

The Supporting Statement

Case Plan Information Collection

A. Justification

1. Circumstances Making the collection of Information Necessary

The case plan information collection is authorized in sections 422(b)(8)(A)(ii) [42 USC 622] and 471(a)(16) [42 USC 671] of the Social Security Act (and defined in sections in 475(1), 475(5), and 475(6) [42 USC 675] of the Social Security Act). Federal regulations implementing the statutory provisions are codified at 45 CFR 1356.21(f) and (g). The statutory and regulatory requirements mandate that States develop a case plan and case review system for every child in the foster care system under the care and control of the State. Case plan information collection was approved previously under OMB NO. 0980-0140.

Applicable Federal statute and regulations can be found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/cblaws/safe2007draft.htm and http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/45cfr1356_02.html.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

To obtain federal funding for foster care, adoption assistance and certain child welfare services, States must implement case plan and case review system procedures that periodically assess the appropriateness of a child's placement in foster care and reevaluate the services provided to assist the child and family. The case review system assures that each child has a case plan in place that addresses placement in a safe, least restrictive (most family-like) setting available and in close proximity to the parents' home, consistent with the best interest and special needs of the child until the child can achieve permanency, either reunification with his/her family or in an alternate option such as adoption. Through the case plan and case review system, State child welfare agencies:

- describe the specific services offered and provided to meet the individualized needs of the child and family;
- document compliance with requirements of titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act);
- report progress in achieving child safety, permanency and well-being; and
- provide for an assessment of service delivery and timeliness of decision-making.

Case plan information is recorded and maintained by the State Child Welfare agency. It is not submitted directly to ACF. During the federal foster care eligibility and child and family services reviews, ACF uses the information to:

1. evaluate a State's efforts to ensure the safety of children and attain permanent living arrangements for children in foster care;
2. determine a State's compliance with titles IV-E and IV-B program requirements;
3. identify State practice and systemic issues; and
4. provide technical assistance to a State for program improvement.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The case plan is a written document that provides a narrative description of the child's individualized program of care. Regulations at 45 CFR 1356.21(g) and Section 475(1) of the Social Security Act delineate the specific information that should be addressed in the case plan. ACF does not require a specific record keeping format for the case plan nor does ACF require submission of the document to the federal government. States may maintain case plan information electronically through the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), which is a federally funded and federally supported data automation system.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

No other data source collects similar information.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

This information does not impact small businesses or other small entities. Only State child welfare agencies are required to collect and report this information. Reported information is limited to children for whom States have responsibility for placement and care.

6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

Case plan development occurs continuously throughout a child's tenure in the child welfare system. Case plan and case review procedures are mandated program components for a State to receive federal financial participation. Data collection timeframes are prescribed in federal statute and regulation. Legislative change is the only means to reduce this burden. Case plan development is standard operating procedure for child welfare services and models good practice, as well. Regardless of

funding source, states will develop a case plan for each child served. The instrument guides a caseworker's service planning, service provision and case decision-making.

7 Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special circumstances that require the collection of the requested information in a manner other than that required by OMB.

8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency

The Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families published a notice (the Department) in the Federal Register, according to the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.8(d), on May 21, 2007 (72 FR 28493). The Department did not receive comments in response to the 60-day Federal Register notice.

The Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families published a 30-day notice (the Department) in the Federal Register, according to the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.8(d), on August 20, 2007 (72 FR 46490).

9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

No payments of gifts will be provided to respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

Section 471 at (a)(8) and at (a)(20)(C) of the Social Security Act provides safeguards that restrict the use and disclosure of certain information reported in the case plan.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There are no questions of a sensitive nature in this information collection.

12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

ANNUAL BURDEN ESTIMATES

Instrument	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per	Average Burden Hours	Total Burden Hours
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		Respondent	Per Response	
Case Plan	638,735	1	3.3	2,115,640

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 2,115,640

For each child in foster care, an initial case plan is completed within 60 days of the date the child is in foster care. The case plan is updated as often as necessary, but at least every 6 months for the duration of the child’s stay in foster care. The number of respondents is 638,735 which is the sum of four groups of children who were in foster care during a given year.

Group A children require an initial case plan which requires an estimated 4 hours to complete (86,299 children X 4 hours estimated per plan per child = 345,196 hours).

Group B children are those children with a six-month anniversary during the year who require an on-going case plan (309,941 children X 2 hours estimated per plan per child = 619,882 hours).

Group C children are those children with two six-month anniversaries during the year who require two on-going case plans (152,204 children X 2 hours estimated per plan per child X 2 plans per child = 608,816 hours).

Group D children are those children who required an initial case plan (4 hours) and had a six-month anniversary (requiring a plan that takes an estimated 2 hours) during the year (90,291 children X (4 hour estimated initial plan + 2 hour estimated ongoing plan) = 541,746 hours.)

Group	Cost per hour	Hours	Monetary Value of Hour Burden
Case Plan	\$15.00	2,114,640	\$31,734,600

13. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers

There is no annual cost burden for respondents resulting from this information collection.

14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

There is no Federal Government cost associated with this information collection.

15. Explanation of Program Changes or Adjustments

This request is an adjustment resulting from the refinement in the estimated of the number of record keepers and the hourly burden.

16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

The Department does not plan to publish the information collected.

17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate

There is no standardized form issued to States for submitting case plan information to the Department. The OMB approval number is displayed at 45 CFR 1356.21.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission

There are no special circumstances that require the collection of the requested information in a manner other than that required by OMB.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

The case plan information collection does not require the use of statistical methods. Such methods will not reduce the reporting burden for respondents or improve the accuracy of results.