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

Child and Family Services Reviews Stakeholder Interview Guide

February 2003

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

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Stakeholder interviews are conducted at the local review sites and at the State level during the onsite component of the child and family services reviews. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews is to collect information for evaluating and rating the systemic factors that are examined during the child and family services reviews.

The review team interviews stakeholders who are representative of the types of organizations and individuals who participated in the development of the State's Child and Family Services Plan, as required at 45 Code of Federal Regulations 1357.15(1). These include representatives of courts, administrative review bodies, children's guardians ad litem, and other individuals or bodies assigned responsibility for representing the best interests of children. The following core stakeholders must be interviewed:

State Stakeholders

State child welfare director State child welfare program specialists State court system representative(s) Major tribal representatives State representative(s) of administrative review bodies Youth being served by the agency State foster and/or adoptive parent association representatives

Local Stakeholders

Local child welfare agency administrator
Foster and adoptive parent(s)
Juvenile court judge
Caseworker(s) from the local agency
Supervisor(s) from the local agency
Guardians ad litem/legal representatives
Agency attorney(s)
Local representatives of administrative review
bodies
Tribal representatives
Youth being served by the local site office

Review teams may interview additional stakeholders at both the State and local levels, as needed; see the *Child and Family Services Reviews Procedures Manual* for a listing.

Instructions for Using the Stakeholder Interview Guide

- This interview guide identifies the core question(s) to be asked at each stakeholder interview. The identified core question(s) listed by item number represent the central theme(s) for each systemic issue that the reviewer should attempt to address during stakeholder interviews. The ratings that the review team assigns to the systemic factors should be based on thorough explanations of and responses to the core questions.
- While each individual stakeholder may not be able to answer every core question, reviewers should be able to elicit all the needed information from the range of stakeholders interviewed at the State and local site levels. Following each item is a list of possible stakeholders who may be able to address the core question(s). Reviewers, however, will need to make judgments about which of the questions they should pursue with each individual stakeholder.

- Each core question is followed by exploratory questions that reviewers should use as appropriate (to the stakeholder and the situation) during the interviews. The exploratory questions guide reviewers to determine the most appropriate response to the core question(s). Reviewers should be prepared to rephrase the exploratory questions, or ask related questions, to explore the core question(s) fully, for example, by asking "why" or "why not," as appropriate.
- In addition to the core questions and exploratory questions, the Administration for Children and Families Regional Office Team Leader, in collaboration with the State and the Children's Bureau, will identify State-specific issues from the Statewide Assessment that need further examination through stakeholder interviews; these will then be listed in Section II of the interview guide.
- Reviewers should be careful to pursue issues only with stakeholders who have
 firsthand knowledge of the issue under review. The information recorded on the
 Stakeholder Interview Guide, and therefore subsequently used to evaluate the agency's
 performance, should reflect the input of stakeholders with firsthand, well-founded
 knowledge of the issue. (Some stakeholders may offer secondhand experience or
 express opinions that are not supported by facts or experience; this information should
 not be recorded on the interview guide.)
- Interviews should be limited to approximately 1 hour. Reviewers should become thoroughly familiar with the core questions and exploratory questions in the Stakeholder Interview Guide before beginning the stakeholder interviews. Reviewers should note that stakeholders may provide information out of sequence from the order of the Stakeholder Interview Guide.
- The Local Site Leaders or their designee should record the notes from all the stakeholder interviews in the appropriate blank spaces on the Stakeholder Interview Guide. Preferably, reviewers will use a single Stakeholder Interview Guide, adding pages as needed to record notes under each section of the guide. Local Site Leaders must turn into their Team Leader one completed Stakeholder Interview Guide for their site, which includes information learned from all of the stakeholders interviewed during the onsite review.
- In order to identify which stakeholders made specific comments, reviewers should assign a number to each stakeholder (or stakeholder group) interviewed in the list of stakeholders that follows. Reviewers can then record this number next to comments in the body of the Stakeholder Interview Guide.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE					
A. Interviewer(s):		B. Date(s) of Interv	iews:		
County and State Reviewed:		<u> </u>			
	Persons or Gro	ups Interviewed			
Name of Person or Group Interviewed	Title/Agency		ID Number*	Type of Stakeholder	
Group interviewed			Sta		Local

^{*}See instructions on previous page

Section I: Safety Outcomes for Children		
Safety Outcome 1: Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected From Abuse and Neglect. (Items 1–2)		
Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment (Caseworkers, Agency Administrators, Law Enforcement)		
Core Ques	tion:	
	fective is the agency in initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment in a timely , including at night and on weekends?	
Explorator	ry Question:	
	ractice(s) enable the agency to respond to reports of maltreatment in a timely manner? re the barriers to the agency responding in a timely manner?	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment (Caseworkers, Agency Administrators, Law Enforcement, Administrative Review Bodies, Courts)		
Core Question:		
• How ef	fective is the agency in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment?	
Explorato	ry Questions:	
	es the agency identify risk factors that might lead to children being maltreated or to the note of maltreatment, and is this approach effective?	
• What pol	licies and practices are effective in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment?	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Safety Outcome 2: Children Are Safely Maintained in Their Homes Whenever Possible and Appropriate. (Items 3–4)			
	Item 3: Services to Family To Protect Child(ren) in Home and Prevent Removal (Caseworkers, Service Providers, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies)		
 Core Question: How effective is the agency in providing services, when appropriate, to prevent removing children from their homes? 			
 Exploratory Question: What facilitates providing preventive and protective services, or what are the barriers to the provision of these services? 			
ID Number	Interviewee Comments		

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 4:	Risk of Harm to Child(ren) (Caseworkers, Service Providers, Courts, Guardians Ad Lit	tem,
	Youth Representatives)	

Core Question:

• How effective is the agency in reducing the risk of harm to children, including those in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency ensure that safety and risk of harm issues are assessed continually while families receive services and at key decisionmaking points throughout the case (for example, at the point of reunification or case closure)?
- What are the agency's interventions to protect children from maltreatment, and are they effective (for example, is the State taking the appropriate and necessary actions to protect children)?
- How does the agency ensure that children remain safe after they are placed in foster care, and is this approach effective?
- How effectively does the agency screen incoming reports of suspected child maltreatment to determine what response it will make?
- How does the agency handle additional reports of suspected child maltreatment for cases already being investigated or open for services?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Section II: Permanency Outcomes for Children		
Permanency Outco	ome 1: Children Have Permanency and Stability in Their Living Situations. (Items 5–10)	
Item 5: Foster Car Bodies)	re Re-Entries (Caseworkers, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review	
Core Question	1:	
How effect	ive is the agency in preventing multiple entries of children into foster care?	
Exploratory (Questions:	
• What factors	s contribute to children re-entering foster care?	
	rriers to helping children remain in stable living arrangements after discharge from foster, please describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

	lity of Foster Care Placement (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, n Representatives, Service Providers)	
Core Que	estion:	
 How effective is the agency in providing placement stability for children in foster care (that is, minimizing placement changes for children in foster care)? 		
Explorate	Exploratory Questions:	
• How of	ten do children in foster care change placements?	
• What co	ontributes to placement changes?	
• Are init	cial shelter or other temporary placements routinely used?	
• Are the descri	re barriers to helping children remain in stable placements while in foster care? If so, please be.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child (Caseworkers, Supervisors, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies)	
Core Que	estion:
 How effective is the agency in determining the appropriate permanency goals for children on a timely basis when they enter foster care? 	
Explorat	ory Questions:
	fective and timely is the agency in determining that the goals of reunification, adoption, ianship, or permanent placement with relatives are not appropriate for children?
• What fa	actors affect the agency's ability to set timely and appropriate permanency goals?
• Are the	re barriers to setting appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner? If so, please describe.
• How do foster	es the agency make decisions about changing the permanency goal that is in effect for a child in care?
	e agency engage in concurrent planning (working toward two different goals, such as adoption eunification, simultaneously)? What are the results of this approach?
	de la constitución de la constit
ID Number	Interviewee Comments
ID Number	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 8: Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Tribal Representatives, Administrative Review Bodies, Supervisors)	
Core Qu	estion:
 How effective is the agency in helping children in foster care return safely to their families when appropriate? 	
Explorat	ory Questions:
• Which	practices or policies promote timely reunification with parents; are they effective?
• Are the	re barriers to timely reunification with parents? If so, please describe.
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 9: Adoption (Caseworkers, Pre-Adoptive Parents, Supervisors, Adoption Program Specialists, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies, Tribal Representatives, Youth Representatives)	
Core Qu	estion:
 How effective is the agency in achieving timely (within 24 months or less) adoption when that is appropriate for a child? 	
Explora	tory Questions:
• What p	olicies or practices are effective in achieving timely adoption?
• Are the	re barriers to achieving timely adoptions? If so, please describe.
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 10: Permanency Goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Supervisors, Youth Representatives, Guardians Ad Litem, Courts)	
Core Qu	estion:
 How effective is the agency in establishing planned permanent living arrangements for children in foster care, who do not have the goal of reunification, adoption, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives? 	
Exploratory Questions:	
 How effectively is the agency using the goal of other planned permanent living arrangement to meet the needs of children in foster care with this goal? 	
• For chil	dren with this permanency goal, is the agency providing services consistent with the goal?
• How ef	fective is the agency in helping children achieve independence?
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Permanency (Outcome 2: The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections Is Preserved for Children. (Items 11–16)	
	cimity of Foster Care Placement (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Courts, Supervisors, acy Administrators, Service Providers)	
Core Qu	estion:	
	fective is the agency in placing foster children close to their birth parents or their own nunities or counties?	
Explorat	cory Questions:	
_	 What practices does the agency engage in to place children in foster care in their own communities or counties? 	
• Under v	what circumstances does the agency place children out of State?	
• Are the	re barriers to achieving community-based placements? If so, please describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Lite	m, Administrative Review Bodies, Youth Representatives)	
Core Qu	Core Question:	
 How effective is the agency in keeping brothers and sisters together in foster care? 		
Explorat	ory Questions:	
 What process does the agency use to place brothers and sisters together in foster care? 		
• Are the	re barriers to placing brothers and sisters together? If so, please describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

Item 12: Placement With Siblings (Caseworkers, Supervisors, Foster Parents, Courts, Guardians Ad

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 13: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care (Caseworkers, Youth Representatives, Supervisors, Foster Parents)	
Core Qu	estion:
 How effective is the agency in planning and facilitating visiting of children in foster care with their parents and siblings placed separately in foster care? 	
Explora	tory Questions:
• How often and under what circumstances are children in foster care able to visit their families?	
• Where	do the visits occur?
 Are there barriers to visits between children in foster care and parents or siblings placed separately in foster care? If so, please describe. 	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

 How effective is the agency in preserving important connections for children in foster care, such as connections to neighborhood, community, faith, family, and friends? 	
Explora	tory Questions:
 How does the agency determine what connections a child has that need attention and preservation while in foster care? 	
• What do	oes the agency do to help preserve children's important connections?
 How does the agency comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) provisions concerning notification of tribes, observing placement preferences, and working with tribes and courts around decisions for Native American children in foster care? 	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 14: Preserving Connections (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Youth Representatives, Service

Providers, Tribal Representatives)

Core Question:

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 15: Relative Placement (Caseworkers, Youth Representatives, Courts, Supervisors)	
Core Qu	estion:
	fective is the agency in identifying relatives who could care for children entering foster care, sing them as placement settings when appropriate?
Explora	tory Questions:
	bes the agency seek out relatives, including fathers not in the home and paternal relatives, and hem as placement resources for children?
	re barriers to identifying and using relatives as placements for children in foster care? If so, se describe.
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents (Foster Parents, Service Providers, Youth Representatives)	
Core Qu	estion:
 How effective is the agency in promoting or helping to maintain the parent-child relationship for children in foster care, when it is appropriate to do so? 	
Exploratory Question:	
• What k	inds of activities does the agency engage in to support parent-child relationships in foster care?
• Are the descr	re barriers to promoting the parent-child relationship for children in foster care? If so, please ribe.
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Section III: Child and Family Well-Being

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity To Provide for Their Children's Needs. (Items 17–20)

Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents (Foster Parents, Service Providers, Caseworkers, Supervisors)

Core Questions:

- How effective is the agency in assessing the needs of children, parents, and foster parents?
- How effective is the agency in providing needed services to children in foster care, to their parents and foster parents, and children and families receiving inhome services?

Exploratory Questions:

- Is there a formal assessment process? If so, please describe the process for conducting formal assessments, including who conducts them.
- How do caseworkers assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents?
- When do caseworkers assess the needs of children and families (ongoing or at specific intervals)?
- How are needs assessments used in developing case plans (for example, are the services provided to children and families addressing the needs identified through formal and informal assessments)?
- Are there barriers to assessing needs? If so, please describe.
- How do caseworkers determine which services are needed?
- Are there barriers to providing services? If so, please describe.
- How does the agency routinely assess and provide services for all youth (age 16 and older) to prepare them to be independent, regardless of their permanency goal; is this effective?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning (Caseworkers, Pre-Adoptive Parents, Service Providers, Supervisors, Youth Representatives, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies)		
Core Qu	estion:	
• How ef	• How effective is the agency in involving parents and children in the case planning process?	
Explora	Exploratory Questions:	
 How does the agency engage children, parents, pre-adoptive parents, and permanent relative or guardian caregivers in case planning activities, such as identifying strengths and needs, determining goals and services needed, evaluating progress? 		
• Are the	re barriers to involving them in the case planning process? If so, please describe.	
• How of	ten are fathers, or absent parents, involved in case planning activities?	
• What e	fforts are made by the agency to locate and involve fathers if they are not in the home?	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

 How effective are agency workers in conducting face-to-face visits as often as needed with children in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes? 		
Explora	tory Questions:	
• How of	ten do caseworkers see the children on their caseloads?	
• How do	• How do caseworkers determine how frequently they should see children?	
	• Is there a difference in the frequency of caseworker visits with the children in foster care and children receiving inhome services? If so, please describe.	
• How su	fficient is the frequency and quality of the visits?	
	 Are there barriers to the frequency and quality of agency workers' visits with children? If so, please describe. 	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

Item 19: Worker Visits With Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Youth Representatives,

Supervisors)

Core Question:

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Core Qu	Core Question:	
 How effective are agency workers in conducting face-to-face visits as often as needed with parents of children in foster care and parents of children receiving inhome services? 		
Explora	tory Questions:	
	ten do caseworkers see the parents, pre-adoptive parents, and permanent relative or guardian givers of children on their caseloads?	
	caseworkers determine how often they need to see the parents, pre-adoptive parents, and anent relative or guardian caregivers?	
	a difference in the frequency of caseworker visits with the parents of children in foster and children receiving inhome services? If so, please describe.	
• How su	fficient are the frequency and quality of the visits?	
• Are the descr	re barriers to the frequency and quality of agency workers' visits with parents? If so, please ribe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

Item 20: Worker Visits With Parents (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Supervisors, Contract Service Providers)

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Well-Being (Well-Being Outcome 2: Children Receive Appropriate Services To Meet Their Educational Needs. (Item 21)	
	lucational Needs of the Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Youth Representatives, lucational Representatives, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies)	
Core Q	uestion:	
	effective is the agency in addressing the educational needs of children in foster care and those eiving services in their own homes?	
Explor	ratory Questions:	
• How	does the agency identify and address the educational needs of children?	
	re a difference in how caseworkers address the educational needs for children in foster care and ldren receiving inhome services? If so, please describe.	
	nere barriers to the agency identifying and addressing the educational needs of children? If so, ase describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Well-Being O	Well-Being Outcome 3: Children Receive Adequate Services To Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs. (Items 22–23)	
	sical Health of the Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Service Providers, Youth resentatives, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies)	
Core Qu	estion:	
	fective is the agency in identifying and addressing the physical health and medical needs, ding dental needs, of children receiving inhome and foster care services?	
Explora	tory Questions:	
• How do	pes the agency identify and address the physical health and medical needs of children?	
	re barriers to the agency addressing the physical health and medical needs of children? If so, e describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 23: Mental Health of the Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Service Providers, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies, Youth Representatives)		
Core Qu	Core Question:	
 How effective is the agency in identifying and addressing the emotional and mental health needs of children receiving inhome and foster care services? 		
Exploratory Questions:		
• How do	bes the agency identify and address the emotional and mental health needs of children?	
	re barriers to the agency addressing the emotional and mental health needs of children? If so, e describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Section IV:	Statewide Information System	
Item 24		
the who	te is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care. (State and inty Agency Staff)	
Core Que	estion:	
charac	fective is the State's information system in readily identifying the status, demographic cteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately ding 12 months, has been) in foster care?	
Explorat	tory Questions:	
• How ac	curate are the data produced on these indicators?	
additi	 What are the gaps in the information system from the State and local perspectives, and what types of additional information should the system capture in order to determine the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for all children in foster care? 	
• How un	niform is the State's information system capacity on a statewide basis?	
	cessible is the information in the system to staff, supervisors, managers, and administrators, that w quickly can the information be provided?	
• Are the	re barriers to accessing information from the system? If so, please describe.	
 How accurately does the information system provide information on the location of children in foster care, including the status of children who have runaway or have been abducted while under the State's responsibility? 		
• How cu	• How current are the data reported by the information system?	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

with Stat	vides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions. (State and County Agency of Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, vocates, Administrative Review Bodies, Quality Assurance Staff)	
Core Qu	estion:	
• How ef	fective is the agency in developing written case plans jointly with the child's parents?	
Explora	tory Questions:	
• Do all o	children have current case plans?	
	e case plans developed, and who participates in developing them (for example, children, ats, foster parents)?	
	 In what specific ways are parents, pre-adoptive parents, and permanent relative or guardian caregivers involved in developing case plans? 	
• When a	and how are case plans updated?	
• How ar	e case plans used to guide the actual work that occurs with children and families?	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

Section V: Case Review System

Items 25–29

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

tha Co	vides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently n once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review. (State and inty Agency Staff, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, irts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies)
Core Qı	estion:
	ffective is the agency in conducting the periodic review of the status of each child, no less ently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?
Explora	tory Questions:
• What p	procedures are in place for conducting the periodic reviews for children in foster care?
• Do the	reviews occur on a timely basis? If not, what are the barriers?
-	articipates in the review and what is their role (for example, children, parents, foster and doptive parents, and others)?
	ffective are the periodic reviews in promoting permanency for all children in foster care, iding children in relative placements?
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 27: Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter. (State and County Agency Staff, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies)		
Core Que	estion:	
a quali	ective is the agency in ensuring that each child in foster care has a permanency hearing in ified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?	
Explorat	ory Questions:	
• What pr	ocedures are in place for permanency hearings for children in foster care?	
• Who co	• Who conducts the hearings?	
• Do the h	• Do the hearings occur on a timely basis?	
• Who pai	rticipates in the hearings? Children? Parents? Foster and preadoptive parents? Others?	
 How effective are the hearings in promoting permanency for children in foster care, including children in relative placements? 		
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 28: Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies)		
Core Ques	stion:	
	ective is the agency in providing a process for termination of parental rights for children in care, in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act?	
Explorato	ory Questions:	
• How doe	• How does the agency identify children who have been in foster care for 15 of the past 22 months?	
 How effective is the agency in pursuing termination of parental rights (TPR) for children who have been in foster care for at least 15 of the past 22 months? 		
• Under w	hat circumstances are exceptions made to the TPR requirements?	
• How are	• How are exceptions reviewed and documented?	
• Are there	• Are there barriers to the agency pursuing or the court granting TPRs? If so, please describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

in foster care to be notified held with respect to the chi	or parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing ld. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, akeholders, for Example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Review Bodies)
 Core Question: How effective is the agency in ensuring that foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care receive notice of reviews or hearings held with respect to the child in their care, and have an opportunity to be heard? 	

Exploratory Questions:

- How are foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers notified of reviews or hearings?
- Does notification occur on a regular basis or are there barriers to notification?
- How often do caretakers actually attend and participate in reviews or hearings?
- To what extent are foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers provided an opportunity to be heard in reviews or hearings?
- Are there barriers to the opportunity to be heard? If so, please describe.

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Section VI: Quality Assurance System		
Items 30–3	Items 30–31	
F	he State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are rovided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children. (State and ounty Agency Staff, External Stakeholders, Foster Parents, Service Providers)	
Core	Question:	
	• In what ways has the State developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health?	
Explo	ratory Questions:	
 Does the agency have standards that address the health and safety of children in foster care placements in addition to its licensing standards for foster family homes and other placement facilities, particularly residential care facilities? 		
• How	effective are these standards, if they are in place?	
• Are there areas in which these standards need to be developed or improved?		
 What services are in place to protect the health and safety of children in foster care placements, and are these services effective? 		
ID Numbe	r Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 31:	The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented. (State and County Agency Staff, Quality Assurance Staff, External Stakeholders)
Cor	e Question:
	what extent does the State operate an identifiable quality assurance system that evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented?
Ехр	ploratory Questions:

- How does the agency monitor the quality of its work and the outcomes for children and families, beyond frontline supervision; is the process effective?
- What constitutes the quality assurance system?
- Does the quality assurance system operate on a statewide basis? If not, in which jurisdictions does it operate?
- What reports does the quality assurance system produce?
- How does the agency use the information obtained from quality assurance activities to guide agency programs, policies, and practices, and is this approach effective?

Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Section '	Section VII: Training	
Items 32–	Items 32–34	
Item 32:	The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Service Providers, Tribal Representatives, Local External Stakeholders)	
Co	re Question:	
•	How effective is the State in providing <i>initial</i> training for all staff who provide child welfare services?	
Ex	ploratory Issues:	
•	Does the agency have an overall training plan?	
•	How does the agency provide preservice or initial training for State child welfare staff, and is this approach effective?	
•	 At what point is the initial training provided (for example, before a caseworker receives a caseload)? 	
What types of initial training are provided?		
•	How adequately does the training address the skills needed by staff to do their jobs?	
•	Are there barriers to staff members receiving or using this training? If so, please describe.	
ID Num	er Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

need Cou	State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base led to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP. (State and nty Agency Staff, Courts, Service Providers, Tribal Representatives, Local External eholders)	
Core Que	estion:	
	ective is the State in providing <i>ongoing</i> training for staff that addresses the skills and edge base needed to carry out their duties?	
Explorat	ory Questions:	
• I	How does the agency assess/identify the training needs of staff?	
• How do	• How does the agency provide ongoing training to State child welfare staff?	
• At what points are the ongoing training provided (for example, on a monthly basis)?		
• What ty	What types of ongoing training are provided and is ongoing training required?	
 Does the agency provide opportunities for staff to pursue professional education (for example, educational leave)? 		
 How adequately does the ongoing training address the skills and knowledge that staff need to do their jobs? 		
• Are there barriers to staff receiving ongoing training? If so, please describe.		
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and
staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or
adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to
carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children. (State and County Agency
Staff, Foster and Pre-Adoptive Parents, Local External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

• How effective is the State in providing training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed or approved facilities that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency provide preservice or initial training for foster and adoptive parents?
- How does the agency provide advanced or ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents?
- How effectively does the training prepare foster or adoptive parents to care for the children in their homes?
- Are all foster and adoptive parents trained?
- How does the agency ensure that training is provided for the staff of State-licensed or -approved child care facilities?
- Have all such staff received training?
- Are there barriers to the state providing training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, or staff of State-licensed or -approved facilities? If so, please describe.

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Section VIII:	Service Array	
Items 35–37		
fami indiv safel place Repi	State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and lies and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to vidual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain y with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive ements achieve permanency. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Quality Assurance resentatives, Youth Representatives, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, ocates, External Stakeholders)	
Core Que	stion:	
	 How responsive is the State's array of services to the needs of the children and families it serves, including in-home and foster care services? 	
Explorate	ory Questions:	
 How does the agency provide services to protect children in their own homes; and is that process effective? 		
 How does the agency provide services to promote timely reunification of children in foster care with their families; and is that process effective? 		
 How does the agency provide services to promote timely adoptions and support for adoptive families after placement and finalization of the adoption; and is that process effective? 		
 How does the agency provide services to youth in foster care to prepare them for independent living and to make the transition from foster care to adulthood; and is that process effective? 		
Are there gaps in the State's service array and, if so, what are they?		
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

cove Rep	services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions ared in the State's CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Quality Assurance resentatives, Youth Representatives, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, ocates, External Stakeholders)
Core Que	estion:
• To what	extent are services accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions in the State?
Explorat	ory Questions:
• How ac	cessible are the services to the children and families?
	re barriers to accessibility (for example, location, cost, waiting lists, availability of providers)? please describe.
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

	The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Quality Assurance Representatives, Youth Representatives, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Advocates, External Stakeholders)
Core	Question:
	v effectively does the agency individualize, or tailor, services to the unique needs of children and milies?
Expl	oratory Questions:
	v does the agency tailor services to meet the unique, individualized needs of the children and amilies it serves?
• Are	flexible funds available to obtain unique or individualized services?
• Are	there barriers to individualizing services? If so, please describe.
ID Numb	er Interviewee Comments

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Items 38: In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Other Agency Representatives, Advocates, External Stakeholders) Core Question: • To what extent does the State engage in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies in order to include these stakeholders' major concerns in its State plan? Exploratory Question: • How effectively does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the State's child welfare goals and objectives? • How broad is the array of stakeholders with whom the State consults about its plans, goals, and objectives? • How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans? ID Number Interviewee Comments	Section IX: Agency Responsiveness to the Community		
tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Other Agency Representatives, Advocates, External Stakeholders) Core Question: • To what extent does the State engage in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies in order to include these stakeholders' major concerns in its State plan? Exploratory Question: • How effectively does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the State's child welfare goals and objectives? • How broad is the array of stakeholders with whom the State consults about its plans, goals, and objectives? • How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans?	Items 38–4	Items 38–40	
 To what extent does the State engage in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies in order to include these stakeholders' major concerns in its State plan? Exploratory Question: How effectively does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the State's child welfare goals and objectives? How broad is the array of stakeholders with whom the State consults about its plans, goals, and objectives? How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans? 	1	ribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major oncerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Other Agency Representatives,	
service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies in order to include these stakeholders' major concerns in its State plan? Exploratory Question: How effectively does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the State's child welfare goals and objectives? How broad is the array of stakeholders with whom the State consults about its plans, goals, and objectives? How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans?	Core	Question:	
 How effectively does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the State's child welfare goals and objectives? How broad is the array of stakeholders with whom the State consults about its plans, goals, and objectives? How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans? 	se	vice providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and	
 goals and objectives? How broad is the array of stakeholders with whom the State consults about its plans, goals, and objectives? How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans? 	Expl	oratory Question:	
objectives? • How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans?	g		
ID Number Interviewee Comments	• Hov	does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans?	
	ID Numb	Interviewee Comments	

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

and Repr	ngency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress services delivered pursuant to the CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal resentatives, Service Providers, Other Agency Representatives, Advocates, External eholders)
Core Que	estion:
identif	extent does the agency develop, in consultation with the individuals or organizations fied in item 38, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the State's title State plan?
Explorat	ory Question:
	fectively and to what extent does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the al Progress and Services Reports?
• Who is i	involved in the development process?
	es the State use the information obtained from stakeholders in the Annual Progress and ces Reports?
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Fed Age	State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other eral or federally assisted programs serving the same population. (State and County ncy Staff, Tribal Representatives, Other Agency Representatives [for example, cation, Mental Health, Health], External Stakeholders)
Core Que	estion:
	t extent are the State's services coordinated with the services or benefits of other Federal or ally assisted programs serving the same population?
Explorat	ory Questions:
	e services to children and families coordinated with other Federal or federally assisted ams in the State?
• Are the	re barriers to coordinating these services? If so, please describe.
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Section X:	Foster and Adoptive Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention
Items 41–45	
whic Age	State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions ch are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards. (State and County ncy Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected seholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)
Core Qu	estion:
	t extent has the State implemented licensing or approval standards for foster family homes and care institutions that ensure the safety and health of children in foster care?
Explorat	tory Questions:
• How do	the agency's licensing standards ensure the safety and protection of children in foster care?
	fectively do the agency's licensing standards address issues such as admission policies, safety, ation, and protection of civil rights?
• What ar	re the agency's procedures for relicensing foster homes?
	fective is the agency in relicensing or reinspecting homes on a timely basis to assure conformity its licensing standards?
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

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Personnel, Service Providers)		
Core Question:		
 To what extent are foster care standards applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds? 		
Explorate	Exploratory Question:	
• Does the relativ	e agency apply the same standards equally to all licensed or approved foster homes, including ve and nonrelative homes?	
	re provisions whereby States may place children in homes that are not fully licensed or ved? If so, please describe.	
ID Number	Interviewee Comments	

Item 42: The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care

institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 43: The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)		
Core	Que	estion:
		e State conduct criminal background clearances on prospective foster and adoptive parents licensing or approving them to care for children?
Expl	lorat	ory Questions:
• Wh	at is	the agency's process for conducting background clearances?
• Ho	w eff	ective is this process in screening out prospective caretakers with criminal backgrounds?
• Are	e ther	e barriers associated with this activity? If so, please describe.
ID Numb	er	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 44:	The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and
	adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom
	foster and adoptive homes are needed. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly
	Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected Stakeholders; for
	example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)

Core Question:

• To what extent has the State put in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children needing foster and adoptive homes?

Exploratory Questions:

- How adequate is the county's (State's) current pool of foster families in meeting the family-based foster care placement needs of the children it serves?
- How adequate is the county's (State's) current pool of adoptive families in meeting the adoption placement needs of the children it serves?
- How does the agency recruit foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in need of placement in the State; is the recruitment effective?
- How does the State monitor the supply of homes to ensure the number and type correspond to the number and characteristics of the children in care needing placement?
- Are there sufficient staff resources available to perform recruitment functions?
- What initiatives, programs, and services are in place to assist in the retention of foster and adoptive homes?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

Item 45: The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)	
Core Que	estion:
 How effectively does the State recruit and use families who live in other jurisdictions, (for example, out of State), to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children? 	
Explorator	ry Questions:
• How does the agency recruit and use adoptive families from across State lines or other jurisdictions?	
	es the agency use available resources, such as adoption exchanges, for placing children for in other jurisdictions?
Are ther	re barriers to inter-jurisdictional adoptions? If so, please describe.
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

State-Specific Issues

Core Question:	
Exploratory Question	ons:
ID Number	Interviewee Comments

ID Number	Interviewee Comments