

# Child and Family Services Reviews

## Stakeholder Interview Guide

April 2021

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## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

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### Introduction and Instructions

Stakeholder interviews will be conducted during the onsite component of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The purpose of the stakeholder interviews is to collect information needed to determine whether the state is in substantial conformity with CFSR systemic factor federal requirements. However, because substantial conformity determinations can be made based on the information the state submits in its statewide assessment, stakeholder interviews may not be required to collect information about every systemic factor during the onsite component of the CFSR.

When stakeholder interviews are required, 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 (CFSP), as required by regulations at 45 CFR § 1357.15(1). Individuals are selected to participate in stakeholder interviews based on their ability to respond to the Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG) assessment questions that target the additional information needed to determine substantial conformity. In addition, careful consideration should be given to identifying and individualizing questions that should be asked of these stakeholders. The following are examples of stakeholders who may be interviewed:

- State child welfare director
- Child welfare agency administrator or program area administrator(s)
- Youth and parents being served by the agency
- Court improvement project administrator(s)
- Court system representative(s) or juvenile court judge(s)
- Guardian(s) ad litem/legal representative(s) for children
- Legal representatives for parents
- Agency attorney(s)
- Representative(s) of administrative review bodies
- Caseworker(s) from the public child welfare agency or private agencies
- Supervisor(s) from the public child welfare agency or private agencies
- Unlicensed relative caregiver(s), foster and adoptive parent(s)
- State foster and/or adoptive parent association representative(s)
- Tribal leader(s)
- Tribal child welfare staff, including program administrator(s), caseworker(s), and supervisor(s)
- Law enforcement representative(s)
- Representatives of Kinship Navigator Programs
- Major child welfare contractor(s) or service provider(s)

Review teams may interview additional stakeholders who will inform a determination of the state's substantial conformity on the systemic factors as needed. Please refer to the *CFSR Procedures Manual* for more information regarding how to select stakeholders for interviews.

### Stakeholder Interview Guide Structure

The SIG is divided into seven sections, each of which corresponds to a separate systemic factor. Each systemic factor is composed of one or more items. For example, the Statewide Information System and Case Review System systemic factors are composed of one and five items, respectively.

The items in this instrument begin with Item 19 because Items 1 through 18 are outcome-related and covered in the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions. Items related to the systemic factors, which are the focus of this instrument, are Items 19 through 36.

The questions are structured to use data and information provided in the statewide assessment, as well as to gather stakeholder observations and experiences about systemic factor functioning. The questions are categorized as follows:

- Data/information
- Systems/processes
- Data quality
- State-specific questions

### **Preparing to Facilitate Stakeholder Interviews**

This guide identifies questions that may be asked during stakeholder interviews. Every question will not be necessary. Rather, the reviewers will determine the questions that will be asked of selected stakeholders to inform substantial conformity determinations for systemic factors. The reviewers select the stakeholders and relevant interview questions based on the information the state provides in the statewide assessment.

- Reviewers should become thoroughly familiar with the statewide assessment before conducting stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment will help reviewers (1) understand what the state has already reported about the functioning of each systemic factor and (2) identify additional data/information that may be needed from stakeholder interviews to inform decisions regarding substantial conformity. The review team should come to consensus on the questions to ask during each interview.
- Each systemic factor should be functioning statewide, and this guide includes questions throughout to capture this requirement. Please see Appendix A for alternate language.
- Reviewers do not have to use the questions verbatim but should not veer from the substance of a question to gather extraneous information that is not needed for the purposes of determining substantial conformity. Reviewers should note for each stakeholder that the review focuses on the most recent data and information.
- Reviewers should note that stakeholders may provide information out of sequence from the order of the stakeholder interview guide. As such, reviewers should be mindful that it is not necessary to ask questions in the sequence they are presented under each section; rather, the flow of the stakeholder interview should inform the order in which questions are asked.
- In the appendix, reviewers will find alternative language and phrasing for SIG questions, if needed. Examples illustrating how questions and alternative language and phrasing can be used during the stakeholder interview are provided. In addition, the appendix contains definitions and citations for key terms referenced in the SIG.

## Section I: Statewide Information System (Item 19)

### Item 19: Statewide Information System

How well is the statewide information system functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care?

#### Item 19 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether the state can readily identify the following data elements for each child in foster care in the state:
  - Status;
  - Demographic characteristics;
  - Location or placement; and
  - Permanency goals.
- 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
- 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
  - How do you know that the four data elements can be readily identified in the statewide information system?
  - Are there other ways that you know about for determining whether data elements can be readily identified?
- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. What system (or source of information) do you access to identify a child's status, demographic characteristics, location, and permanency goals?
  - 2b. What policy or guidance is in place for entering data regarding a foster child's status, demographic characteristics, location, and permanency goals, initially and on ongoing basis?
  - 2c. How often is data being entered in accordance with policy or guidance?
  - 2d. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges to ensuring that the four statewide information system data elements are readily identifiable for each child in foster care?
  - 2e. How is the state addressing these barriers so that the four statewide information system data elements are readily identifiable across the state for each child in foster care?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information? How often is this data/information collected?
  - 3b. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3c. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. Are you aware of any limitations to the data/information?

- 3e. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3f. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Section II: Case Review System (Items 20–24)

### Item 20: Written Case Plan

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) and includes the required provisions?

#### Item 20 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - Each child in foster care, statewide, has a written case plan developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) and includes the required provisions.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that case plans are developed jointly with parents and that the case plans include the required provisions?
    - Are there other ways that you know about for determining whether case plans are developed jointly with parents and that the case plans include the required provisions?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How is the statewide process helping to ensure joint development of a case plan with the child’s parent(s) and that the case plans include the required provisions?
  - 2b. What aspects of the statewide process or system create barriers or challenges to the requirement that each child has a written case plan developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) and includes the required provisions?
  - 2c. How is the state able to address these barriers so that each child has a written case plan developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) and includes the required provisions?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are you aware of any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what’s missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 21: Periodic Reviews

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?

#### Item 21 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - Periodic reviews occur statewide for each child no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.
- 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
- 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
  - How do you know that periodic reviews are occurring statewide in a timely manner, either by a court or by administrative review?
  - Are there other ways you know about for determining whether periodic reviews are occurring statewide in a timely manner, either by a court or by administrative review?
- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process or system in place ensure periodic reviews for each child occurring no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?
  - 2b. What aspects of that process or system create barriers or challenges to the requirement that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?
  - 2c. How is the state able to address these barriers so that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.



## Item 22: Permanency Hearings

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

### Item 22 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - For each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care; and
  - For each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs every 12 months after the initial hearing.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that initial permanency hearings are occurring in a timely manner?
    - How do you know that subsequent permanency hearings are occurring statewide in a timely manner?
    - Are there other ways that you know about for determining whether initial or subsequent permanency hearings are occurring in a timely manner?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process or system in place ensure that for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date on which the child entered foster care?
  - 2b. How does the process in place ensure that for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs every 12 months after the initial hearing?
  - 2c. What aspects of that process or system create barriers or challenges to the requirement that for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date on which the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?
  - 2d. Is the state able to address these barriers so that for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date on which the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?

- 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
- 3e. Are there any limitations to the data and information?
- 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?

#### Item 23 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - The filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs statewide in accordance with required provisions.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that TPR proceedings are being filed in accordance with required provisions?
    - Are there other ways you know that TPR proceedings are being filed in accordance with required provisions?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process or system in place ensure statewide filing of TPR proceedings in accordance with required provisions?
  - 2b. What aspects of that process or system create barriers or challenges to the requirement that the filing of TPR proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?
  - 2c. How is the state able to address these barriers so the filing of TPR proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information are accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care (1) are receiving notification of any review or hearing held with respect to the child and (2) have a right to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to the child?

### Item 24 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - Foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are receiving notification of any review or hearing held with respect to the child; and
  - The notification includes caregivers' right to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to the child.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that foster parent, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are receiving notification of any review or hearing held with respect to the child and the notification includes their right to be heard?
    - Are there other ways that you know about how the caregivers identified above are receiving notifications of any review or hearing held with respect to the child and that the notification includes their right to be heard?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place help ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are receiving notification of any review or hearing held with respect to the child?
  - 2b. Does the notification include caregivers' right to be heard?
  - 2c. What aspects of the process or system create barriers or challenges to the requirement that all caregivers are receiving notification of reviews or hearings and the notifications include caregivers' right to be heard?
  - 2d. How is the state able to address these barriers so that all caregivers receive notification of reviews or hearings and notifications include caregivers' right to be heard?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?

- 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
- 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Section III: Quality Assurance System (Item 25)

### Item 25: Quality Assurance System

How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) is operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures?

#### Item 25 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether the quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it:
  - Is operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided;
  - Has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety);
  - Identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system;
  - Provides relevant reports; and
  - Evaluates implemented program improvement measures.
- 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
- 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
  - How do you know that the requirements outlined above are functioning as required across the state?
  - Are there other ways you know about for determining if the requirements outlined above are functioning as required across the state?
- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place ensure that the requirements outlined in question 1 above are functioning across the state?
  - 2b. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges to ensuring that the requirements outlined in question 1 above are functioning across the state?
  - 2c. Is the state able to address these barriers so the quality assurance system functions as required?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?

- 3b. How often is data/information collected?
- 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
- 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
- 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
- 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Section IV: Staff and Provider Training (Items 26–28)

### Item 26: Initial Staff Training

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) so that:

- Staff receive training in accordance with the established curriculum and timeframes for the provision of initial training; and
- The system demonstrates how well the initial training addresses the basic skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties?

*"Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.*

#### Item 26 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about (on a statewide basis):
  - Whether all staff, as defined above, receive training pursuant to the established curriculum and timeframes for the provision of initial training; and
  - How well the initial training addresses the basic skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that all staff, as defined above, receive initial training pursuant to the established curriculum and timeframes for the provision of initial training and that the training addresses the basic skills and knowledge needed by the staff to carry out their duties?
    - Are there other ways you know about for determining whether staff receive initial training and that the training addresses the basic skills and knowledge needed by the staff to carry out their duties?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place ensure provision of timely initial training for all staff before they are assigned a caseload across the state?
  - 2b. Does the initial training address the basic skills and knowledge necessary for staff to carry out their duties?
  - 2c. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges to the delivery of timely initial training that addresses the basic skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties?



- 2d. How is the state able to address these barriers so the initial training system functions as required?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP so that:

- Staff receive ongoing training pursuant to the established curriculum and timeframes for the provision of ongoing training; and
- The system demonstrates how well the ongoing training addresses the skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties?

*Staff, for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted/non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.*

*Staff, for purposes of assessing this item, also includes direct supervisors of all contracted/non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.*

#### Item 27 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):

- All staff, as defined above, receive ongoing training pursuant to the established curriculum and time frames; and
- The ongoing training addresses skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?

1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:

- How do you know that all staff, as defined above, receive ongoing training pursuant to the established curriculum and timeframes and that the training addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?
- Are there other ways you know about for determining whether all staff receive ongoing training, the training addresses the established curriculum and timeframes for the provision of ongoing training, and the training addresses the skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties?

1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?

2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:

2a. How does the process in place ensure provision of timely, ongoing training for all staff, as defined above?

2b. Does the ongoing training address the basic skills and knowledge necessary for staff to carry out their duties?

- 2c. What aspects of the training system create barriers or challenges to the delivery of timely ongoing training that addresses the basic skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties?
- 2d. How is the state able to address these barriers so the ongoing training system functions as required?
- 3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data and information?
  - 3f. Does this data or information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

How well is the staff and provider training system functioning to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (who receive title IV-E funds to care for children) so that:

- Current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff receive training pursuant to the established annual/biannual hourly/continuing education requirement and timeframes for the provision of initial and ongoing training; and
- The system demonstrates how well the initial and ongoing training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?

*The following individuals are subject to this training requirement:*

- *Current or prospective foster and 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.*

#### Item 28 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):

- Initial and ongoing training for current and prospective caregivers is provided according to the established annual/biannual hourly/continuing education requirement and timeframes and addresses the skills and knowledge needed for staff to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children; and
- Initial and ongoing training for staff of state licensed/approved facilities is provided according to the established annual/biannual hourly/continuing education requirement and timeframes and addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?

1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:

- How do you know that initial and ongoing training for current and prospective caregivers is provided according to the established requirement and timeframes and addresses the skills and knowledge needed for staff to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?
- How do you know that initial and ongoing training for staff of state licensed/approved facilities is provided according to the established requirement and timeframes and addresses the skills and knowledge needed for staff to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?
- Are there other ways you know about for determining if the initial and ongoing training requirement is met for current/prospective caregivers and staff of state licensed/approved facilities and that the training addresses the skills and knowledge needed for staff to carry out their duties?

- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. For current and prospective caregivers:
    - How does the process in place ensure provision of timely initial and ongoing training for current and prospective caregivers across the state?
    - Does the initial and ongoing training address the skills and knowledge needed for staff to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adoptive children?
  - 2b. For staff of state licensed/approved facilities:
    - How does the process in place ensure provision of timely initial and ongoing training for staff of state licensed/approved facilities across the state?
    - Does the initial and ongoing training address the skills and knowledge needed for staff to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?
  - 2c. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges to the delivery of timely training for caregivers and staff of state licensed/approved facilities that addresses the skills and knowledge needed for staff to carry out their duties?
  - 2d. How is the state able to address these barriers so that the initial and ongoing training systems function as required?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Section V: Service Array and Resource Development (Items 29–30)

### Item 29: Array of Services

How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the range of services specified below is available and accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)?

- Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs;
- Services that address the needs of families in addition to those of individual children in order to create a safe home environment;
- Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable; and
- Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

For each of the following questions, each of these four categories of service should be addressed.

#### Item 29 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - The state has all of the above-referenced services in each political jurisdiction covered by the CFSP; and
  - There are any gaps in the above-referenced array of services in terms of the availability and accessibility of such services across all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that the services referenced above are in each political jurisdiction in the state covered by the CFSP and whether there are any availability or accessibility gaps in the array of services?
    - Are there other ways you know about for determining if the services referenced above are in each political jurisdiction in the state covered by the CFSP and whether there are any availability and accessibility gaps in the array of services?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place (1) ensure that the state has all of the above-referenced services in each political jurisdiction covered by the CFSP; and (2) address any gaps in the above-referenced array of services in terms of the availability and accessibility of such services across all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP?

- 2b. Does the state have all the above-referenced services in each political jurisdiction covered by the CFSP and are there any gaps in the array of these services in terms of their availability and accessibility across all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP?
- 2c. Does the state have a sufficient number of appropriate and accessible state licensed/approved homes to meet the needs of children and youth currently in care and entering care? If there are any gaps in placement resources, what are they? Are hotels/offices or other placements that do not meet the safety and other needs of the children/youth being used and if yes, why?
- 2d. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges (1) in ensuring the state has all the above-referenced services in each political jurisdiction covered by the CFSP and (2) in addressing any gaps in the above-referenced array of services in terms of the availability and accessibility of such services across all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP?
- 2e. How is the state able to address these barriers so the state has all of the above-referenced services in each political jurisdiction covered by the CFSP and there are no gaps in the array of these services in terms of their availability and accessibility across all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 30: Individualizing Services

How well is the service array and resource development system functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency?

*Services that are developmentally and/or culturally appropriate (including linguistically competent), responsive to disability and special needs, or accessed through flexible funding are examples of how the unique needs of children and families are met by the agency.*

#### Item 30 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - The services identified in Item 29 are developmentally and/or culturally appropriate (including linguistically competent), responsive to disability and special needs, or accessed through flexible funding, as examples of how the unique needs of children and families are met by the agency.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that services identified in Item 29 are being individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families?
    - Are there other ways you know about for determining if the services identified in Item 29 are being individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place help ensure that the services identified in Item 29 are developmentally and/or culturally appropriate (including linguistically competent), responsive to disability and special needs, or accessed through flexible funding, as examples of how the unique needs of children and families are met by the agency?
  - 2b. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges to ensuring that services identified in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families?
  - 2c. How is the state able to address these barriers so the services identified in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?



- 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
- 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Section VI: Agency Responsiveness to the Community (Items 31–32)

### Item 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, 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, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?

#### Item 31 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - 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
  - Major concerns of these stakeholders are included in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.
- 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
- 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
  - How do you know that the state engages in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders and that major concerns of these stakeholders are included in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?
  - Are there other ways you know about for determining if the agency engages in ongoing consultation and that major concerns of these stakeholders are included in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?
- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place ensure ongoing statewide consultation and engagement of key stakeholders?
  - 2b. How does the process in place support inclusion of major concerns from these key stakeholders in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?
  - 2c. What aspects of the process create barriers or challenges to ongoing statewide consultation and engagement of key stakeholders and inclusion of their concerns in the CFSP?
  - 2d. How is the state able to address these barriers?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?

- 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
- 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
- 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?

#### Item 32 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - Services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that the state coordinates the state's services under the CFSP with services/benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?
    - Are there other ways you know about for determining if the agency is coordinating the state's services under the CFSP with services/benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place ensure coordination of the state's services under the CFSP with services/benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?
  - 2b. Does the coordination of services occur statewide?
  - 2c. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges in coordinating these services?
  - 2d. How is the state able to address these barriers so that the state can coordinate services for programs serving the same population?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?

4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Section VII: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention (Items 33–36)

### Item 33: Standards Applied Equally

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?

#### Item 33 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - The state’s standards are applied equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes (relative and non-relative) receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds; and
  - The state’s standards are applied equally to all licensed or approved child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.
  - 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
  - 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
    - How do you know that the state’s standards are applied equally to all licensed/approved foster family homes (relative and non-relative) and child care institutions?
    - Are there other ways you know about for determining whether the state’s standards are applied equally to all licensed/approved foster family homes (relative and non-relative) and child care institutions?
  - 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place ensure equal application of standards in licensing or approving foster family homes (relative and non-relative) across the state?
  - 2b. How does the process in place ensure equal application of standards in licensing or approving child care institutions across the state?
  - 2c. Are waivers or exceptions to licensing standards specified in policy or regulation? If so, what is the process for allowing exceptions or granting waivers?
  - 2d. What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges in applying standards equally?
  - 2e. How is the state able to address these barriers so that the licensing system functions as required?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?

- 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
- 3e. Are there any limitations to the data and information?
- 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
- 4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that 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?

#### Item 34 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - The state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements; and
  - The state has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.
- 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
- 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
  - How do you know the state complies with the federal requirements for criminal background clearances when licensing and or approving foster care and adoptive placements?
  - How do you know the state has a case planning process to ensure that the agency is placing children in foster or adoptive homes that meet the federal requirements for criminal background clearances?
  - Are there other ways that you know about for determining whether the state complies with the federal requirements for criminal background clearances and that the case planning process ensures placement of children in foster/adoptive homes that meet federal requirements for criminal background clearances?
- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How does the process in place promote compliance with the federal requirements for criminal background clearances?
  - 2b. What system or source of information do you access to determine whether children have been placed in homes that fail to comply with the federal requirements for criminal background clearances?
  - 2c. What policy or guidance is in place for conducting and monitoring criminal background clearances for foster family homes?
  - 2d. What policy or guidance is in place to ensure that children are not placed in foster or adoptive homes that fail to comply with the federal requirements for criminal background clearances?
  - 2e. What specific problems or challenges does the state have in ensuring compliance with the federal requirements for criminal background checks when licensing or approving foster and adoptive placements and to ensure children are not placed in homes that do not meet federal requirements for criminal background checks?



- 2f. How is the state able to address these barriers so the criminal background check system functions as required?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
  - 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide?

#### Item 35 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about (on a statewide basis):
  - Data or information regarding the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed;
  - Data or information regarding the ethnic and racial diversity of current foster and adoptive homes; and
  - Whether the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring.
- 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
- 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
  - How do you know that the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system ensures the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom homes are needed?
  - Are there any other ways of determining whether the system ensures the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom homes are needed?
- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. How well does the state's process work to gather and review data/information regarding the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state, as well as current foster and adoptive homes, to inform recruitment planning?
  - 2b. How does the statewide process ensure diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed?
  - 2c. What specific problems or challenges does the state have in ensuring that potential foster and adoptive homes reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed?
  - 2d. How is the state able to address these barriers so the system for recruitment of potential foster and adoptive homes functions as required?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:

- 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
- 3b. How often is data/information collected?
- 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
- 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
- 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
- 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
- 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

### Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide?

#### Item 36 Questions:

1. Data and information: We are interested in learning about whether (on a statewide basis):
  - The effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources (including resources within the state) to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide; and
  - All home study requests received from another state to facilitate a permanent foster or adoptive care placement are completed within 60 days.
- 1a. Reviewers may summarize or reference pertinent data/information that was provided in the statewide assessment, as appropriate for the focus of the interviews and stakeholder group being interviewed. Is there any additional data or information that you would like to provide at this time?
- 1b. If no data/information was provided in the statewide assessment or during the interview, reviewers can ask the following questions:
  - How do you know that the state effectively uses cross-jurisdictional resources (including resources within the state) to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children and that all home study requests received from other states are completed within 60 days?
  - Are there other ways you know about for determining whether the state effectively uses cross-jurisdictional resources and completes all home study requests received from other states within 60 days?
- 1c. What has been your experience or observations regarding the requirements of this item?
2. Systems/processes that are in place to support this systemic factor:
  - 2a. Cross-jurisdictional resources (including resources in the state):
    - What are the cross-jurisdictional resources that are used to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children?
    - How does the process in place support the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to ensure timely placement of waiting children in adoptive or permanency homes across the state?
    - What aspects of the system create barriers or challenges to effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources?
    - How is the state able to address these barriers?
  - 2b. Completion of home studies:
    - How does the process in place ensure timely completion of home study requests received from another state to facilitate permanent foster or adoptive placements across the state?

- What specific problems or challenges does the state have in timely completion of home studies?
  - How is the state able to address these barriers?
3. Data quality: If the state provided data/information (either in the statewide assessment or during the interview), reviewers may ask one or more of the following questions:
- 3a. What process was used to gather and collect the data/information?
  - 3b. How often is data/information collected?
  - 3c. How confident are you that the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3d. How do you make sure the data/information is accurate and reliable?
  - 3e. Are there any limitations to the data/information?
  - 3f. Does this data/information tell you everything you need to know about how this systemic factor is functioning statewide? If not, what's missing?
  - 3g. What would make this data/information more helpful to you to be better able to understand how well this systemic factor is functioning statewide?
4. State-specific questions: Development of any state-specific questions should be informed by the statewide assessment.

## Appendix A

### Item-Specific Alternative Language and Phrasing

The following contains words and phrases used in the Stakeholder Interview Guide with suggested alternatives that are not reliant on knowledge of child welfare terminology.

#### General

##### Statewide functioning

**Alternatives:** Occurring or functioning statewide; occurring or functioning on a statewide basis; occurring or functioning throughout the state; occurring or functioning in every jurisdiction in the state; occurring or functioning in every county.

#### Item 19

##### Statewide information system

**Alternatives:** Electronic case management system, computer system, or name/acronym of the state's statewide information system, e.g., FACTS, KIDS, FACS

##### Statewide system data elements

**Alternatives:** Provide examples of the required data elements, e.g., whether the child is in foster care; child's date of birth, sex, race, and ethnicity; physical address of placement; identification of permanency goals (reunification, adoption, guardianship, another planned permanent living arrangement)

#### Item 20

##### Written case plan

**Alternatives:** Family plan, child's plan, treatment plan, or court-ordered plan

##### Developed jointly

**Alternatives:** Parent participation; parent input; or incorporate examples of situations where joint planning might occur, e.g., family team meetings, meetings with the case worker

##### Required provisions

**Alternatives:** Provide examples of the required provisions, e.g., description of placement; services to child, parents, and foster parents; information about the child's school progress; the child's health records

#### Item 21

##### Periodic review

**Alternatives:** Going in front of the judge, court hearing, foster care board/hearing, or review board hearing. Describe periodic review requirements, e.g., determine the child's safety, review the continuing need for foster care, determine compliance with case plan and progress made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care

#### Item 22

##### Permanency hearing

**Alternatives:** Going in front of the judge, court hearing, foster care board/hearing, or review board hearing. Describe permanency hearing requirements, e.g., determine the permanent plan for the child; in the case of a child who has attained age 16, determine the services needed to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to independent living; consult with the child in an age-appropriate manner regarding the proposed permanency or transition plan for the child

### Item 23

#### Termination of parental rights

**Alternative:** Freeing the child for adoption

#### Required provisions

**Alternatives:** Provide examples of the termination of parental rights requirements, e.g., the child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months; the parent has committed a serious offense such as killing another child. Provide examples of the exceptions, e.g., the child is living with relatives; there is a compelling reason why the parents' rights should not be terminated

### Item 24

#### Notice of hearing and right to be heard

**Alternatives:** Receive a letter or phone call from a caseworker that lets you know about your right to provide comments or information to the court/judge. Receive a notification of court hearings that includes a form that requests input to the court/judge

### Item 25

#### Quality assurance system

**Alternative:** Describe the components of the quality assurance system the state has described in the Child and Family Services Plan or Annual Progress and Services Report, e.g., quality data collection; a method for conducting ongoing case reviews; a process for the analysis and dissemination of quality data on all performance measures; and a process for providing feedback to stakeholders and decision-makers and as needed, adjusting state programs and process

#### Services included in the Child and Family Services Plan

**Alternatives:** In-home and foster care services, services provided by the agency, services for which the agency contracts

### Items 26, 27, and 28

#### Training system

**Alternatives:** Training for contracted and non-contracted workers, foster parents, and adoptive parents; training provided by the agency for their staff; training provided by the contractor agency for their staff; training for staff at residential treatment centers or other child care institutions that the agency uses to place children; training provided by the university partner; or use the name the state uses for its training programs, e.g., core training, permanency training, MAPS, PRIDE, pre-service or in-service training

### Item 29

#### Service Array

**Alternatives:** Using the four categories of services listed in the Stakeholder Interview Guide, provide examples of the types of services children and families may need, e.g., family support services, family preservation services, etc.

#### Accessible

**Alternatives:** Available, able to be used, easy to get to, available nearby

#### Political jurisdictions covered by the Child and Family Services Plan

**Alternatives:** Everywhere in the state, across the state, in urban and rural areas, every place where the agency serves children and families

### Item 30

#### Individualized services

**Alternatives:** Services that the family needs; services tailored to what the child/family needs; services provided in a way the family needs them—in their home, in the language child/parent/family can understand or uses to communicate

### Item 31

#### Ongoing consultation

**Alternatives:** Gather input, meet with, discuss and plan together, feedback loops and adjustments

#### Child and Family Services Plan and Annual Progress and Services Reports

**Alternatives:** The documents the agency creates for the federal government to describe the services they provide and the state's goals and objectives; the plan the state agency has for serving children and families; the written plan that describes the services the agency provides and the goals and outcomes for the children served; the state's 5-year plan; the IV-B plan

### Item 32

#### Other federal programs

**Alternatives:** Provide examples of other federal programs serving the same population, e.g., Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Housing and Urban Development (federal housing program), child support

### Item 33

#### State standards

**Alternatives:**

Foster care licensing regulations or policies; requirements to be a foster or adoptive parent; provide examples of specific standards, e.g., reference checks, home visits, physical space requirements

#### Title IV-B or IV-E funds

**Alternatives:**

Federal funding; federal dollars used to provide foster care payments and pay for services to children and families

### Item 34

#### Criminal background check

**Alternative:** National fingerprint-based check

### Item 35

#### Reflect the ethnic and racial diversity

**Alternatives:** Whether the demographics of foster parents are similar to the race and ethnicity of children needing foster or adoptive homes

### Item 36

#### Cross-jurisdictional resources

**Alternatives:** Provide examples of resources the state may use to identify placements in other counties or states, e.g., national or state adoption exchanges and parent/relative locator services



## **Appendix B**

### **Definitions of Terms**

**Criminal Background Check**—§ 471(a)(20)(A) of the Social Security Act. A criminal background check for prospective foster and adoptive parents that includes fingerprint-based criminal record checks of the national crime information databases.

**Child Care Institution**—§ 472(c) of the Social Security Act. A private child-care institution, or a public child-care institution that accommodates no more than 25 children, which is licensed by the state in which it is situated or has been approved by the agency of the state responsible for licensing or approval of institutions of this type as meeting the standards established for such licensing. In the case of a child who has attained 18 years of age, the term shall include a supervised setting in which the individual is living independently, in accordance with such conditions as the Secretary shall establish in regulations. The term does not include detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools, or any other facility operated primarily "for the detention of children who are determined to be delinquent."

**Federal or Federally Assisted Programs**—ACYF-CB-PI-14-03. Examples of federal or federal assistance programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid, Child Care, Head Start, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Housing and Urban Development programs, and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention programs.

**Foster Family Home**—§ 472(c) of the Social Security Act. A foster family home for children, which is licensed by the state in which it is situated or has been approved, by the agency of the state having responsibility for licensing homes of this type, as meeting the standards established for such licensing.

**Interstate Compact for Placement of Children**—§ 471(a)(26) of the Social Security Act. States shall directly or by contract complete home study requests from other states within 60 days of receipt of the request. If the state fails to comply within the 60-day period as a result of circumstances beyond the control of the state (such as a failure by a federal agency to provide the results of a background check, or the failure by any entity to provide completed medical forms, requested by the state at least 45 days before the end of the 60-day period), the state shall have 75 days to comply with clause if the state documents the circumstances involved and certifies that completing the home study is in the best interests of the child.

**Periodic Review Requirements**—§ 475(5)(B) of the Social Security Act. Periodic reviews should occur periodically but no less frequently than once every 6 months from the date on which the child entered foster care by either a court or by administrative review. Requirements for periodic reviews include a determination of the child's safety, a review of the continuing necessity for foster care placement, a review of the extent of compliance with the case plan and progress made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care, and a projection of the likely date for reunification, legal guardianship, or adoption.

**Permanency Hearing Requirements**—§ 475(5)(C) of the Social Security Act. Permanency hearings should be held within 30 days of a determination that reasonable efforts to return the child home are not required, and at least once every 12 months while the child is in foster care, starting from the date the child has entered foster care. Additional requirements for permanency hearings include:

- A determination of the permanency plan for the child—whether and when the child would be reunified or placed for adoption and the state would file for termination of parental rights or refer the child for legal guardianship or (if the state has documented to the court a compelling reason why it would not be in the child's best interests to pursue these permanency options) place the child in Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
- For a child not being reunified with parents, consideration of in-state and out-of-state placement options
- In the case of a child placed out-of-state, a determination of whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the child

- In the case of a child who has attained age 16, a determination of the services needed to assist the child in making the transition from foster care to independent living
- Consultation in an age-appropriate manner with the child regarding the proposed permanency or transition plan for the child

### **Statewide System Data Elements**

- Status—In foster care or no longer in foster care
- Demographic characteristics—date of birth, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, medically diagnosed condition requiring special care, ever been adopted
- Location—child's physical location
- Goals for permanency—reunification, adoption, guardianship, another planned permanent living arrangement, not yet established

**Termination of Parental Rights**—§ 475(5)(E) of the Social Security Act. The agency seeks termination of parental rights (TPR) when the child has been in care for at least 15 of the most recent 22 months, or a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that:

- The child is abandoned; or
- The child's parent has been convicted of one of the following felonies: (1) murder of another child of the parent; (2) voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent; (3) aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring, or soliciting to commit such a murder or such voluntary manslaughter; or (4) a felony assault that resulted in serious bodily injury to the child or another child of the parent.

Exceptions to the TPR requirement include when:

- The child is being cared for by relatives;
- The agency has documented in the case plan a compelling reason for determining that TPR would not be in the best interests of the child; or
- The state has not provided to the family the services that the state deemed necessary for the safe return of the child to the child's home if reasonable efforts are required to be made with respect to the child.

**Written Case Plan Requirements**—§ 475 of the Social Security Act [45 U.S.C. 675], 45 CFR § 1356.21(g)

- A description of the type of home or institution in which a child is to be placed, including a discussion of the safety and appropriateness of the placement
- A plan for assuring that the child receives safe and proper care and that services are provided to the parents, child, and foster parents in order to improve the conditions in the parents' home, facilitate return of the child to his own safe home or the permanent placement of the child, and address the needs of the child while in foster care, including a discussion of the appropriateness of the services that have been provided to the child under the plan
- The health and education records of the child, including the most recent information available regarding:
  - Names and addresses of the child's health and educational providers
  - Child's grade level performance and school record
  - Record of the child's immunizations and medications; and

- Any other relevant health and education information concerning the child as determined to be appropriate by the agency
- For a child age 16 or over, a written description of the programs and services that will help such child prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living
- For a child with a permanency plan of adoption or placement in another permanent home, documentation of the steps to find an adoptive family or other permanent living arrangement for the child, or to place the child with an adoptive family, a fit and willing relative, a legal guardian, or in another planned permanent living arrangement, and to finalize the adoption or legal guardianship
  - For a child with respect to whom the permanency plan is placement with a relative and receipt of kinship guardianship assistance payments, a description of:
    - Steps taken to determine that it is not appropriate for the child to be returned home or adopted;
    - Reasons for any separation of siblings during placement;
    - Reasons why a permanent placement with a fit and willing relative through a kinship guardianship assistance arrangement is in the child's best interests;
    - Ways in which the child meets the eligibility requirements for a kinship guardianship assistance payment;
    - Efforts made to discuss adoption by the child's relative foster parent as a more permanent alternative to legal guardianship and, in the case of a relative foster parent who has chosen not to pursue adoption, documentation of the reasons; and
    - Efforts made to discuss with the child's parent or parents the kinship guardianship assistance arrangement, or the reasons why the efforts were not made
- A plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child while in foster care, including:
  - Assurances that each placement takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; and
  - An assurance that the agency has coordinated with local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of each placement or, if remaining in such school is not in the best interests of the child, assurances to provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school, with all of the educational records of the child provided to the school