

Round 4 Child and Family Services Review National Call Series

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

MARCH 23, 2022



Children's Bureau Presenters

- *Jennifer M. Haight*, Director, Division of Performance Measurement and Improvement
- *Misty Carlyle*, CF SR Unit
- *Patrice Perrault*, CF SR Unit, JBS International



Agenda

- What is the Statewide Assessment?
- Statewide Assessment Guiding Principles
- Framework for the Statewide Assessment
- Statewide Assessment Template Updates
- Questions/Dialogue



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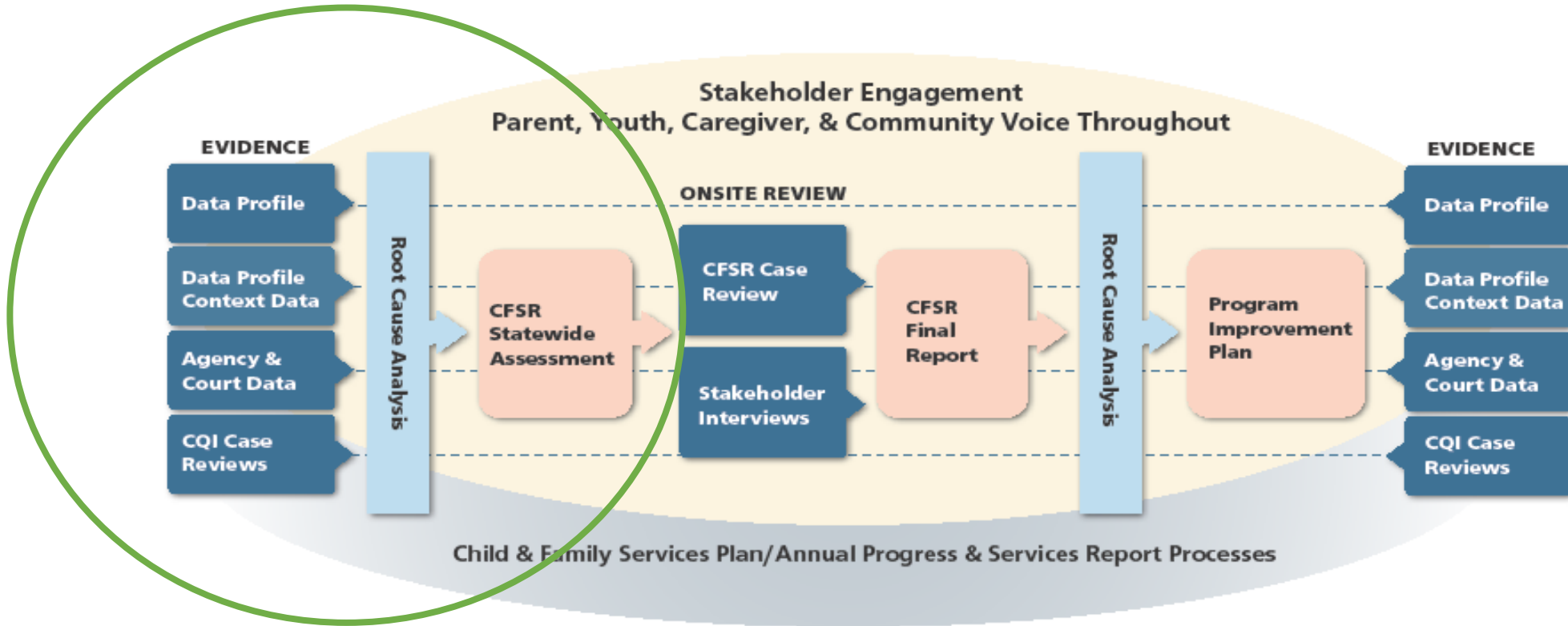
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Participant Polls

What is the Statewide Assessment?

- The statewide assessment is the first phase of the CFSR.
- It supports decisions about the substantial conformity of outcomes and systemic factors.
- It also identifies areas where more information may be needed through stakeholder interviews.
- It is an opportunity for states to connect their ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts with their efforts related to the CFSR.
- The statewide assessment sets the stage for developing strategies for systemic improvements in the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

CFSR Process Graphic





[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > [Round 4 Resources](#) > [CFSR Round 4 Instruments, Tools, and Guides](#)

CFSR Round 4 Instruments, Tools, and Guides

This section includes CSFR Round 4 instruments, reporting guidelines, and forms for onsite reviews and program improvement plan monitoring.

Statewide Assessment (SWA) and Guidance

Statewide Assessment

This template is offered to enable states to gather and document information that is critical to analyzing their performance during the statewide assessment phase of the CSFR process. The state may use another format as long as the state provides all required content.

 [Nonfillable PDF \(990.52 KB\)](#)

 [Fillable PDF \(758.93 KB\)](#)

Guiding Principles, Framework, and Tools for the Statewide Assessment Process

This document provides guiding principles, a suggested framework, and resources and tools states can use when completing a quality statewide assessment.

SEARCH



R4 Resources

[CFSR Round 4 Process](#)

[CFSR Round 4 Instruments, Tools, and Guides](#)

[CFSR Round 4 Statewide Data Indicators](#)

[CFSR Round 4 Technical Bulletins](#)



CFSR REPORTS



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Child and Family Services Reviews: Guiding Principles, Framework, and Tools for the Statewide Assessment Process

The Children's Bureau (CB), part of the Department of Health and Human Services, administers Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The reviews were established by the 1994 Amendments to the Social Security Act. In 2000, the Children's Bureau published a final rule in the Federal Register to establish a process for monitoring state child welfare programs. The review process is designed to meet statutory and regulatory requirements to provide oversight of states' compliance with the requirements in titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. Under the rule, states are assessed for substantial conformity with federal requirements for child welfare services.

The CFSR process enables CB to (1) ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is happening to children and families receiving child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being. The reviews are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement within their agencies and programs, and to ultimately improve services and strengthen the functioning of the system.

The CFSRs are a partnership between federal and state staff. The CFSR is a multi-phase process that begins with the statewide assessment. Information provided in the statewide



Cornerstones of CFSR/Statewide Assessment

1. Reliance on quality and relevant data and use of evidence. Analysis of the evidence must reflect use of proper measurement skills.
2. Broad and meaningful involvement of system partners who are representative of the communities and people who interact with the child welfare system, with a particular focus on the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Framework—Statewide Assessment

- States need to determine at a system level how well the vision for the child welfare system is realized in its core structures and processes.
- When routinely functioning, systemic factors support positive safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families.

Framework—Processes

- Collecting and analyzing evidence to understand system dynamics, outcome performance, and routine functioning of systemic factors
- Identifying areas where there is a lack of data and developing data collection plans
- Identifying and understanding areas of strength to build on what is working well
- Using equity and inclusion principles throughout the statewide assessment process

Tools – Table 1

- Reviews 8 concrete activities that are a part of developing a high-quality statewide assessment.
- For each of the activities, there is a clear description of each activity and a series of questions to consider in the child welfare system’s process.

Table 1: Activities and Questions to Consider for Statewide Assessment⁹

Activity	Description	Questions to Consider
A. Review the state’s vision for its child welfare system.	<p>Reviewing the vision for the state’s child welfare system will help ground the statewide assessment in the direction the state is headed and the potential transformation being made.</p> <p>This helps the assessment serve as an extension of the CQI change and implementation process that is used to achieve the state’s vision and desired outcomes.</p> <p>Engage individuals who work in and have lived experience with the child welfare system in the review and discussion as they will provide different and important perspectives to consider throughout the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = very unclear, 10 = very clear), how clearly does the state describe or articulate the vision for its child welfare system? • How well is the vision for the state’s child welfare system understood and supported across system partners, individuals with lived experience, and the community? • Are the individuals participating in the statewide assessment process reflective of the race, ethnicity, and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequity in the child welfare system? If not, who is missing?



Tools—Additional Resources

- This is a series of resources available from the Capacity Building Center for States, the Children’s Bureau, and private foundations that provide additional information, reports, and data that could support the CFSR process.



Appendix A – 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)?

- 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





Child and Family Services Reviews

Statewide Assessment

[insert date of submission]

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: The purpose of this information collection is to review state child welfare systems' performance related to child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation and independent living as well as their conformity to required child and family outcomes. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per grantee, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. This is a mandatory collection of information (45 CFR 1355.33(b)). An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0214 and the expiration date is 1/31/2025. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact the Children's Bureau at Danielle.McConaga@acf.hhs.gov



Background

One of the ways in which the Children's Bureau (CB) helps states achieve positive outcomes for children and families is monitoring state child welfare services through Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The CFSR process¹ is designed to meet the statutory requirement to provide federal oversight of states' compliance with title IV-B and IV-E plan requirements and to strengthen state child welfare programs and improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families served. The CFSR process enables CB to:

- 1) Ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements
- 2) Determine what is happening to children and families receiving child welfare services
- 3) Assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being

For more information about the CFSRs, see the *Child and Family Services Reviews* at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>.

Purpose of the Statewide Assessment

The CFSR is a two-phase process. The first phase is a statewide assessment and is conducted by staff of the state child welfare agency in partnership with representatives with whom the agency was required to consult in the development of the state's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) (45 CFR § 1355.33). These internal and external stakeholders are selected by the agency in collaboration with CB and may include other individuals, such as family and youth served by the state's child welfare system and members of the judicial and legal communities.

The second phase of the review process is an onsite review. The onsite review includes case record reviews, case-related interviews for the purpose of determining outcome performance, and, as necessary, stakeholder interviews to further inform the assessment of systemic factors. Information from both the statewide assessment and the onsite review is used to determine whether the state is in substantial conformity with the seven outcomes and seven systemic factors. States determined not to be in substantial conformity with one or more of the seven outcomes and seven systemic factors are required to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address all areas of nonconformity.

States are required to complete and document an assessment of the extent to which their federally funded child welfare system functions effectively to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families with whom they have contact. This process involves a state:

- Using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (e.g., state administrative data, information management system reports, case record reviews, interviews with case participants and key stakeholders) to assess its performance on the outcomes and systemic factors
- Analyzing and explaining its performance in meeting the national standards for the CFSR statewide data indicators
- Providing supporting evidence of the state's assessment of its child welfare system, program, practice strengths, opportunities for improvement, and results of data-driven problem exploration

¹ Procedures for the review. 45 CFR § 1355.33.

Background and Purpose

These two sections remained essentially the same, with some updates to the language.



Statewide Assessment Template — New Sections

- **Stakeholder Involvement**—Offers additional detail and recommendations on *which stakeholders* to involve and *how they might participate* in the process.
- **Capacity to Complete a Quality Statewide Assessment**—Offers a series of self-assessment questions to support states in preparing and enhancing their capacity for the SWA process.
- **Availability and Use of Quality Data and Information**—Provides information on how to use and analyze relevant evidence to inform the state’s assessment of outcome and systemic factor functioning.

Stakeholder Involvement Section

- Empowering families and youth to participate in ongoing conversations about system-level improvement needs and acting on their recommendations
- Collecting and analyzing data from selected partners and stakeholder groups
- Using partners' administrative data to provide evidence of performance and systemic functioning

Stakeholder Involvement

- Involving stakeholders in the review and analysis of data to help identify contributing factors, underlying causes of performance challenges, and possible solutions
- Discussing findings, recommended changes, and implications of proposed interventions, and obtaining stakeholder feedback regarding implemented solutions
- Systematically providing feedback to stakeholders regarding how their input was used to change policy, processes, practice, or service provision

Capacity To Complete a Quality SWA

- Does the assessment team reflect the families and youth the system serves?
- What data are already collected and what new data may be needed?
- Do team members have expertise with effectively analyzing and communicating about data?
- Do team members have experience with the CQI change and implementation process?
- How does organizational culture impact the state's ability to complete the assessment? Does the leadership within your agency support this work?
- What organizational resources and infrastructure are in place to support the assessment process?

Availability and Use of Quality Data

- The statewide assessment represents a compilation of observations made about the state's child welfare system that is grounded in evidence.
- Evidence is information that is used to support an observation, claim, hypothesis, or decision. Evidence may be qualitative or quantitative and can be found in or derived from a number of sources.
- Gathering and exploring data and evidence begins during problem exploration and continues over the course of implementing, assessing, and sustaining change.

*Source: https://fcda.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/2014-07-Principles-Language-andShared-Meaning_Toward-a-Common-Understanding-of-CQI-in-Child-Welfare.pdf

Instructions

- Develop a set of questions that when answered will provide the necessary information to assess the child welfare systems' processes, programs, and practices.
- Build on past work, including results of data exploration, progress made, lessons learned from the CFSR/PIP, CFSP/APSR, and other CQI activities.
- Determine what other relevant quality data are available and/or needed to provide an understanding of state performance.
- Summarize the results of the assessment by responding to the questions that are designed to solicit the most notable information about state performance.

Preparation of Evidence

- **SECTION I. General Info**
- A list of participants in the statewide assessment and a description of their involvement.
- **SECTION II. State Context**
- Descriptions of the state's vision and tenets of the system, cross-system challenges, and current initiatives.
- **SECTION III. Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes**
- Data/information to assess outcomes in safety, permanency, and well-being.
- **SECTION IV. Assessment of Seven Systemic Factors**
- Data/information to support how well each systemic factor functions.

Section II: State Context

- **Part 1: Vision and Tenets**
- **Part 2: Cross-System Challenges**
- **Part 3: Current Initiatives**

Part 1: Vision and Tenets

- What is the vision of the child welfare system?
- What are the core tenets/principles of the child welfare system?
- What are the programs or structures through which the child welfare system realizes its vision?



Part 2: Cross-System Challenges

- What are the cross-cutting issues that are affecting the system's programs, practice, and performance?
- Examples: legislation, budget reductions, consent decrees, or workforce issues.

Part 3: Current Initiatives

- What are some system improvement initiatives?
- What were the priority focus areas from the Round 3 CFSR/PIP and/or the CFSP?
- Opportunity to highlight current initiatives and progress toward achieving desired outcomes and systemic change.
- Examples: safety model, targeted grants, collaborative work with system partners

Section III: Outcomes

Section III: Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes

Safety Outcomes 1 and 2, Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2, and Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3

- Performance Data Highlights ⇒ Brief summary of relevant data
- Brief Analysis ⇒ Questions to guide states in analysis
- Deeper Data Exploration ⇒ Questions to guide states in diving deeper into the data
- CQI Change and Implementation ⇒ Asks states to address how this analysis fits in with ongoing CQI efforts

Performance Data Highlights

Highlight the most notable state performance information and provide a brief summary of the state's most recent, relevant, and quality data pertaining to outcomes and supporting practices.

Examples:

- State data profile including context data
- Case review results
- Administrative data such as timeliness of contacts with children in investigations

Include a description of state-produced measures (denominator and numerator), data periods represented, and methodology.



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Brief Analysis

- What do the most relevant data and evidence reveal about outcome functioning?
- What are the system's strengths and areas needing improvement?
- How does Risk-Standardized Performance compare to National Performance?
- How does current case review performance compare to Round 3 findings and PIP measurement?
- Describe the quality of the data.

Brief Analysis

- What is the trend in performance over time?
- What information do other related data sources provide to inform state observations?
- What does data from the legal and judicial communities show with respect to the impact of court processes on outcomes?
- Are there disparities in outcomes across race, ethnicity, age, or geography?
- What are areas of strength?
- What are areas needing improvement?
- Are there data quality limitations?

Deeper Data Exploration

- What areas does the child welfare system prioritize for deeper data exploration?
- How did you identify those areas?
- Summarize the results of the data analysis.
- What additional evidence is needed to deepen the state's understanding of this focus area?

Deeper Data Exploration

- What meaningful differences were identified for sub-populations for specific groups of children, such as age, race/ethnicity, or geographic location?
- What contributes to strengths and challenges?
- What supporting evidence is provided by stakeholders (e.g., caseworkers, families and youth, and caregivers) regarding root causes?
- Are there data or research findings pointing to the root cause(s) and/or contributing factors?

Information Regarding CQI Change and Implementation Activities

- Briefly describe how the information and results of the analysis above relate to or build on results of prior data exploration and CQI change and implementation activities.
- Has progress been made and/or have lessons been learned from the state's most recent CFSR/PIP, CFSP/APSR, and other systemic improvement processes?
- Are adjustments needed to existing strategies/interventions/plans, or are new CQI change and implementation plans needed to achieve desired outcomes?

Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factors

- Each systemic factor item includes guiding questions for states to use to guide their analysis of the state's systemic factor functioning.
- States are also asked to address stakeholders' experience of the functioning of each item (e.g., Item 26, How do participants experience initial training?)

Systemic Factor Guiding Questions

- 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?

Questions ?

Our Next Call: Systemic Factors/Stakeholder Interview Guide

WEDNESDAY APRIL 6 @ 2PM ET

