

**Vermont Title IV-E Program Improvement Plan  
March 30, 2012**

<b>Goal 1: Anytime a child enters foster care, there will be a judicial determination to the effect that continuation in the home is contrary to the welfare, or that placement is in the best interest of the child.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. Train IVE Managers and other relevant staff on the essential elements of court orders and all of requirements governing judicial determinations.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director, in collaboration with Children’s Bureau	June 29, 2012	
2. Train appropriate court personnel on Title IVE, including the necessary elements of court orders and the judicial determination requirements.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director	June 29,2012	
<b>Goal 2: Anytime a child enters foster care, there will be a judicial determination to the effect that reasonable efforts were made, or not required to be made, to prevent or eliminate the need for removal.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. Train IVE Managers, and other relevant staff, on the essential elements of court orders and all of the requirements governing judicial determinations.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director, in collaboration with the Children’s Bureau	June 29, 2012	
2. Train appropriate court personnel on Title IVE, including the necessary elements of court orders and the requirements governing judicial determinations.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director	June 29, 2012	

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<b>Goal 3: If a child re-enters foster care after a trial home visit that exceeds 180 days the title IV-E eligibility will be established anew. This will include obtaining judicial findings that remaining in the home is contrary to the welfare of the child and that reasonable efforts had been made to prevent removal.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. DCF will create a report which is distributed to the district offices monthly that lists any child whose trial home visit is approaching 180 days.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director, DCF IT	January 1, 2013	
2. Relevant staff will be trained on all elements of the title IV-E program, including parameters around trial home visits.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director in collaboration with the Children's Bureau	June 29, 2012	
<b>Goal 4: Any child that is in foster care for more than 12 months will have a judicial determination that the state made reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan. This judicial finding will occur at regular 12-month intervals for the duration of the foster care episode and no later than 12 months from the month in which the prior determination was obtained.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. Include information about judicial determinations regarding Reasonable Efforts to Finalize a Permanency Plan, including requirements, timelines, and the need to review documents for accuracy in title IV-E staff training.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director, in collaboration with the Children's Bureau	June 29, 2012	
2. Ensure that staff understand the importance of accurate and timely data entry in all areas of the Title IV-E program, including related to the PREA.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director; Karen Shea, Child Protection and Field Operations Director; District Directors	Ongoing	
<b>Goal 5: The State will maintain placement and care responsibility for all children in foster care for the entire duration of the foster care episode as clearly indicated in a court order or voluntary care agreement.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
Work with DCF IT to ensure that Title IV-E claims are not made after the expiration date of a voluntary care agreement.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director; Cindy Walcott, Family Services Deputy Commissioner; DCF IT	March 29, 2013	

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<b>Goal 6: To meet compliance with the 1996 title IV-A plan option, the State will ensure youth over the age of 18 are full-time students and expect to graduate prior to turning 19 years old. If both requirements are not met under the title IV-A plan option, AFDC eligibility will end in the month the youth turns 18 and title IV-E payments will end then. If both requirements are met under the title IV-A plan <i>option</i>, the State will exclude title IV-E payments for youth at the end of the month in which they turn 19 years old or graduate, whichever happens first.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. Work with DCF IT ensure that foster care payroll system excludes IV-E payments in the month after an otherwise eligible youth turns 19 or graduates from high school, whichever is sooner.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director; DCF IT	March 29, 2013	
2. Relevant staff will be trained on all elements of the title IV-E program, including parameters around youth over 18 and paying particular attention to the importance of accurate data entry.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director, in collaboration with the Children's Bureau	June 29, 2012	
<b>Goal 7: The State will document that any child deemed eligible for Title IV-E payments is financially needy and deprived of parental support during the month the voluntary placement agreement was signed or the month the court proceedings to remove the child from the home were initiated.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Update/Status
The DCF Central Office staff who complete the IV-E determination process will compare the information from the Economic Services Division and the information on the completed 201, provided by the district offices. If a discrepancy exists, Central Office staff will follow-up with the district office to ensure that the determination is based on accurate information.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director, Brenda Hallock, Child Welfare Resource Coordinator; Alma Greene, Title IV-E Program Administrative Assistant	Ongoing	

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<b>Goal 8: The State will only deem eligible children/youth who are in eligible placements.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
Relevant staff will be trained on all elements of the title IV-E program, including parameters around home visits and youth on runaway status. Training will also focus on the importance of accurate and timely data entry.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director, in collaboration with the Children's Bureau	June 29, 2012	
<b>Goal 9: All in state and out of state foster homes in which children are placed will be fully licensed as required by §472(b) &amp; (c) of the Act and 45 CFR 1356.71(d)(1)(iv).</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. Develop and operationalize digital document storage system to facilitate background check record keeping.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; AHS IT	March 1, 2013	
2. Modify foster care database (SSMIS) to track fingerprint process.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; DCF IT	November 2011	Complete
3. Re-assign temporary social worker position to eliminate backlog of foster care licensure renewals.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director	June 1, 2012	
4. Review and enhance database internal controls regarding payment of title IVE.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; DCF IT DCF Business Office; Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director	November 1, 2012	
5. Enhance IT system to ensure that licensing information is captured for out-of-state family foster care placements.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director; Margo Bryce, ICPC Administrator; DCF IT	January 1, 2013	
<b>Goal 10: All criminal background checks for foster parents , in state and out of state, as described in §471(a)(20) of the Act and 45 CFR 1356.30 will be completed prior to licensure of the home.</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. Redefine and clarify licensure date in policy and on foster care database to reflect correct compliance.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; DCF IT	January 1, 2013	
2. Change responsibility for foster care licensure renewal from RLSI administrative staff to RLSI social work staff.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director	June1, 2011	Complete
3. Modify foster care database (SSMIS) to track fingerprint process.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; DCF IT	November 2011	Complete

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4. Review and improve child placing agency approved foster home record keeping.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; Margo Rome, RLSI social worker; AHS IT	March 1, 2013	
5. Review and enhance database internal controls regarding payment of title IVE.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; DCF IT DCF Business Office; Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director	November 1, 2012	
<b>Goal 11: There will be documentation of safety considerations for staff of a childcare institution for all in state and out of state institutions in which children and youth are placed as per 45 CFR 1356.30(f).</b>			
Activities	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Status/Update
1. Change contract requirements for out-of-state child care facilities to require licensing documentation as a condition of new contract.	Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director; Nancy Williams, Out-of-State Residential Programs Contract Manager	March 1, 2013	
2. Develop and operationalize digital document storage system to facilitate background check record keeping.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; AHS IT	March 1, 2013	
3. Review and enhance annual licensure review of state child care facilities staff background check process.	Jim Forbes, RLSI Director; Brenda Dawson, RLSI social worker	January 1, 2013	

**Process of Evaluation:**

1. The State of Vermont DCF will conduct monthly meetings to evaluate the progress on our program improvement plan. These meetings will include all relevant staff and leadership who are in positions to implement and monitor the action steps listed above.
2. Quarterly, DCF will conduct a review of 10% of all cases submitted to Central Office for Title IVE determination in the preceding quarter. If the review reveals any errors in title IVE determinations in the 10% sample, DCF will review 50% of all cases submitted in the preceding quarter. Additionally, during the next state fiscal year (SFY 2013), DCF will complete a 100% eligibility review. In any error case found, DCF will back out any improper payments and discontinue until eligibility requirements are met.
3. Quarterly, DCF will submit program improvement plan updates to the Children’s Bureau, which will include information about when each action step is achieved.

Heather McLain, Revenue Enhancement Director will be the evaluation lead. She can be reached at (802)769-6114 or heather.mclain@state.vt.us