

NUMBER

#19-68-20

DATE

August 23, 2019

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors

Social Services Supervisors and
Staff

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read information and
prepare for implementation

EXPIRATION DATE

August 23, 2021

Amendments to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System Rule

TOPIC

Implementation of amendments to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) final rule.

PURPOSE

To announce the implementation plan for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System final rule in the Social Service Information System (SSIS).

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Children and Family Services Administration

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

History and background

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) is a federally required data collection system [[Title IV-E, section 479 of the Social Security Act](#)] and codified in [45 C.F.R. § 1355.40](#). AFCARS regulations were first published in 1993; states began submitting data in fiscal year 1995 to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Data includes information collected at the case-level information from state and tribal Title IV-E agencies on children entering and exiting foster care, and children adopted with the involvement of a Title IV-E agency.

The data is used for many purposes at the federal level for a variety of requirements, including but not limited to:

- Determining awards for the Adoption and Guardianship Incentives program
- Preparing the Child Welfare Outcomes report
- Conducting the Child and Family Services Reviews
- Conducting Title IV-E foster care eligibility reviews
- Determining allotment of funds for the Chafee program
- Conducting trend analyses and short- and long-term planning efforts
- Targeting areas for initial or increased technical assistance efforts, discretionary service grants, research and evaluation, and regulatory change
- Responding to requests for data from federal, state, tribal, and private agencies.

The Children's Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, has been involved in a process to amend AFCARS. It has conducted a series of reviews and requested public comments from 2016-2019.

On April 19, 2019, an [Information Memorandum, ACYF-CB-IM-19-02 \(PDF\)](#) and [45 C.F.R. Part 1355 \(PDF\)](#), Notice of Proposed Rules, was issued. This will streamline AFCARS data elements from the 2016 final rule and reduce Title IV-E agencies' reporting burden.

The department collects AFCARS data elements from SSIS and reports it to the Children's Bureau on a quarterly basis. Minnesota will have until October 1, 2020, to implement these changes.

Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide an overview of the implementation plan for the AFCARS final rule.

The Indian Child Welfare Act and Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act requirements were implemented in SSIS in February 2018. The [New Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System requirements for Indian Children #18-68-24 \(PDF\)](#) bulletin is a reference for more information.

Below is a list of completed and upcoming changes to the data elements in SSIS. As changes occur, help text will be added in SSIS. The released versions are on the department's CountyLink under [General SSIS Release Information, Release notes](#) web page.

AFCARS SSIS data elements table

Federal due date	Completion date	Data elements	Area of change affected	Release/proposed date	Implemented
10/01/2020	05/31/2016	Child sex trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous placement 	09/2016	Yes
10/01/2020	08/31/2017	Education — educational stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person 	08/2017 and 09/2017	Yes
10/01/2020	02/28/2018	ICWA eligibility – reason to know child is Indian child under ICWA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person 	02/2018	Yes
10/01/2020	02/28/2018	Available ICWA foster care, pre-adoptive placement preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement location 	02/2018	Yes
10/01/2020	02/28/2018	Available ICWA adoptive placement preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement location 	02/2018	Yes
10/01/2020	08/31/2018	Active efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workgroup Time reporting Case notes 	08/2018	Yes
10/01/2020	Not completed	Parent or legal guardian info; removal info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person Continuous Placement Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3/2019 (ICWA) 9/2019 	Partially completed (ICWA portion done only)
10/01/2020	Not completed	Removal conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous placement 	9/2019	No

Federal due date	Completion date	Data elements	Area of change affected	Release/proposed date	Implemented
10/01/2020	Not completed	Permanency planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous placement • Placement location 	10/2019	No
10/01/2020	Not completed	Other Child fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person • Placement locations • Continuous placement 	10/2019	No
10/01/2020	Not completed	Exit information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous placement 	2/2020	No
10/01/2020	Not completed	Foster parent information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person • Placement location 	2/2020	No
10/01/2020	Not completed	Removal and living arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement location 	5/2020	No
10/01/2020	Not completed	Financial and medical assistance support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous placement • Placement location 	9/2020	No
3/31/2021	Not completed	Construct federal file for transmission	NA	2/2021	No

Upcoming developments

An AFCARS practice guide will be released in 2020. This will replace the [SSIS Placement – Tip Sheet \(PDF\)](#).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-4670 (voice) or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.