

ACF

Administration
for Children
and Families

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

1. Log No: ACYF-CB-PI-12-01

2. Issuance Date: 01-06-2012

3. Originating Office: Children's Bureau

4. Key Words: Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act; Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act; Child Welfare Services Program; Monthly Caseworker Visits

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: State Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

SUBJECT: Data requirements for States related to reporting monthly caseworker visits under title IV-B of the Social Security Act (the Act) as revised by the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act [Public Law (P.L. 112-34)], enacted September 30, 2011.

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES: Title IV-B, subpart 1, sections 422 & 424 of the Act, P.L. 112-34, and ACYF-CB-IM-11-06.

PURPOSE: This Program Instruction (PI) provides guidance to States regarding revisions to data collection and reporting requirements on monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care.

BACKGROUND: The President signed P.L. 112-34 into law on September 30, 2011. Generally, P.L. 112-34 extends programs funded under title IV-B of the Act through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016. More specifically, P.L. 112-34 revises title IV-B of the Act to modify requirements for submission and assessment of data on monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care.

For FFY's 2007 through 2010, States submitted data on monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care. These data report their progress in achieving the target that by October 1, 2011, 90 percent of children in foster care are visited on a monthly basis by their workers and that the majority of the visits occur in the residence of the child. As directed in ACYF-CB-PI-11-06, States must also report monthly caseworker visit data for FFY 2011 to the Children's Bureau (CB), following the methodology outlined in that PI. These data were due on December 15, 2011.

INSTRUCTION: With the passage of P.L. 112-34, States must continue to collect and report information to CB on monthly caseworker visits. However, beginning with the submission of data for FFY 2012, States must report their information using a new data reporting methodology, consistent with the changes in the law made by P.L. 112-34. ACF will assess compliance based on the revised performance requirements outlined in statute (section 424(f) of the Act).

The New Monthly Caseworker Visit Requirements

Section 424(f) of the Act requires that each State must meet the following performance requirements for monthly caseworker visits beginning in FFY 2012:

- *For each of FFYs 2012-2014:* The total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 90 percent of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care.
- *For FFY 2015 and each FFY thereafter:* The total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 95 percent of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care.
- *For FFY 2012 and each FFY thereafter:* At least 50 percent of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care during a fiscal year must occur in the child's residence.

States failing to meet any one of the above applicable requirements in a FFY will be subject to a reduction in the rate of Federal Financial Participation (FFP) for title IV-B, subpart 1 expenditures in the subsequent FFY. See the *Potential Reduction in FFP* section in this document for further information.

Population to be Included in Data Reporting

In determining which children States must include in the data reporting population, the following applies:

- All children under age 18 who have been in foster care for at least one full calendar month during the FFY are included in the population.
- At this time, we are not requiring that States include youth in the data reporting population for monthly caseworker visits if they are age 18 or older.
- A child with more than one foster care episode during the 12-month period is considered as one child.

- Children who are placed in an out-of-state foster care placement are included in the data reporting population of the State that has placement and care responsibility for the children.
- If a State considers children who have gone home for a trial home visit to be in foster care, then the children are included in the population.
- Children who have run away from a foster care placement are included in the population for as long as the child remains in the State's placement and care.
- Children in foster care who are covered by a title IV-E agreement between the State title IV-E agency and an Indian Tribe or another agency (e.g., juvenile justice) are included in the population.

Who Qualifies as a Caseworker?

Section 422(b)(17) of the Act requires agencies administering titles IV-B and IV-E to describe standards for monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care. At a minimum, the standards are to ensure that caseworker visits are well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child. Visits may be conducted by any caseworker with whom the title IV-B/IV-E agency has assigned or contracted case management or visitation responsibilities and must be held face-to-face. Within these parameters, the agency may determine which caseworkers are appropriate to conduct the visits (see the Child Welfare Policy Manual, Section 7.3 Q/A #5).

Data to be Submitted

States are required to submit data for FFY 2012 and succeeding fiscal years according to the revised requirements described previously in *New Monthly Caseworker Visit Requirements* (section 424(f) of the Act). States must submit the data listed in items #1 - 4 specified in *Data Needed for Computation and Verification* and the derived percentages specified in *Calculation of Percentages*. CB will annually communicate the submission deadline for each FFY in the PI for the Child and Family Services Plan or Annual Progress and Services Report.

States must report the caseworker visit data for any FFY for the full 12-month period, e.g., for FFY 2012, States must report data for the period from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012.

Data Needed for Computation and Verification

The following data are required to compute the percentages and verify the selection of the data reporting population for each FFY:

1. The aggregate number of children in the data reporting population (described above);
2. The total number of monthly caseworker visits made to children in the reporting population. If multiple visits were made to a child during the calendar month, the State must count them as one monthly visit;
3. The total number of complete calendar months children in the reporting population spent in care;
4. The total number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population that occurred in the child's residence. If multiple visits were made to a child during the month and at least one of those visits occurred in the child's residence, the State should count and report that one monthly visit occurred in the residence of the child.

Calculation of Percentages

Based on these data, States must calculate percentages in the following way:

- The ***percentage of visits made on a monthly basis by caseworkers to children in foster care*** is determined by taking the number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population (item #2) and dividing it by the number of such visits that would occur during the FFY if each such child were visited once per month while in care (item #3). The quotient is multiplied by 100 and expressed as a percentage, rounded to the nearest whole number.
- The ***percentage of visits that occurred in the residence of the child*** is determined by taking the number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population that occurred in the residence of the child (item #4) and dividing it by the total number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population (item #2). The quotient is multiplied by 100 and expressed as a percentage, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Verification of Data Reporting Population

CB will assess the accuracy and completeness of the data reporting population by comparing the aggregate number of children who are in the reporting population (item #1) to an extract of equivalent data the State reports through AFCARS for the two six-month periods that make up the same FFY. The State must satisfactorily explain

differences of greater than +/- 10 percent between the two sources as a condition of ACF acceptance of the caseworker visit reporting data.

Option to Use Sampling

Under the revised data reporting requirements, States still have the option to use sampling to meet the monthly caseworker visit data reporting requirement. In reporting data, States must identify whether any of the submitted data (items #1-4 ***under Data Needed for Computation and Verification***) were derived through sampling.

Any State wishing to use a sampling methodology to fulfill the revised monthly caseworker data reporting requirements must contact their CB Regional Office to obtain approval before submitting data for FFY 2012 (or any subsequent FFY if a new or revised sampling methodology is to be employed following approval of the FFY 2012 sampling methodology). To gain approval, the State must either obtain an updated sampling methodology developed by the CB Data Team or develop its own sampling methodology in consultation with the CB Data Team.

Minimum Performance Requirements Rather than Target Percentages

Under the revised data reporting requirements, the statute eliminated the requirement for States to develop target data percentages. Instead, States must meet required minimum performance standards, as stated earlier. Consistent with the statute, States must:

- Ensure for FFY's 2012 through 2014 that the total number of monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care is not less than 90 percent of the total visits that would be made if each child were visited once per month.
- Ensure for FFY 2015 and thereafter that the total number of monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care is not less than 95 percent of the total visits that would be made if each child were visited once per month.
- Ensure for FFY 2012 and thereafter that not less than 50 percent of monthly caseworker visits occur in the residence of the child.

Potential Reduction in Federal Financial Participation (FFP)

Changes to sections 424(f)(1)(B) and 424(f)(2)(B) of the Act require a reduction in FFP for failure to meet the percentages for monthly caseworker visits and visits in the residence of the child as prescribed in statute. The following chart details the FFP reductions associated with each level of non-compliance:

If the title IV-B agency falls short of statutory percentage by:	The Federal match for the title IV-B, subpart 1 will be reduced by:
Less than 10%	1 percentage point
10% to less than 20%	3 percentage points
20% or more	5 percentage points

The FFP reductions will be separately assessed for the monthly caseworker visit requirement and the visits in the residence of the child requirement. For example, if the percentage of the State's required monthly visits in a single FFY is 14 percent below the required level and the percentage of the visits occurring in the residence of the child is 5 percent below the required level, the FFP rate reduction applied to title IV-B, subpart 1 funds in the following FFY would be 4 (3+1) percentage points.

In any FFY in which a State fails to meet the prescribed minimum percentage for one or both data requirements, ACF will continue to make the full Federal allotment available to the State, but the State must increase its match rate in order to access the full Federal allotment. Any FFP reduction(s) shall be combined and applied to the title IV-B, subpart 1 funding allocation for the FFY following the year for which the required compliance level was not met.

INQUIRIES TO: Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

/s/
 Bryan Samuels
 Commissioner
 Administration on Children, Youth
 and Families

Attachment:
 Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

I	Region I - Boston Bob Cavanaugh bob.cavanaugh@acf.hhs.gov JFK Federal Building, Rm. 2000 Boston, MA 02203 (617) 565-1020 States: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont	VI	Region VI - Dallas Janis Brown janis.Brown@acf.hhs.gov 1301 Young Street, Suite 945 Dallas, TX 75202-5433 (214) 767-8466 States: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
II	Region II - New York City Junius Scott junius.scott@acf.hhs.gov 26 Federal Plaza, Rm. 4114 New York, NY 10278 (212) 264-2890 States and Territories: New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands	VII	Region VII - Kansas City Rosalyn Wilson rosalyn.wilson@acf.hhs.gov Federal Office Building Room 276 601 E. 12th Street Kansas City, MO 64106 (816) 426-3981 States: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska
III	Region III - Philadelphia Lisa Pearson lisa.pearson@acf.hhs.gov 150 S. Independence Mall West - Suite 864 Philadelphia, PA 19106-3499 (215) 861-4000 States: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia	VIII	Region VIII - Denver Marilyn Kennerson marilyn.kennerson@acf.hhs.gov Federal Office Building 1961 Stout Street - 9th Floor Denver, CO 80294-3538 (303) 844-3100 States: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming
IV	Region IV - Atlanta Ruth Walker ruth.walker@acf.hhs.gov Atlanta Federal Center 61 Forsyth Street, S.W. , Suite 4M60 Atlanta, GA 30303 (404) 562-2900 States: Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee	IX	Region IX - San Francisco Paul Kirsitz (acting) paul.kirsitz@acf.hhs.gov 1250 Maryland Ave., S.W. Washington, D.C. 20024 (202) 205-6733 States and Territories: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Outer Pacific—American Samoa Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap) Guam, Marshall Islands, Palau
V	Region V - Chicago Angela Green angela.green@acf.hhs.gov 233 N. Michigan Avenue Suite 400 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 353-9672 States: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin	X	Region X - Seattle Tina Minor tina.minor@acf.hhs.gov 2201 Sixth Avenue, Suite 300, MS-70 Seattle, WA 98121 (206) 615-3657 States: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington