



Child and Family Services Reviews

Massachusetts

Final Report

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

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Final Report: Massachusetts Child and Family Services Review Report Re-Issued: 2017

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Massachusetts.¹ The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for Massachusetts are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families and submitted to the Children's Bureau on September 8, 2015. The statewide assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes, and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
- The results of case reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home cases) conducted via a Traditional CFSR Case Review process at Boston, Arlington, and Worcester West Area Offices during the week of September 21, 2015
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Administrative Review Board members
 - Attorneys representing the state/agency
 - Attorneys representing parents
 - Child welfare agency caseworkers and supervisors
 - Child welfare agency senior managers including Regional Directors and Clinical Managers
 - Judges and representatives from the court system and Court Improvement Project
 - Foster and adoptive parents
 - Information system staff
 - Law enforcement
 - Licensing, recruitment, and Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPS) staff

¹ The Children's Bureau suspended the use of the state's performance on the national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. This re-issued report does not contain changes to the case review and systemic factor functioning results issued in the prior version of the state's Final Report.

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- Parents served by the agency
- Representatives from the Foster Parents Association and Adoption Resource Exchange
- Service providers
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, the Children's Bureau suspended the use of the state's performance on national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. For contextual information, Appendix A of this report shows the state's performance on the 7 data indicators. Moving forward, the Children's Bureau will refer to the national standards as "national performance." This national performance represents the performance of the nation on the statewide data indicators for an earlier point in time. For the time periods used to calculate the national performance for each indicator, see 80 Fed. Reg. 27263 (May 13, 2015). As a result, Massachusetts' Final Report is being reissued (see footnote 1).

Background Information

The Round 3 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates one or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome.

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state's substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the statewide assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity.

The Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. As such, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides tables presenting Massachusetts' overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about Massachusetts' performance in Round 2.

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I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

None of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity.

The following 2 of 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity:

- Statewide Information System
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Children's Bureau Comments on Massachusetts Performance

The following are the Children's Bureau's observations about cross-cutting issues and Massachusetts' overall performance:

In 2014, the Child Welfare League of America completed a review of a high-profile case and conducted an analysis of certain systemic aspects of the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). Since that time, DCF and the Office of the Child Advocate have completed and publicized reviews of other high-profile cases. Those reviews noted challenges in the state's policies and practices to ensure the safety of children involved with the child welfare system. The CFSR revealed concerns similar to those identified in these previous reviews around safety practices. As a result of all these reviews, DCF has recently introduced significant changes to intake and supervisory policies, which will serve as the foundation to improving safety outcomes.

A number of cases in the review sample illustrated insufficiencies in DCF's intake policies that resulted in inconsistent interpretation and application of the policies across the three sites. There appeared to be confusion surrounding DCF's policy for initiation of an investigation, including the agency's requirement for face-to-face contact with the child. Investigation initiation and/or face-to-face contact with the child were not timely in more than half of the applicable cases reviewed during the CFSR.

The CFSR also identified challenges in assessing and managing risk and safety concerns. In the cases reviewed, initial safety and risk assessments typically occurred timely; however, ongoing assessments of safety and risk were not completed in a number of cases. When ongoing assessments did occur, a reliance on informal approaches appeared to contribute to inconsistencies in practice. When safety concerns were identified, appropriate safety plans were not always developed, nor were existing safety plans routinely updated or monitored. In particular, the case review results identified challenges in addressing and managing safety and risk concerns in in-home cases (family preservation) when parents refused to cooperate with services. This was most often seen in cases involving domestic violence, substance abuse, and cases with multiple intake reports. In these cases, the agency either failed to make concerted efforts to engage the family in the services, or the agency failed to provide services targeted toward safety and risk concerns. While some of these cases were closed due to the parents' lack of cooperation, others remained open with little work occurring with the family. It did not appear that the agency considered whether legal action was necessary to ensure safety of the children in the home. Stakeholders noted that the agency's clinical review process was a strength in assisting social workers and supervisors with difficult case decisions, and DCF may want to explore how the use of the clinical review process might support case decision-making, particularly in high-risk in-home cases.

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The early identification of relatives and placement of children with relatives was a positive factor in many of the permanency outcomes. The review found that in many of the cases where a child was placed with relatives, the relative had made a permanent commitment to the child. The agency used relative resources to facilitate stable placements and to maintain significant family connections for children removed from their homes.

A practice concern identified was the use of third-party custody orders by the court when a child could not be placed with a relative because of criminal background check or other issues affecting DCF's ability to license the placement. The court-issued third-party custody order allows the child to be temporarily placed with the relative. While the order is in effect, the child is not considered to be in foster care and the court no longer requires DCF involvement with the child and family. However, DCF policy requires that the agency make reasonable efforts to provide services to the child and family and to work toward reunification. The case review revealed challenges in these third-party custody cases with lack of clarity on the permanency goal, leading to the agency often working toward a different goal than what was officially in the case plan. Because these children are not considered to be in foster care, efforts made toward permanency are difficult to assess, as the cases are not subject to the foster care review process. The Children's Bureau encourages the agency and court to clarify each entity's expectations, responsibilities, and procedures for ensuring appropriate decisions and safety, permanency, and well-being for the children in court-issued third-party custody cases.

The review found that while, in most cases, the agency established timely and appropriate permanency goals, case review results and interviews with stakeholders found that the agency and the courts did not make concerted efforts to achieve the permanency goal in a timely manner in the majority of cases. Case review results also found delays in timely termination of parental rights (TPR) due to court scheduling as well as late publication of required notifications. Stakeholders reported that a hiring freeze affecting court personnel, in conjunction with the surge in cases, likely impeded the courts' ability to hear TPR cases in a timely way and that the delayed submissions of required reports impacted the timeliness of permanency hearings. Stakeholders were also concerned that the backlog of TPR hearings prolonged the adoption process.

Regular caseworker visits with children was a positive practice that contributed to successful well-being outcomes. In most cases, workers visited children on at least a monthly basis, and these visits were of good quality—addressing issues related to safety, permanency, and well-being of the child. Stakeholder interviews with older youth indicated the positive effect that youth outreach workers made by assisting with plans for the future and helping youth understand the available services and assistance.

Stakeholders and case review results identified the need for the state to improve its practices in engaging and working with parents. The review results identified weakness in the various aspects of work with parents, including: worker visits with parents; assessing parents' needs and providing services to meet their needs; engaging parents in developing case plans; and ensuring that parents build positive relationships with their children in foster care through regular and quality visitation and participation in activities with their children.

Assessing and identifying the needs of children and parents in care and providing appropriate services to meet the identified needs is a critical component of child welfare work. Case review results showed that workers were assessing and identifying the needs of children in care but in some cases struggled to provide appropriate services to meet these identified needs. Case review results indicated significant challenges in assessing the needs of parents, specifically fathers.

Case review results demonstrated a strong relationship and coordination between the agency and local school systems. In the vast majority of applicable cases, the educational needs of the child were assessed and services were provided to address the identified

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needs. However, while educational needs were met in the cases reviewed, the CFSR found that children's needs related to physical, dental, and mental/behavioral health were not met in a significant number of cases.

Many stakeholders reported that the increase in the number of children removed from their families resulted in caseload challenges for both the agency and the court. According to the statewide assessment, referrals to the agency increased 10 percent between 2011 and 2014 with a similar increase in screened-in reports. Removals were attributed to parental mental health and substance abuse concerns, high staff turnover at the agency, and heightened public and media focus on recent child fatalities. Stakeholders reported large gaps in services, resulting in wait lists for trauma-focused treatment and services addressing mental health and substance abuse. The Children's Bureau notes that these issues affect the agency's and court's abilities to meet safety needs and achieve timely permanency for children.

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II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, CB provides performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. Massachusetts provides an alternative/differential response to, in addition to a traditional investigation of, incoming reports of child maltreatment or children in need of services. Where relevant, CB provides performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care, in-home, and in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

This report provides an overview with results rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to Massachusetts Department of Children and Families. The state is encouraged to conduct additional item-specific analysis of the case review findings to better understand areas of practice that are associated with positive outcomes and those that need improvement.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Item 1.

State Outcome Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 43% of the 28 applicable cases reviewed.

Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes.

State policy requires that reports screened in for initial assessment have an initial contact from the social worker within 2 business days of assignment. For CPS investigations, state policy requires that reports assigned for Emergency response are initiated within 2 hours from the time the report was received by the Department. Reports assigned for Non-Emergency response are initiated within 2 business days from the date the report was received by the Department. The Department's screening activities begin, and are considered part of, the investigative process.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 43% of the 28 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the safety statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

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Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

State Outcome Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 66% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 75% of the 40 foster care cases, 52% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 2. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 62% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 71% of the 7 applicable foster care cases, 55% of the 20 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 66% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 75% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 52% of the 23 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6.

State Outcome Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 35% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

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Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 80% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 55% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 6. Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 50% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the permanency statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

State Outcome Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 65% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 7. Placement With Siblings

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

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- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 64% of the 22 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,² and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 59% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 62% of the 13 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 73% of the 26 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 44% of the 9 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

Item 9. Preserving Connections

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 74% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 10. Relative Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 71% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

² For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

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Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father³ or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 64% of the 28 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 68% of the 28 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 60% of the 10 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

State Outcome Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 34% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 33% of the 40 foster care cases, 39% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 0% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 12. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents⁴ and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

³ For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

⁴ For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

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- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 38% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 35% of the 40 foster care cases, 43% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

Sub-Item 12A. Needs Assessment and Services to Children

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 78% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 83% of the 40 foster care cases, 74% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Sub-Item 12B. Needs Assessment and Services to Parents

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 39% of the 57 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 34% of the 32 applicable foster care cases, 43% of the 23 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 58% of the 57 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 40% of the 45 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

Sub-Item 12C. Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 81% of the 37 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents⁵ and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 58% of the 62 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

⁵ For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

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- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 68% of the 37 applicable foster care cases, 48% of the 23 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 73% of the 41 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 72% of the 54 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 58% of the 33 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 74% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 83% of the 40 foster care cases, 61% of the 23 in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers⁶ of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 44% of the 54 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 45% of the 29 applicable foster care cases, 48% of the 23 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 59% of the 54 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 47% of the 32 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

⁶ For Item 15, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “Mother” and “Father” is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

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Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Item 16.

State Outcome Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 90% of the 42 applicable cases reviewed.

Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 90% of the 42 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 92% of the 36 applicable foster care cases, 80% of the 5 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 using the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

State Outcome Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 67% of the 55 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 68% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 64% of the applicable 14 in-home services cases, and 100% of the applicable 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance

Item 17. Physical Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

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- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 85% of the 47 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 85% of the 40 foster care cases, 83% of the 6 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 in-home services alternative/differential response case.

Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 62% of the 37 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 62% of the 26 applicable foster care cases, 60% of the 10 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.

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III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item and a description of how the rating was determined. The CFSR relies upon a review of information contained in the statewide assessment to assess each item. If an item rating cannot be determined from the information contained in the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau conducts stakeholder interviews and considers information gathered through the interviews in determining ratings for each item.

Statewide Information System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 19.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Massachusetts is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Statewide Information System Item Performance

Item 19. Statewide Information System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts provided information on the processes that support the statewide information system's capacity to provide the required information on children in foster care. Stakeholders confirmed that the statewide information system is able to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in care, and that the data are timely and accurate.

Case Review System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. One of the 5 items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

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Case Review System Item Performance

Item 20. Written Case Plan

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described the state's policies for case plan development and provided data on service plan completion. In interviews, stakeholders reported that joint development of the case plan with parents is inconsistent, and that plans are often developed without input from the parents and presented to them.

Item 21. Periodic Reviews

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicated that periodic reviews occur largely on time and as required. Delays may occur on occasion to accommodate parents or, in a limited number of geographic areas, as a result of significant increases in the foster care population.

Item 22. Permanency Hearings

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts provided information on the requirements for permanency hearings and the process for monitoring timeliness. Data from the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicated that permanency hearings were not held timely in many cases.

Item 23. Termination of Parental Rights

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

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- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts provided data focused on the scheduling of termination of parental rights hearings and resolving issues related to scheduling of these hearings. During the onsite review, results indicated that for one-third of the children who had been in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the required provisions for filing of termination of parental rights or documentation of a compelling reason had not occurred. Although stakeholders largely believed that filing was occurring timely, case review information collected during the CFSR review did not support this.

Item 24. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24. Findings were determined based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described challenges in ensuring that caregivers of children in foster care are notified of and have a right to be heard in any review or hearing. Stakeholders reported that caregivers are typically notified of and invited to attend reviews and hearings by caseworkers or by written notice. Under Massachusetts law, caregivers are not considered a party to the case and as a result, each court treats caregivers differently, varying in involvement with some caregivers sworn in to provide testimony; other times caregivers are not considered for input.

Quality Assurance System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 25.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Quality Assurance System Item Performance

Item 25. Quality Assurance System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described several components of the state's continuous quality improvement (CQI) system but was unable to demonstrate the integration of these components. The state's past qualitative reviews were ad

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hoc in nature and did not provide the state with information about the quality of its services and the strengths and needs of its service delivery system. The state is developing a new case review process that is currently in its foundational stage.

- Stakeholders confirmed that a functioning and integrated quality assurance system that uses data and information to inform practice changes or monitor performance is not yet in place.

Staff and Provider Training

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Staff and Provider Training Item Performance

Item 26. Initial Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts provided information on initial staff training for new workers including classroom-based, on-the-job, and in-service trainings, and the state's Web-based learning management system. During interviews, stakeholders were concerned that the training did not prepare staff to perform their job functions and that the state lacked methods to evaluate the effectiveness of this training.

Item 27. Ongoing Staff Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff⁷ that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

⁷ "Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.

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- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders indicated that the state requires 30 hours of ongoing training annually; however, the state does not have training requirements for supervisors. The state offers professional development to supervisors, and in-house and topically based training to all workers. Stakeholders reported concerns with tracking staff participation in and completion of ongoing training as well as with the evaluation of ongoing training.

Item 28. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders indicated that foster and adoptive parents complete initial and ongoing training and that training is effective in providing them with the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children. However, the state did not provide information to demonstrate whether staff of child care institutions receive training that effectively prepares them to carry out their duties.

Service Array and Resource Development

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance

Item 29. Array of Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and obtained through interviews with stakeholders indicated that there are significant waiting lists for many services, and some services are unavailable in the more rural areas of the state or in the suburbs. In

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particular, stakeholders identified significant gaps for children and families, which include access to transportation services, independent living housing for older youth, and services for cognitively impaired parents.

- Stakeholders also identified long wait lists for intensive foster care homes, child psychological evaluation and treatment, substance abuse treatment services, and trauma informed services.

Item 30. Individualizing Services

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described the agency's ability to purchase services that could be individualized for the child and family. During interviews, stakeholders clarified that practice is inconsistent and depends on the caseworker's level of involvement in crafting such services. Stakeholders also asserted that individualization is difficult for persons who are non-English speaking or those with cognitive disabilities.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Massachusetts is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance

Item 31. State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with some stakeholders described the ongoing engagement and consultation with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders and Tribes. However, the state did not demonstrate how information was considered in developing the CFSP, and other stakeholders described challenges in ongoing and routine engagement of attorneys for parents, Tribes, and law enforcement.

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Item 32. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described how the state coordinated federally funded services and collaborated with other agencies receiving federal funds/grants. The state presented examples of how these collaborations were supporting children and families.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

State Systemic Factor Performance

Massachusetts is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. None of the four items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Item Performance

Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described the state policies and processes for applying licensing standards at initial licensing and at reevaluation. Stakeholders reported that there were inconsistencies in how the standards are applied, particularly in the use of waivers for unrestricted family homes.

Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

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- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders provided information on the state's policy requiring foster and adoptive parents to complete criminal background checks prior to licensing. However, no data or information in the statewide assessment or obtained from stakeholders during interviews demonstrated that the policy was being implemented consistently statewide. The state was unable to provide data or information concerning provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

Item 35. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described general recruitment efforts including the quarterly comparison of the race and ethnicity of resource caregivers with the population of children in need of care. The state did not provide data or information in the statewide assessment to demonstrate that the state's approach to diligent recruitment was adjusted based on data or that there was a functioning statewide recruitment plan. Stakeholders were also unable to provide this data or information.

Item 36. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Massachusetts described its partnership with the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange and its ability to access nationwide pre-adoptive resources through AdoptUSKids. Data in the statewide assessment documented that although timeliness has improved, a sizeable number of home studies requested by other states in order to place a child in a Massachusetts home are delayed beyond 60 days. Stakeholder interviews confirmed this information and reported that little information is available on the effectiveness of the state's use of cross-jurisdictional placements.

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 Child and Family Services Review Performance

I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcome Achievement: Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the state to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

Item Achievement: Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1 Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	43% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	43% Strength

SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 2 Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	66% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	62% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	66% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	35% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	55% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength

PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2 The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	65% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	64% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	74% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	71% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	64% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1 Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	34% Substantially achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	38% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	78% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	39% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	81% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	58% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	74% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	44% Strength

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Not In Substantial Conformity	90% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	90% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	67% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	62% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children's Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The Children's Bureau determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the Children's Bureau must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the Children's Bureau must find that the item is functioning as required.

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	In Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Case Review System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 20 Written Case Plan	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21 Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 22 Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 23 Termination of Parental Rights	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 24 Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 26 Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28 Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Service Array and Resource Development	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 29 Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30 Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	In Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 33 Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 34 Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 35 Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 36 State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators⁸

The state's performance is considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator and provides contextual information for considering the findings. This information is not used in conformity decisions. State performance may be statistically above, below, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the Children's Bureau did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.1%	Lower	22.4%	21.8%–23.1%	FY13–14
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	34.40	32.12–36.84	14A–14B, FY14

⁸ In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. The syntax revision is still underway, so performance shown in this table is based on the 2015 Federal Register syntax.

Appendix A: Summary of Massachusetts 2015 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	Higher	46.0%	44.7%–47.4%	12A–14B
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12- 23 months	43.6%	Higher	34.2%	32.2%–36.3%	14A–14B
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	24.2%	22.6%–25.7%	14A–14B
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	13.6%	12.3%–15.1%	12A–14B
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	6.23	6.08–6.38	14A–14B

* **Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP)** is derived from a multi-level statistical model and reflects the state’s performance relative to states with similar children and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children, and, for some indicators, the state’s entry rate. It uses risk-adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a more fair comparison of state performance against national performance.

** **95% Confidence Interval** is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state’s RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

*** **Data Period(s) Used for State Performance:** Refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1 – September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1 – March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1 – September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.

Appendix B: Massachusetts 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Appendix B

Summary of CFSR Round 2 Massachusetts 2007 Key Findings

The Children's Bureau conducted a CFSR in Massachusetts in 2007. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

Identifying Information and Review Dates

General Information
Children's Bureau Region: 1
Date of Onsite Review: July 23–27, 2007
Period Under Review: April 1, 2006, through July 23, 2007
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: February 28, 2008
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: February 6, 2008
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: October 1, 2009

Highlights of Findings

Performance Measurements
A. The State met the national standards for none of the six standards.
B. The State achieved substantial conformity for one of the seven outcomes.
C. The State achieved substantial conformity for six of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: Massachusetts 2007 CFSR Key Findings

State's Conformance With the National Standards

Data Indicator or Composite	National Standard	State's Score	Meets or Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)	94.6 or higher	89.1	Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	98.72	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	118.4	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	78.3	Does Not Meet Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	116.6	Does Not Meet Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	77.4	Does Not Meet Standard

State's Conformance With the Outcomes

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Massachusetts 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

State’s Conformance With the Systemic Factors

Systemic Factor	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Statewide Information System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Case Review System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Quality Assurance System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Staff and Provider Training	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Service Array and Resource Development	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Achieved Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Massachusetts 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Key Findings by Item

Outcomes

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 2. Repeat Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
Item 5. Foster Care Re-entries	Area Needing Improvement
Item 6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 7. Permanency Goal for Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives	Strength
Item 9. Adoption	Area Needing Improvement
Item 10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	Strength
Item 12. Placement With Siblings	Area Needing Improvement
Item 13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 14. Preserving Connections	Area Needing Improvement
Item 15. Relative Placement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 16. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
Item 17. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	Area Needing Improvement
Item 18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: Massachusetts 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 19. Caseworker Visits With Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 20. Caseworker Visits With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21. Educational Needs of the Child	Strength
Item 22. Physical Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement

Systemic Factors

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 24. Statewide Information System	Strength
Item 25. Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
Item 26. Periodic Reviews	Strength
Item 27. Permanency Hearings	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
Item 29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Strength
Item 31. Quality Assurance System	Strength
Item 32. Initial Staff Training	Strength
Item 33. Ongoing Staff Training	Strength
Item 34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
Item 35. Array of Services	Strength
Item 36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement
Item 37. Individualizing Services	Strength

Appendix B: Massachusetts 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength
Item 39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
Item 40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength
Item 41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength
Item 42. Standards Applied Equally	Strength
Item 43. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Strength
Item 44. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Area Needing Improvement
Item 45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Strength