

Instrument 1: Specifications for Monthly Sample File Submissions

Thank you for participating in the National and State Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSSCAW) sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NSSCAW will collect state and national estimates on the well-being, experiences, and service needs and receipt of families involved with the child welfare system (CWS). The information collected will support state decision-making about practice and policy improvements intended to strengthen child and family well-being, prevent the need for foster care, and promote the recruitment and retention of safe and stable foster homes. Participating in this research is voluntary.

This document describes NSSCAW's sampling process. It also includes instructions on how to prepare and submit monthly files of children with closed maltreatment investigations (assessments) and those in legal custody. You will need to submit these files for 15 consecutive months. We expect this process will take 1 hour per month.

This document is divided into three sections that provide additional information about:

- The types of child cases to include in the monthly files,
- The data elements from your state's child welfare data system to include in the monthly files, and
- The process for securely submitting monthly files to the study team.

I. Child Cases to Include in the Monthly Files

In the monthly file, you should include all children who had a closed (or completed) investigation or assessment in the previous month, and all children who entered legal custody in the previous month without a precipitating investigation or assessment (e.g., children who entered custody via the juvenile justice system). For example, in December 2026, we will be selecting cases from November 2026. From this list of the previous month's cases, we will select a random sample of children. This will be done each month for 15 months so that over the course of the 15-month period, there will be enough children selected from each county to obtain the desired number of completed interviews. Because there may be delays in which the data for closed cases are entered into agency systems, we would like to receive lists of the children who had a closed investigation/assessment in the previous 3 months. This will allow us to check the list of cases that were closed in the previous two months and include any children whose cases were not included in the previous month's list. Over the course of the 15-month period, then, we are requesting the submission of 15 total files.

For sampling, each child will be classified into three groups, which are:

- (1) children not receiving services,
- (2) children receiving in-home services, and
- (3) children receiving out-of-home services.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: The purpose of this information collection is to gather information about child and family experiences with the child welfare system. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.0 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions and for the generation and submission of each monthly sample file. This is a voluntary collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0202 the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Melissa Dolan; mdolan@rti.org.

II. Data Elements to Include in the Monthly Files

Data elements requested in each monthly file submission include: ids and unique identifiers, geographic variables, child welfare investigation/assessment case variables, and demographic variables. The data requested corresponds to data elements collected in Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) or Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) and reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

III. Process for Submitting Monthly Files

You will be given a link to a password-protected secure website to securely send data files to the study team for processing. Please upload your monthly files to RTI's password-protected website <SECURE WEBSITE> by <DAY OF MONTH>. Data security procedures are in place to ensure PII is protected. We will email you monthly with a reminder before the submission date.