adoptive parents with pending fingerprint-based checks and work with providers to complete fingerprint checks or close the fingerprint checks that are not required. (e.g. the foster home is closed).	Lisa Kanne	January 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of the materials provided to CBCU staff.
f. Provide training materials to CBCU staff to reinforce the directive that they must follow up with the operation and resolve all fingerprint based "TO DO"reminders on their caseload within the CLASS system.	Lisa Kanne	January 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of the process memorandum provided to CBCU staff.
g. Disable functionality in the CLASS system that is not consistent with current rules which copies over previously completed fingerprint based background checks in situations where the foster or adoptive parent is required to complete a new fingerprint check.	Lisa Kanne	September 2013			DFPS will provide the release notes for these CLASS system changes
h. Send email from licensing to all RCCL Providers (General Residential Operations and Child Placing Agencies) reminding them of the Federal requirement for criminal background checks, to include the requirement for FBI fingerprint based checks, initial checks at the time of hire or verification, and the ongoing 24 month check requirement.	Jean Shaw	May 2012		April 10, 2012	DFPS will provide ACF with a copy of the email that was sent to all RCCL Providers.

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
i. Send annual reminder from licensing to all RCCL providers regarding continued compliance with the requirements.	Jean Shaw	May 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of the email that was sent to all RCCL Providers.

Section III. Quality Assurance

Strategy 1: Title IV-E Case Monitoring

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Add an additional full-time employee to assist CPS state office in developing an ongoing Title IV-E foster care quality assurance process.	Max Villarreal	February 2013		August 2012	Confirm employment of Quality Assurance staff.
b. Develop a Quality Assurance process to review a sample of Title IV-E eligibility cases on a quarterly basis.	Max Villarreal	January 2013			DFPS will provide a copy of the written outline of the Quality Assurance process.
c. Implement quarterly monitoring of Title IV-E cases to ensure compliance with all Title IV-E eligibility criteria.	Max Villarreal	Implement quarterly case monitoring following the first quarter of PIP approval			DFPS will provide a copy of the written outline of the Quality Assurance process.

Strategy 2: Case Monitoring Outcomes

Action Steps:	Responsible Party	Target Completion Date:	Progress Report	Actual Completion Date	Evidence of Completion (Date sent to ACF)
a. Analyze results of quarterly case reading sample to ensure compliance with all Title IV-E eligibility criteria.	Max Villarreal	Implement quarterly case monitoring following the first quarter of PIP approval			DFPS will provide a copy of the written outline of the Quality Assurance process and a summary of results from case monitoring outcomes.
b. Notify appropriate state office staff in order to initiate corrective payment claims when case monitoring determines improper Title IV-E claims pertaining to underpayments and ineligible payments. Ensure underpayments are corrected and ineligible payments are removed from Title IV-E claims.	Max Villarreal	Implement quarterly case monitoring following the first quarter of PIP approval			DFPS will provide a copy of the written outline of the Quality Assurance process and a summary of results from case monitoring outcomes.
c. Provide additional training to Foster Care Eligibility staff regarding recurring eligibility-related errors identified during case monitoring and which resulted in under payment or ineligible payment.	Max Villarreal	Ongoing			DFPS will provide dates and method of training.