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This page provides resources and information about new federal legislation, regulations, and Children's Bureau policies. As new laws are passed, regulations are issued, or the Children's Bureau announces new policy, the information on this page is changed to ensure that the most current policy information is available to stakeholders quickly and accurately. Any questions or comments about information and resources provided here should be directed to the **Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers**.

New Information Memoranda (IMs) and Program Instructions (PIs)

- **ACF-ACYF-CB-IM-25-01:** The purpose of this Information Memorandum (IM) is to inform state and tribal title IV-B and title IV-E agencies of a final rule issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that implements Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). HHS's final rule includes regulatory provisions relevant to child welfare agencies that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These regulatory provisions clarify how Section 504 applies in the child welfare context. This guidance focuses on the Section 504 final rule and does not cover all disability rights laws applicable to child welfare entities.
- **ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-24-11:** The purpose of this Program Instruction (PI) is to instruct tribal title IV-E agencies administering or supervising the administration of title IV-E under sections 479B and 471(a) of the Act on the title IV-E prevention program requirements, the exemption of tribal title IV-E agencies from the evaluation waiver and continuous quality improvement requirements, and on the flexibility title IV-E agencies may provide to tribes with whom they have agreements under section 472(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Act. This PI supersedes **ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-18-10** issued November 30, 2018, upon publication.
- **ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-24-10:** The purpose of this Program Instruction (PI) is to instruct state title IV-E agencies on the title IV-E prevention program requirements and on the flexibility such agencies may provide to tribes with whom they have agreements under section 472(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Act. ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-24-10 supersedes **ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-24-07** issued May 21, 2024, upon publication.

View additional Information Memorandums (IMs) and Program Instructions (PIs).

2024 Final Rule on the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

A final rule on the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) was published in the Federal Register on December 5, 2024 ([89 FR 96569](#) [↗](#) [↗](#)). It amends the AFCARS regulations to require state title IV-E agencies to collect and report data elements related to the procedural protections of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA). The first report period when state title IV-E agencies must begin collecting the information required in this final rule begins October 1, 2028, and the first data files containing this information will be due to ACF by May 15, 2029. Note: A technical correction was published on December 30, 2025 ([89 FR 106364](#) [↗](#) [↗](#)) and was effective as if it was included in the document published December 5, 2024.

- **Final Rule (December 5, 2024)** [↗](#) [↗](#) - This is a link to the final rule in the Federal Register.
- **ACF-ACYF-CB-IM-24-09** - This Information Memorandum informs title IV-E agencies of the publication of the final rule.

2024 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

A proposed rule on the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) was published in the Federal Register on February 23, 2024 (89 FR 13652). It proposes to amend the AFCARS regulations to require state title IV-E agencies to collect and report data elements related to the procedural protections of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA).

- **NPRM (February 23, 2024)** [↗](#) [↗](#) - This is a link to the NPRM in the Federal Register.
- **ACF-ACYF-CB-IM-24-02** - This Information Memorandum informs title IV-E agencies of the publication of the NPRM.
- **Presentation: Overview of the AFCARS NPRM:** This is a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the 2024 AFCARS NPRM.

Foster Care Legal Representation

ACF published a final rule in the Federal Register on May 10, 2024 (89 FR 40400) that allows a title IV-E agency to claim Federal financial participation (FFP) for the administrative cost of an attorney providing legal representation and a non-attorney providing representation in certain proceedings.

- **Final Rule (May 10, 2024)** [↗](#) [↗](#) — this is a link to the final rule in the federal register (89 FR 40400) and associated issuance **ACF-ACYF-CB-IM-24-05** (PDF) (PDF).

- **Presentation: Overview of the Final Rule:** This is a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the final rule.
- **NPRM (September 28, 2023)** [🔗](#) [🔗](#) - This is a link to the NPRM in the Federal Register and associated issuance **ACYF-CB-IM-23-06 (PDF)** (PDF) - This Information Memorandum informs title IV-E agencies of the publication of the NPRM.

Separate Licensing Standards for Relative or Kinship Foster Family Homes

ACF published a final rule in the Federal Register on September 28, 2023 (88 FR 66700) that allows title IV-E agencies to adopt foster family home licensing or approval standards for foster family homes of relatives or kin that differ from nonrelative foster family homes standards. It also requires that during the title IV-E agency's periodic review of licensing standards and the amount of foster care maintenance payments, the agency ensures that eligible children receive the same amount of foster care maintenance payments regardless of whether they are placed in a licensed or approved relative, kinship, or unrelated foster family home.

- **Final Rule (September 28, 2023)** [🔗](#) [🔗](#) - This is a link to the Final Rule in the Federal Register (88 FR 66700).
- **ACF-ACYF-CB-IM-23-07** - This Information Memorandum informs title IV-E agencies of the publication of this final rule.
- **ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-23-10** - This Program Instruction provides instructions for title IV-E agencies that opt to adopt licensing or approval standards for relative or kinship foster family homes that differ from the standards used for non-relative foster family homes.
- **NPRM (February 14, 2023)** [🔗](#) [🔗](#) - This is a link to the NPRM in the Federal Register (88 FR 9411) and associated issuance **ACYF-CB-IM-23-02**.

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Rulemakings

A final rule on the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) was published in the Federal Register on May 12, 2020. It finalizes a proposal to streamline the information required to be reported by title IV-E agencies from the 2016 AFCARS final rule.

- **AFCARS Final Rule (May 12, 2020)** [🔗](#) [🔗](#) - This is a link to the 2020 final rule in the Federal Register (85 FR 28410) and associated issuance **ACYF-CB-IM-20-07** and **Technical Bulletins**.
- **NPRM (April 19, 2019)** [🔗](#) [🔗](#) - This is a link to the 2019 NPRM in the Federal Register (84 FR 16572) and associated issuance **ACYF-CB-IM-19-02**.

- **2016 final rule (December 14, 2016)** [🔗](#) [🔗](#) - This is a link to the final rule in the Federal Register (81 FR 90524).

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Notice of intent means a record from the title IV-E agency, signed by the governor, tribal leader, or designated state or tribal official and provided to ACF declaring that the title IV-E agency plans to build a CCWIS project that is below the APD approval thresholds of 45 CFR 95.611(a).

S/TACWIS project means an active automated data processing system or project that, prior to the effective date of these regulations, ACF classified as a S/TACWIS and for which:

- (i) ACF approved a procurement to develop a S/TACWIS; or
- (ii) The applicable state or tribal agency approved a development procurement for a S/TACWIS below the thresholds of 45 CFR 95.611(a).

Transition period means the 24 months after the effective date of these regulations.

(b) Other terms as they appear in §§ 1355.50 through 1355.59 are defined in 45 CFR 95.605.

[81 FR 35479, June 2, 2016]

§ 1355.52 CCWIS project requirements.

(a) *Efficient, economical, and effective requirement.* The title IV-E agency's CCWIS must support the efficient, economical, and effective administration of the title IV-B and IV-E plans pursuant to section 474(a)(3)(C)(iv) of the Act by:

- (1) Improving program management and administration by maintaining all program data required by federal, state or tribal law or policy;
- (2) Appropriately applying information technology;
- (3) Not requiring duplicative application system development or software maintenance; and
- (4) Ensuring costs are reasonable, appropriate, and beneficial.

(b) *CCWIS data requirements.* The title IV-E agency's CCWIS must maintain:

(1) Title IV-B and title IV-E data that supports the efficient, effective, and economical administration of the programs including:

- (i) Data required for ongoing federal child welfare reports;
- (ii) Data required for title IV-E eligibility determinations, authorizations of services, and expenditures under IV-B and IV-E;

(iii) Data to support federal child welfare laws, regulations, and policies; and

(iv) Case management data to support federal audits, reviews, and other monitoring activities;

(2) Data to support state or tribal child welfare laws, regulations, policies, practices, reporting requirements, audits, program evaluations, and reviews;

(3) For states, data to support specific measures taken to comply with the requirements in section 422(b)(9) of the Act regarding the state's compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act; and

(4) For each state, data for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

(c) *Reporting requirements.* The title IV-E agency's CCWIS must use the data described in paragraph (b) of this section to:

(1) Generate, or contribute to, required title IV-B or IV-E federal reports according to applicable formatting and submission requirements; and

(2) Generate, or contribute to, reports needed by state or tribal child welfare laws, regulations, policies, practices, reporting requirements, audits, and reviews that support programs and services described in title IV-B and title IV-E.

(d) *Data quality requirements.* (1) The CCWIS data described in paragraph (b) of this section must:

(i) Meet the most rigorous of the applicable federal, and state or tribal standards for completeness, timeliness, and accuracy;

(ii) Be consistently and uniformly collected by CCWIS and, if applicable, child welfare contributing agency systems;

(iii) Be exchanged and maintained in accordance with confidentiality requirements in section 471(a)(8) of the Act, and 45 CFR 205.50, and 42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(viii) through (x) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, if applicable, and other applicable federal and state or tribal laws;

(iv) Support child welfare policies, goals, and practices; and

(v) Not be created by default or inappropriately assigned.

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45 CFR Ch. XIII (10-1-22 Edition)

(2) The title IV-E agency must implement and maintain automated functions in CCWIS to:

(i) Regularly monitor CCWIS data quality;

(ii) Alert staff to collect, update, correct, and enter CCWIS data;

(iii) Send electronic requests to child welfare contributing agency systems to submit current and historical CCWIS data to the CCWIS;

(iv) Prevent, to the extent practicable, the need to re-enter data already captured or exchanged with the CCWIS; and

(v) Generate reports of continuing or unresolved CCWIS data quality problems.

(3) The title IV-E agency must conduct biennial data quality reviews to:

(i) Determine if the title IV-E agency and, if applicable, child welfare contributing agencies, meet the requirements of paragraphs (b), (d)(1), and (d)(2) of this section; and

(ii) Confirm that the bi-directional data exchanges meet the requirements of paragraphs (e) and (f) of this section, and other applicable ACF regulations and policies.

(4) The title IV-E agency must enhance CCWIS or the electronic bi-directional data exchanges or both to correct any findings from reviews described at paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(5) The title IV-E agency must develop, implement, and maintain a CCWIS data quality plan in a manner prescribed by ACF and include it as part of Annual or Operational APDs submitted to ACF as required in 45 CFR 95.610. The CCWIS data quality plan must:

(i) Describe the comprehensive strategy to promote data quality including the steps to meet the requirements at paragraphs (d)(1) through (3) of this section; and

(ii) Report the status of compliance with paragraph (d)(1) of this section.

(e) *Bi-directional data exchanges.* (1) The CCWIS must support efficient, economical, and effective bi-directional data exchanges to exchange relevant data with:

(i) Systems generating the financial payments and claims for titles IV-B

and IV-E per paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section, if applicable;

(ii) Systems operated by child welfare contributing agencies that are collecting or using data described in paragraph (b) of this section, if applicable;

(iii) Each system used to calculate one or more components of title IV-E eligibility determinations per paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section, if applicable; and

(iv) Each system external to CCWIS used by title IV-E agency staff to collect CCWIS data, if applicable.

(2) To the extent practicable, the title IV-E agency's CCWIS must support one bi-directional data exchange to exchange relevant data, including data that may benefit IV-E agencies and data exchange partners in serving clients and improving outcomes, with each of the following state or tribal systems:

(i) Child abuse and neglect system(s);

(ii) System(s) operated under title IV-A of the Act;

(iii) Systems operated under title XIX of the Act including:

(A) Systems to determine Medicaid eligibility described in 42 CFR 433.111(b)(2)(ii)(A); and

(B) Medicaid Management Information Systems as defined at 42 CFR 433.111(b)(2)(ii)(B);

(iv) Systems operated under title IV-D of the Act;

(v) Systems operated by the court(s) of competent jurisdiction over title IV-E foster care, adoption, and guardianship programs;

(vi) Systems operated by the state or tribal education agency, or school districts, or both.

(f) *Data exchange standard requirements.* The title IV-E agency must use a single data exchange standard that describes data, definitions, formats, and other specifications upon implementing a CCWIS:

(1) For bi-directional data exchanges between CCWIS and each child welfare contributing agency; and

(2) For data exchanges with systems described under paragraph (e)(1)(iv) of this section.

(g) *Automated eligibility determination requirements.* (1) A state title IV-E agency must use the same automated

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function or the same group of automated functions for all title IV-E eligibility determinations.

(2) A tribal title IV-E agency must, to the extent practicable, use the same automated function or the same group of automated functions for all title IV-E eligibility determinations.

(h) *Software provision requirement.* The title IV-E agency must provide a copy of the agency-owned software that is designed, developed, or installed with FFP and associated documentation to the designated federal repository within the Department upon request.

(i) *Submission requirements.* (1) Before claiming funding in accordance with a CCWIS cost allocation, a title IV-E agency must submit an APD or, if below the APD submission thresholds defined at 45 CFR 95.611, a Notice of Intent that includes:

(i) A description of how the CCWIS will meet the requirements in paragraphs (a) through (h) of this section and, if applicable §1355.54;

(ii) A list of all automated functions included in the CCWIS; and

(iii) A notation of whether each automated function listed in paragraph (i)(1)(ii) of this section meets, or when implemented will meet, the following requirements:

(A) The automated function supports at least one requirement of this section or, if applicable §1355.54;

(B) The automated function is not duplicated within the CCWIS or systems supporting child welfare contributing agencies and is consistently used by all child welfare users responsible for the area supported by the automated function; and

(C) The automated function complies with the CCWIS design requirements described under §1355.53(a), unless exempted in accordance with §1355.53(b).

(2) Annual APD Updates and Operational APDs for CCWIS projects must include:

(i) An updated list of all automated functions included in the CCWIS;

(ii) A notation of whether each automated function listed in paragraph (1)(2)(i) of this section meets the requirements of paragraph (i)(1)(iii)(B) of this section; and

(iii) A description of changes to the scope or the design criteria described

at §1355.53(a) for any automated function listed in paragraph (i)(2)(i) of this section.

(j) *Other applicable requirements.* Regulations at 45 CFR 95.613 through 95.621 and 95.626 through 95.641 are applicable to all CCWIS projects below the APD submission thresholds at 45 CFR 95.611.

[81 FR 35479, June 3, 2016]

§ 1355.53 CCWIS design requirements.

(a) Except as exempted in paragraph (b) of this section, automated functions contained in a CCWIS must:

(1) Follow a modular design that includes the separation of business rules from core programming;

(2) Be documented using plain language;

(3) Adhere to a state, tribal, or industry defined standard that promotes efficient, economical, and effective development of automated functions and produces reliable systems; and

(4) Be capable of being shared, leveraged, and reused as a separate component within and among states and tribes.

(b) CCWIS automated functions may be exempt from one or more of the requirements in paragraph (a) of this section if:

(1) The CCWIS project meets the requirements of §1355.56(b) or (f)(1); or

(2) ACF approves, on a case-by-case basis, an alternative design proposed by a title IV-E agency that is determined by ACF to be more efficient, economical, and effective than what is found in paragraph (a) of this section.

[81 FR 35481, June 2, 2016]

§ 1355.54 CCWIS options.

If a project meets, or when completed will meet, the requirements of §1355.52, then ACF may approve CCWIS funding described at §1355.57 for other ACF-approved data exchanges or automated functions that are necessary to achieve title IV-E or IV-B programs goals.

[81 FR 35481, June 2, 2016]

§ 1355.55 Review and assessment of CCWIS projects.

ACF will review, assess, and inspect the planning, design, development, installation, operation, and maintenance of each CCWIS project on a continuing