ADOPTION   v1.0

Definition

Adoption is the method provided by state law or for a tribal title IV-E agency, tribal law, which establishes the legal relationship of parent and child between persons not so related by birth, with the same mutual rights and obligations that exist between children and their birth parents. This relationship can only be termed "adoption" after the legal process is complete.[1] The primary goal of the title IV-E adoption assistance program is to provide financial support to families who adopt difficult-to-place children from the public child welfare system. These are children who otherwise would grow up in foster care systems if a suitable adoptive parent could not be found.

Collecting information on adoption activities in the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) enables the title IV-E agency to comply with federal reporting requirements, make accurate eligibility determinations, and support the title IV-E agency's diligent recruitment plan and ability to make timely decisions about adoptive placements.

Instructions

The self-assessment tool format is documented below. The Element # refers to the section number assigned to this module which will align with the respective section this self-assessment tool. The CAR document will be utilized to help score and record how well the CCWIS meets compliance with the federal regulations that describe CCWIS.

Section	Element #
Overview	D.A.xx
Self-Assessment – Part One – *Program Goals*	D.B1.xx
Self-Assessment – Part Two – *Foundational Requirements*	D.B2.xx
Resources – Functional Process Factors, Data Elements, & Additional Considerations	D.Cx.xx

CCWIS self-assessment tools assist title IV-E agency staff with voluntary documentation of CCWIS project progress as the agency plans, develops, and deploys system functions. Agencies may use the self-

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[1] 45 CFR §1355.20(a)

assessment tools to determine what features will support federal and state or tribal child welfare program needs and document ongoing CCWIS progress. The data and information provided to ACF by the IV-E agency in the CCWIS self-assessment tools will help inform the agency's CAR process conducted by ACF under 45 CFR part 95, subpart F and § 1355.55.

The Children's Bureau will continue to pilot and utilize the self-assessment tools voluntarily with agencies to document "lessons learned" and provide agencies with opportunities to provide feedback regarding the utility of the tools. At this time, agencies may utilize tools they determine useful to document project processes, such as evaluating progress in developing the CCWIS, sharing information in an Advance Planning Document (APD), or sharing information in regular monitoring calls and other technical assistance activities. Agencies are encouraged to engage CCWIS users (users) as part of their ongoing self-assessment process to ensure the CCWIS is user-friendly and meets program and policy expectations.

Agencies may wish to attach self-assessment tools, screenshots, state or tribal policy, and other documentation to APD documents to describe project progress. The tools may also be used as part of the agency's ongoing project management practices and stored, as desired, by the project team. If a required feature is not yet in production, the agency may document an expected completion date and/or reference the planned timeframe from the most recent APD update. ACF designed the tools to help clarify potential program and technology needs and document project progress towards CCWIS compliance. Agencies are encouraged to utilize standard version control practices to reduce redundancy and promote efficiencies.

A title IV-E agency may use this self-assessment tool to collect information on the type of users and external systems associated with a CCWIS adoption function and any adoption features incorporated in this function. Agencies may cross-reference information if it is already contained in an APD or project artifact. *If a question is not applicable to the adoption function, indicate "N/A" and provide the reason why it is not applicable.*

D.A.01 Date this assessment was completed.

D.A.02 Provide a brief description of the implementation approach, status, and target dates for the adoption function(s) and/or external system(s). *Specific implementation plans are documented in the APD and the agency may reference the APD(s), or document information, here.*

D.A.03 If the function supports programs beyond the child welfare program (such as Juvenile Justice or Adult Services), please identify the other program areas below.

D.A.04 Is this function, or external system(s), accessed by users who are not employees of the title IV-E agency (or counties in a county-administered system), such as private providers, staff of other state or tribal agencies, court staff, or contractors? *Please identify external user groups that will access this function, including Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCAs). Please add more rows, as needed.*

User Group	Purpose of Use

D.A.05 Do title IV-E staff, or external users, use any system(s) external to CCWIS to collect information used in this function? If so, what external system(s) are used and what data from that system is shared with the CCWIS? *External systems can include commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products, publicly available portals, and applications for mobile devices. Please add more rows as, needed.*

External System	Data Shared

D.A.06 Are there any additional comments you would like to provide as background to this function?

Part One – Program Goals

The Program Goals section of this self-assessment tool describes the critical program needs CCWIS must support, as defined at 45 CFR § 1355.52 (a)(1). These program needs apply whether staff enter data directly into the CCWIS or data are imported through a data exchange. Agencies should continually assess changing policy and practice needs to ensure CCWIS aligns with program priorities and remains relevant to support program outcomes. The program goals noted below are common child welfare program needs or are required by policy or federal law.

In this section, the title IV-E agency may document components, factors, and design elements of the function(s) or exchanges that support the program goals of the adoption function. We encourage agencies to simplify their responses by referencing submitted documentation, such as APDs or attach screen shots, system documentation, training materials, survey data, and agency policy or procedures. To ensure the CCWIS is supporting program goals, engagement with end users during all states of the system development life cycle is critical. Likewise, continuous user feedback is often necessary to ensure the system is responsive to program changes after implementation.

In the **Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Program Goals** column, include information such as:
- how the CCWIS supports agency policies and practices;
- feedback from end users;
- how the module was designed to be user-friendly and streamline work;
- data CCWIS maintains to support the goal;
- reports CCWIS provides; and
- components, factors, and design elements of the function(s), or exchanges, that support the goal.

If the title IV-E agency has additional program goals, please include them below and add new rows, as needed.

If a question is not applicable to the adoption function, indicate "N/A" and provide an explanation of why it is not applicable. For example, other functions in the CCWIS may address the program goals.

#	Program Goal	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Program Goal
D.B1.01	Provide consistent, timely, and accurate information in a streamlined manner to support workers in their efforts to achieve the permanency goal of adoption.	

#	Program Goal	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Program Goal
D.B1.02	Support the delivery of pre- and post-adoption services to support the well-being of the child.	
D.B1.03	Provide case history, including family connections and health records, in a timely and accurate manner.	
D.B1.04	Link the child's historical data to a child's new adoption case and provide an audit trail of adoption activities to support the confidentiality and documentation of efforts to ensure well-being, safety, and permanency for the child.	
D.B1.05	Support efforts to comply with adoption components of the agency's title IV-E and IV-B plans, any diligent recruitment plans, and the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act.	
D.B1.06	As defined in state or tribal law, provide adoptees and adoptive parents with information about the birth family, including medical history and family history, as well as photos, such as a Life Book.	
D.B1.07	Support the documentation of special needs, reasonable efforts to achieve the permanency plan, and the specific factors, or conditions that make the child difficult to place.	

Part Two – Foundational Requirements

Foundational Requirements identify conditions to comply with CCWIS Project requirements at 45 CFR § 1355.52. These apply whether staff enter data directly into the CCWIS or data is imported through a data exchange.

> In this section, the title IV-E agency may document components, factors, and design elements of the function(s) or exchanges that support CCWIS foundational requirements. We encourage agencies to simplify their responses by referencing submitted documentation, such as APDs or attached screen shots, system documentation, training materials, survey data, and agency policy or procedures.
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> In the **Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Foundational Requirement** column, include information such as:
> - feedback from end users;
> - how the module was designed to be user-friendly and streamline work;
> - data the CCWIS maintains;
> - reports the CCWIS generates or contributes to;
> - user-interfaces features; and
> - automated processes and other design features.
>
> *If a question is not applicable to the adoption function, indicate "N/A" and provide explanation of why it is not applicable. For example, other functions in the CCWIS may address the relevant foundational requirements.*

#	Foundational Requirement	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Foundational Requirement
D.B2.01	Support the federal and state or tribal practice model.	
D.B2.02	Support federal and state or tribal program goals, outcomes, and reporting requirements.	
D.B2.03	Maintain data to support federal audits, reviews, and other monitoring activities, including title IV-E eligibility reviews.	

#	Foundational Requirement	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Foundational Requirement
D.B2.04	Data is consistently and uniformly collected by CCWIS, exchanged with external systems, and, if applicable, CWCA systems.	
D.B2.05	Automated functions exist to prevent the need to re-enter data already captured or exchanged with the CCWIS.	
D.B2.06	Data is not created by default or inappropriately assigned.	
D.B2.07	Data is exchanged and maintained in accordance with confidentiality requirements in section 471(a)(8) of the Social Security Act (the Act), 45 CFR 205.50, and 42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(viii) through (x) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, if applicable, and other applicable federal and state or tribal laws.	
D.B2.08	For states, data is included that supports specific measures taken to comply with the requirements in section 422(b)(9) of the Act regarding the state's compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.	
D.B2.09	Track timeframes and milestones that reflect the title IV-E agency's governing laws, policies, and practices regarding timely permanency. For example, court milestones, required family partnership meetings, etc.	

RESOURCES

The Functional Process Factors, Data Elements, and Additional Considerations below are examples, not an exhaustive list of functional requirements, the title IV-E agencies may consider in developing an adoption function. Title IV-E agencies are encouraged to collect data required to support child welfare program outcomes, needs of respective users, and CCWIS and program regulations.

Resource 1: Functional Process Factors

Resource 2: Data Elements

Resource 3: Additional Considerations

Resource 1 – Functional Process Factors

Functional Process Factors identify useful *processes* to achieve an efficient, economical, and effective CCWIS, as defined at 45 CFR § 1355.52. A title IV-E agency is not required to have all the functional process factors listed below in the CCWIS. Function descriptions are based on historical perspectives and typical program needs gathered from previous reviews to promote the successful execution of adoption program goals. The functional process factors will evolve and title IV-E agencies may, as needed, include additional factors. Title IV-E agencies are encouraged to assess local program needs, federal and agency policies, and user-centric design as it develops, maintains, and enhances the CCWIS adoption functions to support positive program outcomes.

#	Functional Process Factors
D.C1.01	Adoption functions are available 24 hours a day.
D.C1.02	Remote, or web, connectivity for users.
D.C1.03	Provides person and/or case search that allows quick and user-friendly access and usability of historical data.
D.C1.04	Supports the confidentiality of all information in the CCWIS, such as the link between name and adoption ID, the pre-adoptive name, and Medicaid number. Also supports the confidentiality and linking of these data elements when data is exchanged with external systems, such as finance and Medicaid.
D.C1.05	Includes automated functions that support and track supervisory reviews and feedback.
D.C1.06	Provides support for the integrity of information as reported and allows for auditable changes/updates.
D.C1.07	Allows approved users to link a child's historical data to a child's new adoption case.
D.C1.08	Provides ability to connect sibling records of children who are available for adoption.
D.C1.09	Assigns a unique Adoption ID to each Child or links to existing ID if the person is already documented in the system.
D.C1.10	Provides electronic support for adoption work related to the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children.
D.C1.11	Allows documentation of the reasons contributing to successful, or unsuccessful, adoptions and placements.
D.C1.12	Provides automated and/or electronic support for determining initial and ongoing eligibility for title IV-E adoption assistance.
D.C1.13	Provides the ability to track both title IV-E and non-federal adoption assistance subsidy payments and non-recurring adoption expenses.
D.C1.14	Provides notice or documents notice of adoption tax credits to adopting parents.
D.C1.15	Provides ability to track timeframes that reflect the title IV-E agency's governing laws, policies, and practices regarding the timing of key case events and activities.
D.C1.16	Maintain cases that remain open for adoption or guardianship subsidy.
D.C1.17	Generates required hardcopy documents, if used by the courts, such as applications for adoption

#	Functional Process Factors
	and copies of birth certificates.
D.C1.18	Provides the ability to document the results of criminal background checks of the adoptive family members.
D.C1.19	Imports or tracks the decisions and/or outcomes of court-related factors, such as timeliness of hearings, involvement of judges and guardians, etc., that are likely to result in timely permanency decisions.
D.C1.20	Provides electronic support for Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA).
D.C1.21	Provides the ability to alert, or notify, staff of casework activities per the federal, state, and local child welfare policies.
D.C1.22	Tracks previous adoptions and disruptions/dissolutions.
D.C1.23	Tracks and documents outcomes of annual reviews.

Resource 2 – Data Elements

The Data Elements section identifies examples of useful *data elements* to achieve an efficient, economical, and effective CCWIS as defined at 45 CFR § 1355.52. Data elements evolve and title IV-E agencies may include additional elements to support local program needs.

#	Data Elements
D.C2.01	All federal and IV-E agency data elements required for program administration, federal and agency reporting, and audits typically captured during adoption-related activities. An example of a federal report includes AFCARS.
D.C2.02	Carries data forward to other functions to support: • Administration; • Adoption Assistance; • Recruitment & Matching; and • Provider Management.
D.C2.03	All demographic and contact information required by state or tribal law and policy.
D.C2.04	All information to support recruitment and placement with an adoptive family.
D.C2.05	Information needed to determine the special needs criteria of a child.
D.C2.06	Information to support an exchange with an interstate case processing system, such as the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE).
D.C2.07	Information to support an exchange with ICAMA.
D.C2.08	Information needed to determine initial and ongoing eligibility for title IV-E adoption assistance.
D.C2.09	Information to track monthly subsidy payments (either in this function or a separate financial function).
D.C2.10	Information to ensure youth are appropriately assessed for service needs, subsidy, and Medicaid eligibility.
D.C2.11	Current and historical medical, dental, mental health, and educational status.
D.C2.12	Information needed to report on efforts to achieve permanency. Examples include timeliness of court hearings, termination of parental rights determinations, placement disruptions, service needs, etc.
D.C2.13	Information needed to track and submit annual reviews.

Resource 3 – Additional Considerations

The Additional Considerations section describes useful features agencies may wish to incorporate into the CCWIS design/features.

#	Additional Considerations
D.C3.01	Access via mobile device (e.g., phone or tablet) application.
D.C3.02	Provides online support to include the agency's adoption policy or practice guidance documents, Help, FAQ, and/or chat.
D.C3.03	Provides comprehensive and accurate lists of children available for adoption to support the listing on adoption exchanges.
D.C3.04	Ensures easy access to contact information for all known relatives.
D.C3.05	Allows adoptive parents and children (if age appropriate) to access photos and electronic life books for the child, either through a portal or some other secure communication tool.
D.C3.06	Automated functions to match prospective adoptive parents with children.
D.C3.07	Provides exchange with a market segmentation tool to identify prospective families and communities for recruitment.
D.C3.08	Exchange with a graphical information system (GIS) mapping tool to support recruitment efforts.

We encourage agencies to add examples of additional considerations from their adoption function they wish to highlight.

#	Agency-Submitted Additional Considerations