

Child and Family Services Reviews Update

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In This Issue:

Approved Program Improvement Plans

Expectations for PIPs

Approved Program Improvement Plans

States are required to submit Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) when their child welfare services are determined to be out of conformity on any of seven outcomes or seven systemic factors assessed in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The state must submit the PIP to its Children's Bureau Regional Office for approval within 90 calendar days from the date on which the state receives written notification from the Children's Bureau that it is not operating in substantial conformity with any one of the seven outcomes or seven systemic factors. The Children's Bureau works with the state as it develops the PIP in collaboration with its partners. If the Children's Bureau does not approve the state's initial PIP submission, the Children's Bureau will provide additional information to help the state revise it. The Children's Bureau approval notice indicates the commencement date of the state's PIP.

The following states have approved PIPs:

Arizona
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Kansas
Massachusetts
Minnesota
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Vermont

Expectations for PIPs

The PIP process is designed to create lasting and statewide systemic change in key areas identified in the CFSR while also addressing the immediate needs of children and families. As such, the PIP planning and implementation process is crucial to the ultimate success of the CFSR. Effective systemic improvement begins with identifying and understanding relevant data as well as the underlying factors affecting the state's performance. The Children's Bureau expects states to conduct root cause analysis to understand the reasons behind each state's performance and tie the results of the analysis to PIP goals, strategies, and activities. The goals and strategies in the PIP also must tie into the larger strategic plans within the state. Involvement of critical stakeholders is essential in PIP development and implementation. PIP development provides an opportunity for states to bring together stakeholders to identify what they need to work on to achieve the outcomes they want for children and families receiving child welfare services in their state.

When developing PIPs, states should ask themselves:

1. How are the proposed goals and strategies tied to essential vision, goals, and overall plans for improvement?
2. How did we identify root causes?
3. How are the goals and strategies in the PIP tied to the root causes?
4. What are the adaptive challenges and how are the strategies meant to change behaviors and practices beyond making technical adjustments?
5. What do we need to do during PIP development to establish strategies that go beyond plan-to-plan activities?

Although the state's performance on the statewide data indicators is not used in the substantial conformity determination, performance on the statewide data indicators should be used in the state's analysis. With this level of understanding, strategies or interventions can be chosen based on research and evidence of effectiveness.