

Round 4

Child and Family Services Review

National Call Series

SYSTEMIC FACTORS & STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

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Children's Bureau Presenters

- *Linda Mitchell*, Team Leader, CFSTR Unit
- *Richard Longoria*, CFSTR Unit
- *Sylvia Kim*, CFSTR Unit



Agenda

- **What Are Systemic Factors?**
 - A Brief Introduction/Review
- **Systemic Factor Assessment**
 - Overview of Process
 - Systemic Factor Functioning
 - Strengthening Stakeholder Involvement/Use of Evidence
- **Stakeholder Interviews**
 - Connection to Systemic Factor Assessment
 - Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG)
- **Resources**
- **Questions?**

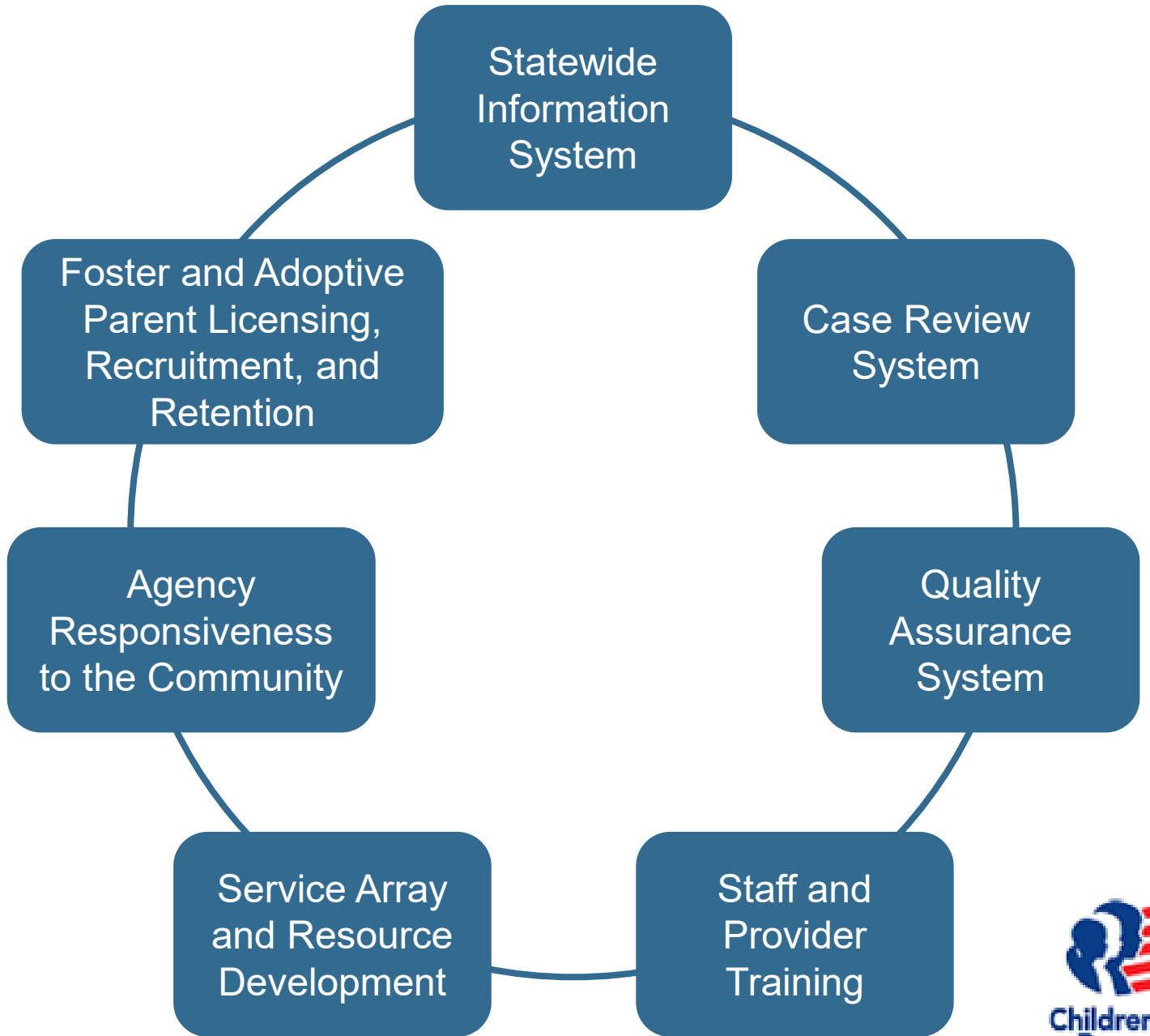


What Are Systemic Factors?

As in previous rounds of the CFSR, systemic factors refer to seven specified systems operating within a state that have the capacity, if well-functioning, to promote child safety, permanency, and child and family well-being outcomes.

The systemic factors comprise federal requirements that are grounded in federal statute, regulations, and state Child and Family Services Plans (CFSP).

45 CFR § 1355.34
Social Security Act



What Are Systemic Factors?

Systemic Factors
&
Systemic Factor Items

Systemic
Factor

Systemic
Factor
Requirement
(Item)

Systemic
Factor
Requirement
(Item)

What Are Systemic Factors?

Systemic Factors & Systemic Factor Items

Case Review System

Written Case Plan

Periodic Reviews

Permanency Hearings

Filing of TPR Petitions

Notice of Hearings and
Reviews to Caregivers
and Right to Be Heard

What Are Systemic Factors?

The 7 systemic factors and 18 systemic factor items subject to review in CFSR Round 3 will remain the same in CFSR Round 4.

Systemic Factor	Systemic Factor Items	
	Round 3	Round 4
Statewide Information System	1	1
Case Review System	5	5
Quality Assurance System	1	1
Staff and Provider Training	3	3
Service Array and Resource Development	2	2
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	2	2
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention	4	4
Total	18	18

What Are Systemic Factors?

Brief Review of Systemic Factor Items

Statewide Information System

Statewide Information System



What Are Systemic Factors?

Brief Review of Systemic Factor Items

Case Review System

Written Case Plan

Periodic Reviews

Permanency Hearings

Filing Petition for Termination of Parental Rights

Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

What Are Systemic Factors?

Brief Review of Systemic Factor Items

Quality Assurance System

Quality Assurance System

What Are Systemic Factors?

Brief Review of Systemic Factor Items

Staff and Provider Training

Initial Staff Training

Ongoing Staff Training

Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

What Are Systemic Factors?

Brief Review of Systemic Factor Items

Service Array and Resource Development

Array of Resources

Individualizing Services

What Are Systemic Factors?

Brief Review of Systemic Factor Items

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

State Engagement and Consultation with Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and Annual Progress and Services Reports

Coordination of CFSP Services with Other Federal Programs

What Are Systemic Factors?

Brief Review of Systemic Factor Items

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Standards Applied Equally

Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Systemic Factor Assessment

Overview



- State analyzes/synthesizes relevant data/information, in partnership with stakeholders, and reports evidence that shows systemic factor functioning.
- Children’s Bureau reviews final submission of the state’s SWA and determines whether any further data/information is needed to rate the systemic factor items. If further information is needed, that information will be collected through stakeholder interviews.
- Synthesize all evidence reported in SWA and any stakeholder interviews conducted to inform final ratings.

Systemic Factor Assessment

Statewide
Assessment Phase



- State analyzes/synthesizes relevant data/information, in partnership with stakeholders, and reports evidence that shows systemic factor functioning.

Systemic Factor Assessment

Systemic Factor Functioning

Background and Context

- State statutes, regulations, policies, and requirements (e.g., licensing and/or training standards/requirements) are important to reference—but alone do not show how well a systemic factor is “functioning.”
- Is the federal requirement (e.g., timely permanency hearings) occurring/happening across the state?
 - Relevant data/information

Strengthening Process/Resources in CFSR Round 4

- Statewide Assessment “Guiding Questions” can help show statewide systemic factor functioning.
- “Systemic Factor Briefs” can be helpful in identifying systemic factor “item-specific” sources of data and methods that can be helpful in providing evidence that shows how well each systemic factor is functioning statewide.



Systemic Factor Functioning

Round 3

Section IV
Statewide
Assessment

Requirement



Assessment Question



Data and Information That Shows
Systemic Factor Functioning

Systemic Factor Functioning

Round 4

Section IV

Statewide Assessment

Requirement

No Change in Round 4

Assessment Question

No Substantive Change in Round 4

Data and Information Requested

Guiding Questions have been added to the
Round 4 Statewide Assessment template to
support Evidence-Informed Response



Systemic Factor Assessment

An Example

Statewide Information
System

(Item 19)

Requirement

The state is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, 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.

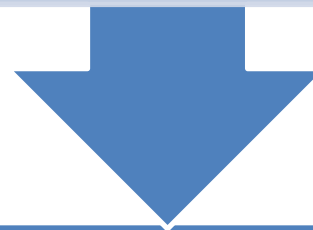
Systemic Factor Assessment

An Example

Statewide Information System
(Item 19)

Requirement

The state is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, 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



Assessment Question

How well is the Statewide Information System 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?

Systemic Factor Assessment

An Example

Statewide Information System (Item 19)

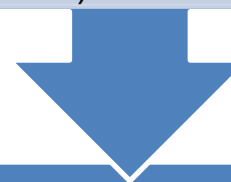
Requirement

The state is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, 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.



Assessment Question

How well is the Statewide Information System 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?



Data and Information Requested

Guiding Questions have been added in the Round 4 Statewide Assessment template to support evidence-informed response.



Systemic Factor Assessment

An Example

Statewide Information System (Item 19)

Guiding Questions

Data and Information Requested

Guiding Questions have been added in the Round 4 Statewide Assessment template to support evidence-informed response.

- What data sources were used/analyzed to inform state observations? Briefly describe your analysis, including data periods represented, measures, and methodology.
- Are there limitations to the evidence and information (e.g., completeness, accuracy, reliability)?
- What does the evidence show with respect to the system functioning statewide?
- What does the evidence identify as strengths and areas needing improvement?
- What does the evidence show with respect to how end users experience the statewide information system?
- How do findings compare to Round 3?

Systemic Factor Assessment

Systemic Factor Functioning

Guiding Questions for Each Systemic Factor Item

Data and Information Requested

Guiding Questions have been added in the Round 4 Statewide Assessment template to support evidence-informed response.

- What data sources were used/analyzed to inform state observations? Briefly describe your analysis, including data periods represented, measures, and methodology.
- Are there limitations to the evidence and information (e.g., completeness, accuracy, reliability)?
- What does the evidence show with respect to the system functioning statewide?
- What are areas of strength and areas needing improvement?
- **What does the evidence show with respect to stakeholder experience?**
- How do findings compare to Round 3?

Systemic Factor Assessment

Systemic Factor Functioning

Guiding Questions for Each Systemic Factor Item

Engagement of Stakeholders & Using Evidence

A more robust understanding of how well Systemic Factors are functioning will emerge as a result of:

- Engaging a wide array of stakeholders in gathering and exploring data
- Considering the experiences of populations within the state that may experience bias, inequities, or underservice
- Promoting critical thinking
- Using the most rigorous methods possible to analyze relevant quantitative and qualitative data to answer these guiding questions
- Encouraging stakeholders to generate other relevant analytic questions that can help address the systemic factor federal requirements

Systemic Factor Assessment

Stakeholder Interviews



- The Children’s Bureau reviews final submission of the state’s SWA and determines whether any further data/information is needed to rate the systemic factor items. If further information is needed, that information will be collected through stakeholder interviews.

Assessment of Data/Evidence Provided in the Statewide Assessment

1. What does the state assert regarding functioning of the systemic factor item?
2. Has the state provided evidence that is relevant and fully addresses the totality of the item?
3. Does the evidence indicate that the systemic factor item is functioning as required statewide?
4. Are there significant methodological, scope, quality, or timeframe issues with the evidence the state provided that prevent the Children's Bureau from relying on it?

Appendix: Data Analysis Checklist

The Data Analysis Checklist provides a short, easy way to help assess the quality and relevance of evidence used for analysis. The questions focus on the scope and methods used to generate evidence and are designed to confirm that the information is relevant and reliable to use for analysis, and to support observations and conclusions. This checklist is an optional resource that may be helpful for individuals planning, conducting, and/or reviewing data analysis done for a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, Child and Family Services Plans (CFSPs), Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), CFSR Statewide Assessments, Program Improvement Plans (PIPs), Court Improvement Program (CIP) Self-Assessments, and state program evaluations.



The Question

- Is it clear what question this analysis is answering?
What is the analytic question?¹⁰



The Evidence/Data/Methodology

- Can you identify the source and characteristics of the data? Are the data provided, and are they complete?
What is the data source?
How current are the data (through what month/quarter/year)?
- Is the information presented clearly labeled?
- Does the population selected for the analysis match the question?
What population is selected for analysis?
- Does the method of analysis match the question being asked or the observation being made?
 - *If the analysis is about a system outcome, does the method use aggregate data?*
 - *If the analysis is about a root cause, does the analysis rely on targeted data collection, either qualitative or quantitative?*
 - *If the analysis is about the quality of a system of care, does it rely on qualitative data collection, such as through focus groups?*
- Should there be a comparison group, and if so, is it included in the analysis?
What population is used for comparison?
- Does the analysis consider variation (e.g., by place, by population, over time)?

¹⁰ A research or analytic question is designed to guide the acquisition and generation of evidence that when processed (or analyzed) increases one's knowledge and is related to a theory or a hypothesis. A good data analytic question specifies the target population and the measurable change that population should experience. Sometimes the question is descriptive (e.g., How often do children placed in care move during their first year in care?), sometimes it is comparative (e.g., Are children who enter care in 2021 moving more now in their first year of care as compared with children placed in care in 2019?), and sometimes it is causal (e.g., To what extent are children who were placed in care in 2021 moving more in their first year of care because of pandemic-related issues?).

- Does the analysis consider whether observed variations may be a consequence of disparities in systems, structures, policies, and/or practices?
- Are the limitations of the data identified?
- Is the data source accurate and reliable?
- Does the analysis answer the question?



The Conclusion

- Are the arguments summarized and clear?
- Are all graphic representations of the data clearly explained in the narrative?
- Were associated factors or data used to better inform the analysis?
For example, if the analysis considered timely permanency, did it also refer to performance on re-entry to care?
- Is the conclusion verified or contradicted by other sources of data?
For example, did feedback from individuals with vested interests, focus groups, surveys, or other administrative data support the analytic findings or suggest possible alternatives?
- Are there perspectives not accounted for in the analysis?
- Do the results suggest that further analysis may be indicated?

After a decade of CQI system and performance measurement work, advancements in our knowledge of implementation science,¹¹ the introduction and application of the CQI change and implementation process, and the call to action to transform and create equitable child welfare systems, the Children's Bureau believes that states are well-positioned to complete high-quality statewide assessments.

For more information or to request technical assistance with the process, contact your Children's Bureau Regional Office.¹²

¹¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (August 12, 2017). *What is implementation science?* [blog post].

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/what-is-implementation-science>

¹² Children's Bureau, *Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers* [webpage].

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/training-technical-assistance/childrens-bureau-regional-program-managers>



Assessment of Data/Evidence Provided in the Statewide Assessment

Data Quality Checklist

- 1. The Question: Is it clear what question this analysis is answering?**
- 2. The Evidence/Data/Methodology**
 - Can you identify the source and characteristics of the data?
 - Are the data provided and are they complete?
 - Is the information presented clearly labeled?
 - Does the population selected for the analysis match the question?
 - Does the method of analysis match the question being asked or the observation being made?
 - Should there be a comparison group, and if so, is it included in the analysis?
 - Does the analysis consider variation?
 - Does the analysis consider whether observed variations may be a consequence of disparities in systems, structures, policies, and/or practice?
 - Are the limitations of the data identified?
 - Is the source accurate and reliable?
 - Does the analysis answer the question?

Assessment of Data/Evidence Provided in the Statewide Assessment

Data Quality Checklist (cont'd)

3. The Conclusion:

- Are the arguments summarized and clear?
 - Does the state assert that the data/evidence represents statewide functioning of the systemic factor item?
 - How compelling is the data/evidence provided re how well the systemic factor is functioning?
- Are all graphic representations of the data clearly explained in the narrative?
- Were associated factors or data used to better inform the analysis?
- Is the conclusion verified or contradicted by other sources of data?
- Are there perspectives not accounted for in the analysis?
- Do the results suggest that further analysis may be indicated?

Stakeholder Interviews

Planning Stakeholder Interviews

- 1. What additional information is needed to supplement the evidence presented in the SWA?**
- 2. Which stakeholders can provide reliable and relevant information for the systemic factor items?**
- 3. Which stakeholders will provide the range of perspectives regarding the systemic factor items?**
 - Include individuals with lived experience who reflect the diversity of the population served by the child welfare system
 - Include individuals who reflect the array of professions that provide services and/or are knowledgeable about the systemic factor under review

Stakeholder Interviews

Planning Stakeholder Interviews :

Required Interviews



Service Array



Case Review System



Stakeholder interviews

Planning Stakeholder Interviews :

Examples of Stakeholders Who May Be Interviewed

- State child welfare (CW) director
- CW agency administrator or program area administrator(s)
- Youth and parent being served by the agency
- Court improvement project administrator(s)
- Court system representatives or juvenile court judges
- Guardian(s) ad litem/legal representatives for children
- Representatives of administrative review bodies
- Caseworkers from the public CW agency or private agencies
- Supervisors from the public CW agency or private agencies
- Unlicensed relative caregivers, foster and adoptive parents
- State foster and/or adoptive parent association representatives
- Tribal leaders
- Tribal CW staff, including program administrators, caseworkers, and supervisors
- Law enforcement representatives
- Representatives of Kinship Navigator Program
- Major CW contractors or service providers

Stakeholder Interviews

Planning Stakeholder Interviews: Logistics

- **What logistic and facilitation factors should be considered when preparing for stakeholder interviews?**
 - Modality of focus groups
 - Schedule no more than 20 focus groups with approximately 12 to 15 participants in each group
 - Consider who should be included in particular focus group
 - Balance the number of focus groups and participants with the need to gather information that is reflective of systemic factor functioning
 - Schedule focus groups for approximately an hour to an hour and a half



Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG)

Introduction and
Review of SIG

- **Divided into seven sections, each corresponding to a systemic factor**
- **Total of 18 items for the 7 systemic factors, Items 19–36**
- **Questions in the SIG are organized into 4 categories:**
 1. Data/information
 2. Systems/processes
 3. Data quality
 4. State-specific questions

Appendix A: Item-Specific Alternative Language and Phrasing

Appendix B: Definitions of Terms

Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG)

Introduction and Review of SIG (cont'd)

4 Categories of Questions in the SIG

1. Data and information: Restates the assessment question for the item
 - a) Asks for any additional data or information
 - b) If no data/information was provided in SWA, asks how the stakeholders know that a particular systemic factor item is functioning statewide
 - c) Asks about stakeholders' experience or observations re systemic factor item
2. Questions re systems/processes that are in place to support the systemic factor item
3. Questions re data quality: informed by the Statewide Assessment
4. State-specific questions: informed by the Statewide Assessment (PIP development)



Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG)

Section I: Statewide Information System (Item 19)

Item 19: Statewide Information System

How well is the statewide information system 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?

Item 19 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether the state can readily identify the following data elements for each child in foster care in the state:
 - Status;
 - Demographic characteristics;
 - Location or placement; and
 - Permanency goals.
 - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
 - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
 - How do you know that the four data elements can be readily identified in the statewide information system?
 - Are there other ways that you know about for determining whether data elements can be readily identified?
 - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
 - 2a. What system (or source of information) do you access to identify a child's status, demographic characteristics, location, and permanency goals?
 - 2b. What policy or guidance is in place for entering data regarding a foster child's status, demographic characteristics, location, and permanency goals, initially and on ongoing basis?
 - 2c. How often is data being entered in accordance with policy or guidance?
 - 2d. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges to ensuring that the four statewide information system data elements are readily identifiable for each child in foster care?
 - 2e. How is the state addressing these barriers so that the four statewide information system data elements are readily identifiable across the state for each child in foster care?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
 - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information? How often is this data/information collected?
 - 3b. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
 - 3c. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
 - 3d. Are you aware of any limitations to the data/information?
 - 3e. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
 - 3f. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

Systemic Factor Assessment

Final Assessment



- Synthesize all evidence reported in SWA and information from stakeholder interviews to inform final ratings.

Criteria for Determining Substantial Conformity

Systemic Factors

Determining Substantial Conformity

	Systemic Factors	Criteria
SF1	Statewide Information System	Item 19 must be rated as a Strength.
SF2	Case Review System	At least 4 of 5 items must be rated as a Strength.
SF3	Quality Assurance System	Item 25 must be rated as a Strength.
SF4	Staff and Provider Training	At least 2 of 3 items must be rated as a Strength.
SF5	Service Array and Resource Development	At least 1 of 2 items must be rated as a Strength.
SF6	Agency Responsiveness to the Community	At least 1 of 2 items must be rated as a Strength.
SF7	Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	At least 3 of 4 items must be rated as a Strength.



Resources

Available on the
CFSR Information
Portal at

<https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources>

Statewide Assessment (SWA)

Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG)

Guiding Principles, Framework, and Tools for the Statewide Assessment Process (“Statewide Assessment guidance document”)

Advancing Equity and Inclusion Through the CFSRs (“foundations document”)

Round 3 reports:

- Legal and Judicial Communities
- Systemic Factors (2015–2018)

Soon to be released:

- CFSR Round 4 Procedures Manual
- Assessing Systemic Factor Functioning Using Data and Evidence (“systemic factor briefs”)
- Fact sheets for stakeholders



Questions
