

**WISCONSIN TITLE IV-E
FOSTER CARE ELIGIBILITY REVIEW
August 4 through 7, 2008**

Introduction

Staff from the Central and Region V Offices of the Children's Bureau (CB), in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) conducted a primary review of Wisconsin's title IV-E foster care program. The eligibility review was held in Madison, Wisconsin from August 4 through 7, 2008. The purpose of the review was to determine if payments made on behalf of children in foster homes and institutions were made in accordance with title IV-E (Sections 471 and 472) of the Social Security Act and title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Sections 1355 and 1356.

A random sample of 100 (80 and an over-sample of 20) cases was drawn from the State's Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data. The listing of sample cases was transmitted to State staff who verified that a foster care maintenance payment had been made in each case during the period under review (PUR), October 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008. On-site, the Review Team examined 80 cases to determine title IV-E eligibility for the child in care and to determine whether the foster home or child care institution was licensed and met safety requirements.

Case Record Summary

Of the eighty (80) cases reviewed, no error cases were identified. One non-error case was determined to have an ineligible payment outside of the PUR.

Ineligible Payment Case-Sample Number 13

The State claimed title IV-E foster care maintenance payments and administrative costs for one day (December 31, 2005) before the initial judicial determination regarding *Reasonable Efforts to Prevent Removal* was made.

Reference: 45 CFR 1356.21

Disallowances: Federal Financial Participation (FFP)
Maintenance, \$9.81 (\$10.00); Administrative, \$747.94 (\$748.00) = Total: \$758.00 FFP

The disallowance covers one day, December 31, 2005, for maintenance payment and the entire month of December 2005 for associated administrative costs. The child was placed on December 31, 2005; however, the judicial requirement was satisfied in January 2006.

Strengths of the State's title IV-E system

- All court findings were timely.
- The effectiveness of the team effort by the State DCF and the State Supreme Court to educate social workers, court personnel, and judges is apparent from the overall high quality of court documents. Court orders were child-specific, comprehensive and detailed. Actions by courts and county agencies related to reasonable efforts to prevent removal and best interests of children were well documented. In many instances, final case dispositions were made well within six months.
- Court hearings to finalize permanency plans and to obtain the related reasonable efforts finding were, in many instances, held more frequently than every 12 months. Many were held every six months or more frequently depending on case circumstances.
- The CFS-Form 205 that documents the initial determination of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)-related eligibility showed clearly the mathematical calculations, reason for deprivation, specified relative from whom a child was removed, and the eligibility decision.
- The eWiSACWIS (Electronic Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System) is capable of storing and producing needed information so that counties are able to minimize the paper they must retain, resulting in more orderly and manageable case records.
- The State and County Child Support Enforcement Units appear effective in collecting from parents whose children are in foster care. Many of the sample cases documented payments collected and used to help defray the cost of the child's care. Continuing payments from the non-custodial parent may be used for the child's care after he or she leaves foster care.

Areas in Need of Improvement

- The eWiSACWIS currently is not capable of determining AFDC-related initial title IV-E eligibility.

Disallowances

The review included a sample of 80 cases drawn from a universe of cases that received at least one title IV-E foster care maintenance payment during the six-month AFCARS period of October 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008. As indicated earlier in this report, based on the results of the review, Wisconsin has been found to be in substantial compliance. One non-error case was determined to have an ineligible payment. A disallowance in the amount of \$758.00 FFP in maintenance assistance and in associated administrative costs is assessed for the period of time of the ineligible payment.

Conclusion

Wisconsin is in substantial compliance with Federal title IV-E review requirements and the next primary eligibility review will take place in three years.