

Strategic Planning for Child Welfare Services FY 2010-2015 Child and Family Services Plan

Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Child Welfare Systems:

Developing child welfare systems that can support positive change for children and families is the ultimate goal of federal and state government. As such, the federal government requires states to develop strategic Child and Family Services Plans (CFSP), submit Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSR) which document progress in implementing the plans and conduct periodic self-assessments and reviews of how well child welfare strategies are achieving positive outcomes for children and families (CFSR). States then develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address areas in which they were found to be out of conformity with any national outcomes or systemic factors under review.

Tell Me More About the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)?

States are required to develop a 5-year CFSP which outlines goals and objectives of its child welfare system as well as the programs, strategies and activities it will carry out to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. Programs included in the state's CFSP are Child Protective Services, Foster Care, Relative Care, Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program and Adoptions. The CFSP also requires a 5-year plan for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program.

When is it Due?

The new CFSP for federal fiscal years 2010 – 2015 is due to the ACF Regional Office on June 30, 2009. This will be the fourth 5-year plan Georgia has submitted. Over the next 30-45 days, the state will begin the process necessary to review and renew their CFSP.

How does this Relate to the PIP?

The state must incorporate the CFRS findings and PIP elements into the goals and objectives of the new CFSP. Progress in implementing the PIP is reported in the CFSP Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR)

What does this mean to me?

The state is using a collaborative process to plan and implement the PIP. We will use the same process to develop the 5-year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). By involving our staff and external partners in the assessment, preparation, implementation and evaluation of the CFSP, we build our capacity to conduct continuous quality improvement of our systems, programs and activities. Not only is it good practice to involve a broad range of stakeholders in the planning process, but each individual component of the plan is supported by legislation that specifically requires consultation with stakeholders to develop the CFSP.

Preparing for new CFSP requires our attention in 6 key areas:

Visioning: Visioning means the ability to “see” or envision exactly where we want to go and why we need to get there. It calls on us to review the potential effect of current and projected forces/issues, define and assess our core competencies and values and begin to plot a strategy for achieving our vision for the future.

Georgia will have an opportunity to revisit and or revise the original CFSP vision to ensure that it remains valid, practical and timely as we continue to move our child welfare systems forward.

CFSP Vision

Every child will be secure from abuse and neglect and will become a healthy, literate, productive, economically self-sustaining citizen within a nurturing, caring, permanent home environment. This will be achieved through the development and enhancement of a coordinated and integrated children and family services system which emphasizes collaborative approaches, earlier identification of issues and delivery of prevention and early intervention services which build on the strengths of families. (*Georgia’s CFSP Vision: See a New Way, 1995*)

Assessment: An assessment is a product developed by gathering, analyzing and synthesizing information to help us identify our resources, strengths, motivations, functional competencies and other factors that can be used to help improve our child and family service system.

The CFSP Assessment involves 3 basic steps:

1. Review Findings from Internal and External Performance Reviews: i.e. data reports, CFRS State Assessments, PIP, IV-E Foster Care Case Reviews and recommendations and PIPs, Legislative Mandates, Consent Decrees and any other Management and Quality Assurance Reports. We may also expand available information with newer information, as needed by conducting surveys or focus groups and incorporating feedback from community meetings and forums.
2. Analyze and synthesize the information to determine agency strengths and weaknesses based on information gathered. We will utilize agency managers, CFSP planning groups and stakeholder groups to do so. Georgia will be required to analyze the state’s progress in accomplishing the goals and objective of the current FY 2005-2009 CFSP and submit a final report along with the new CFSP.
3. Draw Conclusions, Hypotheses and Assumptions about what steps the agency can take to impact those areas. Our PIP has already helped to target key areas for address. We may choose to use our PIP goals and objectives as a portion of the goals and objectives for the CFSP.

Consultation and Coordination: Consultation and coordination are important elements of the CFSP process. Internal and external processes for obtaining broad and active involvement of major stakeholders in the development of the state’s CFSP are critical. This process gives us an opportunity for shared insight about the collective direction in which the state should move. Not only is this process good for system assessment input but also as a better way of doing business.

There are federal regulations that require consultation and coordination.

- According to section 432 of the Social Security Act, the CFSP must be jointly developed with the ACF regional office. The state agency must consult with appropriate public and nonprofit private agencies and community-based organizations.
- Section 106 of the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 (PL 108-36) requires that the 5-year CAPTA state plan be developed in collaboration with DJJ, Public Health, Child Protection and community-based CAN Prevention and Treatment Programs.
- The CFCIP and ETV requires certification that "the State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and that the State has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan" and "that the EVT program is coordinated with other appropriate educational and training programs."
- While Georgia does not have any federally recognized Tribes, we do have Native American children in our foster care system. As such, Tribes must be included in the state's consultation process.

Joint Planning: Joint planning is an ongoing partnership in the process of planning that takes place between state and federal staff and the assembled CFSP planning team. Joint planning includes discussions, consultation, and negotiation between these parties in all areas of CFSP creation. (See 45 CFR 1357.10-Definitions)

Training: The training section of the CFSP is the specific staff development and training plan that supports each of the goals and objectives of the CFSP. This Title IV-B training plan must be combined with the training plan for Title IV-E as required by 45 CFR 1356.60 (b)(2): "[all] training activities and costs funded under IV-E shall be included in the State agency's training plan for Title IV-B."

Assurances: The CFSP requires assurances or a written guarantee that all the elements included in the CFSP are the state's actual intended plan of action.