



# Child and Family Services Reviews

## Maryland

## Final Report

## 2018



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

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# Final Report: Maryland Child and Family Services Review

## INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of Maryland. The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for Maryland are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Maryland Department of Human Services, Social Services Administration (DHS SSA) and submitted to the Children's Bureau on February 2, 2018. The statewide assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
- The results of case reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home) conducted via a State Conducted Case Review process at Carroll, Anne Arundel, Allegany, and Queen Anne's counties and Baltimore, Maryland, between April 1, 2018, and September 30, 2018
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
  - Administrative Review Board
  - Attorneys for the agency, parents, and children
  - Child welfare agency county and city directors
  - Child welfare agency director
  - Child welfare agency senior managers and program managers
  - Child welfare agency supervisors and caseworkers
  - Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)
  - Foster and adoptive parent licensing staff
  - Independent verification agent
  - Interstate State Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) staff

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- Judges and magistrates
- Parents
- Public/private agency training staff
- Representatives from the Court Improvement Program (CIP)
- Representatives from other public agencies
- Service providers
- State licensed/approved child care facility staff
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, the Children’s Bureau suspended the use of the state’s performance on the national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. For contextual information, Appendix A of this report shows the state’s performance on the 7 data indicators. Moving forward, the Children’s Bureau will refer to the national standards as “national performance.” This national performance represents the performance of the nation on the statewide data indicators for an earlier point in time. For the time periods used to calculate the national performance for each indicator, see 80 Fed. Reg. 27263 (May 13, 2015).<sup>1</sup>

### Background Information

The Round 3 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates 1 or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome.

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state’s substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the statewide assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity.

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<sup>1</sup> May 2017 revised syntax (pending final verification) uses 2 years of NCANDS data to calculate performance for the Maltreatment in Foster Care indicator. National performance is based on FY 2013–2014 and 2013AB files. All other indicators use the same time periods identified in the May 2015 Federal Register notice.

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The Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. As such, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides tables presenting Maryland's overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about Maryland's performance in Round 2.

### I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

#### Maryland 2018 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

None of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity.

The following 1 of the 7 systemic factors was found to be in substantial conformity:

- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

#### Children's Bureau Comments on Maryland Performance

The following are the Children's Bureau's observations about cross-cutting issues and Maryland's overall performance:

Maryland's Place Matters initiative has been successful in preventing children from entering foster care whenever possible, ensuring that children are appropriately placed when they enter care, and shortening the length of time youth are placed in out-of-home care. Since its initiation in 2007, the number of children placed in out-of-home care decreased by more than half with only a small percentage placed in congregate care. The sample of cases reviewed during the CFSR reflected a comparable rate of congregate care settings as the overall population of children in care. Many foster care placements were found to be stable and concerted efforts were made to place siblings together in care. Children were also found to be placed with relatives whenever possible, although more efforts could be made on an ongoing basis to explore relative placements.

Maryland demonstrated its commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI) in its child welfare program by developing a robust case review process for its state-conducted CFSR that included a pool of trained reviewers and quality assurance staff. The CQI case review process, which met the requirements for a State Conducted Case Review for the CFSR, also satisfied the state's requirements for a quality assurance process. Under the CQI process, all jurisdictions within the state are reviewed on a 3-year cycle. The state's collaborative partnership with the University of Maryland School of Social Work was a key support in implementing CQI and conducting the state-led CFSR process. The ongoing integration of CQI principles serves as a solid foundation for continuing improvement in ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in the state.

Despite the increase in the number of reports of child abuse or neglect in recent years in Maryland, the case review findings showed that the agency generally responded to reports of child maltreatment in accordance with state policy. However, there were a few

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instances when face-to-face contact was not made within required timeframes. Alternative response assessments were found to be generally timely and effective. The case review revealed no incidents of reported repeat maltreatment during the period under review.

Although investigations are usually initiated timely, services to prevent entry into foster care and to allow children to remain safely in their homes are not consistently offered to families. Children are often placed into foster care without the benefit of safety services, and those remaining at home are at risk of entry. The review also showed that when safety services are provided, they are often ineffective and do not meet the specific needs of the family. Safety plans are not adequate and are often developed without the input of appropriate individuals or without ensuring that all parties understand the plan.

The lack of quality in assessments is a common theme throughout the case reviews. Safety and risk assessments are not routinely conducted at key points in the case and do not consistently address presenting or underlying issues within the family. The review found that Maryland's recently implemented standardized assessments, Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) and CANS—Family Version for In-Home Services (CANS-F), are not utilized consistently or accurately completed. Key participants said that the assessments are burdensome to complete and not particularly useful in identifying needs or individualized services. The information in the statewide assessment and provided by stakeholders identified significant issues with the results of the assessments, and there is a lack of integration into service plans. The assessments do not always address the social needs of children or assess all children in the family home. For parents, the assessments are not consistently comprehensive and do not always identify underlying issues. In some instances, assessments are completed without ever having face-to-face contact with the parent. Although the provision of concrete services is noteworthy in a few cases, services are not always aligned with the results of assessments. It is important that the agency evaluate the effectiveness and use of the standardized needs assessments as well as those used to assess risk and safety to target improvement efforts.

Case review results showed that fathers are rarely assessed for needs and services or involved in case planning even when residing in the home or involved in the child's life. The lack of family involvement in meaningful case planning is a recurring theme and efforts to involve the parents in any capacity throughout the case are inconsistent. As a result, reviewers found that appropriate and individualized services are not consistently provided, case goals are not consistently appropriate, and permanency is not always achieved timely. The most commonly identified service needs for parents are related to homelessness, transportation, and substance abuse and mental health treatment. Youth in care are provided independent living services in some cases, but for some youth the services are inadequate. Informal assessments of substitute caregivers are consistently conducted and services are adequately provided. Despite this, stakeholders reported and case reviews showed that Maryland's resource parents need additional support in managing the challenging behaviors of the children in their homes. A substantial number of local department resource homes do not complete their annual training requirements and this could be a factor contributing to permanency issues.

Other factors contributing to delays in permanency are systemic in nature. Although periodic reviews and permanency hearings are generally interchangeable in Maryland, cases involving youth in "permanent foster care" or long-term foster care are required by state law to be reviewed annually. Stakeholders said that generally reviews are scheduled timely, but there are delays in having timely hearings in the larger metropolitan area and also in smaller jurisdictions where legal representation is shared across counties. Goals are often inappropriate and goals are not concurrently explored. The reluctance to change goals and providing parents extended opportunities for reunification results in low achievement of timely permanency.

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The lack of a consistent process for tracking timely filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) or documenting compelling reasons negatively affects timely achievement of permanency. Some stakeholders said that there is a reluctance in the state to create “legal orphans” by terminating parental rights in cases where an adoptive resource has not yet been identified. Information in the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews showed that the national adoption exchange is under-used and that home studies are not being completed within 60 days. Both of these issues can contribute to delays in timely achievement of permanency.

The frequency of visits between parents and children is affected by a lack of transportation, along with substance abuse and mental health issues. Yet, the quality of parent-child visits is more of concern. The quality of visits is often affected by issues with visitation settings and concerns about safety. Often, there is little support from the agency for visits or to help children maintain connections with other family members and friends. Youth, rather than the agency, commonly take the lead in communicating with non-custodial parents and other relatives. The agency does, however, make concerted efforts to maintain children in their schools of origin.

Reviewers found that visits between workers and parents are rarely occurring. When visits do occur, the quality of the visits is not demonstrated. In some instances, the agency does not contact parents despite knowing their whereabouts and how to contact them. The review found that workers do not feel that training prepares them for their responsibilities. This affects their ability to engage families in the early stages of a case. If early rapport is not established, workers and parents typically do not have much success in case planning or regular visits. The review results found that a lack of engagement of parents during worker visits, in case planning, and in assessment of needs and provision of services is more prevalent for in-home cases. This negatively affects the agency’s ability to ensure the safety of children in their homes. The lack of quality engagement is also affected by a lack of service provision for mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and barriers in communicating with incarcerated parents and those parents who speak languages other than English.

Physical and educational needs of children in foster care are generally well-addressed. Although educational assessments are not always conducted, there is often close collaboration with the school system to provide tutoring, home educational services, and development and updating of individualized education plans. Dental care is the most common physical health area needing improvement, and stakeholders said that there are an insufficient number of providers. Mental health services are also noted to be lacking in certain areas of the state as are quality trauma-related services.

Maryland’s title IV-E demonstration waiver project, Families Blossom, was designed to create a responsive, evidence- and trauma-informed system to strengthen families and promote well-being. The project uses standardized assessments, builds capacity of evidence-based and promising practices, and serves children in their homes. The waiver is in its final year of implementation. Positive results of the waiver efforts were not demonstrated in the outcomes of the review. There is a need for these practices and initiatives to be strengthened.

## II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. Maryland provides an alternative/differential response to, in

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addition to a traditional investigation of, incoming reports of child maltreatment or children in need of services. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care, in-home, and in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to DHS SSA. The state is encouraged to conduct additional item-specific analysis of the case review findings to better understand areas of practice that are associated with positive outcomes and those that need improvement.

### **Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.**

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Item 1.

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 90% of the 29 applicable cases reviewed.

#### ***Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance***

##### **Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes.

State policy requires that screened-in child maltreatment reports be assigned for either a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation or Alternative Response. Reports assigned for a CPS investigation or Alternative Response alleging physical or sexual abuse must be initiated within 24 hours. Reports alleging neglect must be initiated within 5 days. Initiation includes face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim and an attempt to see any other child residing in the home.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 90% of the 29 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Safety statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

### **Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.**

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

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### State Outcome Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 69% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 78% of the 40 foster care cases, 55% of the 22 in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

### Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance

#### Item 2. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 42% of the 12 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 71% of the 7 applicable foster care cases, 0% of the 4 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.

#### Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 69% of the 65 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 78% of the 40 foster care cases, 55% of the 22 in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

### Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6.

### State Outcome Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 35% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

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### ***Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance***

#### **Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 75% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

#### **Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 48% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

#### **Item 6. Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 50% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Permanency statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

### **Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.**

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 45% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

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### *Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance*

#### **Item 7. Placement With Siblings**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 89% of the 18 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

#### **Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,<sup>2</sup> and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 54% of the 28 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 79% of the 14 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting were sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 52% of the 21 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother were sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 64% of the 14 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father were sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

#### **Item 9. Preserving Connections**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 59% of the 39 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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<sup>2</sup> For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

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### Item 10. Relative Placement

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 64% of the 39 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father<sup>3</sup> or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 46% of the 24 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 52% of the 21 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 50% of the 14 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

## Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

### State Outcome Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 31% of the 65 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 20% of the 40 foster care cases, 45% of the 22 in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

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<sup>3</sup> For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

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### *Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance*

#### **Item 12. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents,<sup>4</sup> and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 30% of the 63 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 23% of the 40 foster care cases, 40% of the 20 in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

#### **Sub-Item 12A. Needs Assessment and Services to Children**

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 73% of the 63 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 75% of the 40 foster care cases, 70% of the 20 in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

#### **Sub-Item 12B. Needs Assessment and Services to Parents**

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 32% of the 57 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 23% of the 35 applicable foster care cases, 42% of the 19 applicable in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 50% of the 50 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to both assess and address the needs of mothers.

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<sup>4</sup> For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

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- In 34% of the 41 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to both assess and address the needs of fathers.

### Sub-Item 12C. Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 85% of the 34 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents<sup>5</sup> and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 32% of the 62 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 26% of the 39 applicable foster care cases, 40% of the 20 applicable in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 70% of the 50 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 48% of the 48 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 32% of the 41 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

### Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 72% of the 65 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 80% of the 40 foster care cases, 59% of the 22 in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

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<sup>5</sup> For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

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### Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers<sup>6</sup> of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 31% of the 59 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 15% of the 34 applicable foster care cases, 50% of the 22 in-home services cases, and 67% of the 3 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 46% of the 50 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 35% of the 43 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

### Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Item 16.

#### State Outcome Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 79% of the 43 applicable cases reviewed.

#### Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

### Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

**Purpose of Assessment:** To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if

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<sup>6</sup> For Item 15, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

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the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 79% of the 43 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 91% of the 32 applicable foster care cases, 50% of the 10 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.

### **Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.**

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 using the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 58% of the 57 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 58% of the 40 foster care cases, 60% of the 15 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

#### ***Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance***

##### **Item 17. Physical Health of the Child**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 81% of the 54 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 85% of the 40 foster care cases, 69% of the 13 applicable in-home services cases, and 100% of the 1 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response case.

##### **Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 51% of the 41 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 54% of the 28 applicable foster care cases, 45% of the 11 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

### III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item and a description of how the rating was determined. The CFSS relies upon a review of information contained in the statewide assessment to assess each item. If an item rating cannot be determined from the information contained in the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau conducts stakeholder interviews and considers information gathered through the interviews in determining ratings for each item.

#### Statewide Information System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 19.

##### State Systemic Factor Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

##### *Statewide Information System Item Performance*

#### Item 19. Statewide Information System

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The statewide information system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment. Maryland agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that Maryland does not have an identified process to confirm the accuracy of data or timeliness of data entry on an ongoing basis. Maryland is transitioning to a new comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS), the Maryland Child, Juvenile and Adult Management System (MD CJAMS), as part of the multi-program implementation of a shared health and human services platform.

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### Case Review System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. One of the 5 items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### Case Review System Item Performance

##### Item 20. Written Case Plan

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that statewide, parental involvement in case planning is inconsistent. Some local departments develop case plans jointly with the parents, while others develop the plan without consulting the parents. The extent of parental involvement is dependent on the worker and often workers lack the skills to engage parents and develop rapport to develop plans jointly. The frequency and effectiveness of Family Involvement Meetings (FIMs) varies by jurisdiction. Transportation, agency culture, lack of flexibility in holding FIMs at convenient times for parents and families, incarceration, cultural issues, and a high case transfer rate were identified as barriers. Stakeholders said that parental involvement in case planning is especially challenging for parents with substance abuse issues and mental health issues.

##### Item 21. Periodic Reviews

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders found that not all periodic review hearings are held timely. Some of the smaller jurisdictions lack dedicated children's counsel or permanency planning liaisons (PPL), which contributes to delays in timely hearings. In the largest metropolitan area, the hearings, although scheduled timely, are not held consistently within the 6-month period; hearings are often postponed or continued when adjudication or disposition is not addressed or cases are contested. Stakeholders said cases scheduled before a judge rather than a

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magistrate may be continued more often because the judges' dockets are fuller. By Maryland statute, children with a status of permanent foster care or long-term foster care are required to have hearings only every 12 months. Although many of the jurisdictions no longer have children with this status, there are children in the largest metropolitan area with this status who do not receive 6-month reviews.

### Item 22. Permanency Hearings

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that permanency hearings for children in foster care are held no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter. Throughout the state, initial permanency hearings are often scheduled at 10 or 11 months to account for possible continuances or scheduling conflicts. The average and median time to conduct a subsequent permanency hearing is within 6 months of the prior initial permanency hearing. Ongoing permanency hearings are held every 4 to 6 months.

### Item 23. Termination of Parental Rights

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the process for filing a petition for TPR varies across the state and is not uniformly tracked. Whether the TPR is filed timely often depends on caseworker vigilance with the timeframe often missed. Courts are challenged tracking the timeframe when a child moves in and out of care. An additional barrier to timely filing is the state's reluctance to create "legal orphans" when an adoptive resource has not been identified for the child. There was no indication that the state tracks compelling reasons not to file, and the practice around the use of compelling reasons is inconsistent.

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

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

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- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state does not have a consistent process for notifying resource parents of review hearings and the right to be heard. Although the agency has a template letter for notification of hearings and the caregiver's right to be heard, the template is not always used, and notification typically occurs through verbal communication between the caseworker and caregiver. Although notification occurs more often in smaller jurisdictions, caseworkers do not regularly notify resource parents. At times caregivers must inquire about hearings. The process for notifying caregivers of their right to be heard varies by jurisdiction.

### Quality Assurance System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 25.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

#### *Quality Assurance System Item Performance*

##### Item 25. Quality Assurance System

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The quality assurance system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment. Maryland agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that Maryland has not implemented its quality assurance process for a sufficient period of time to demonstrate that the process is operational in all jurisdictions, has standards to evaluate the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

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### Staff and Provider Training

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### Staff and Provider Training Item Performance

##### Item 26. Initial Staff Training

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that although the state has a robust training curriculum and several training evaluation processes, Maryland did not provide information concerning the quality of training and whether the training provides caseworkers with the skills and knowledge required to perform their job responsibilities. Stakeholders reported that pre-service training does not prepare caseworkers because it is either too generalized or not relevant to the caseworkers' assigned practice areas. There is variation across the state because of regional needs and issues, and initial training requirements may not meet staff needs. Often, additional training is required. Local departments may gradually assign a caseload while caseworkers are still in training. Stakeholders found this disruptive to the training process and felt that shadowing other workers helped to build the necessary skills.

##### Item 27. Ongoing Staff Training

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff<sup>7</sup> that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

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<sup>7</sup> "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

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- In the statewide assessment, Maryland reported that continuing education hours were not required statewide, and stakeholders reported that requirements for ongoing training are based on the requirements for social work licensure. The 20 hours of annual training required for licensure is tracked by supervisors. *Supervision Matters* is the training for new supervisors and is available to existing supervisors. However, there is often a delay of several months before openings for this training are available. There is no statewide requirement for ongoing supervisory training, and requirements vary by jurisdiction. Since workers can attend training external to the agency, there is no method for ensuring that ongoing training addresses the skills and knowledge needed for caseworkers or supervisors to perform their duties. Other statewide training is tracked through the HUB, Maryland's learning management system. Maryland could not provide information on the number of staff who participated in statewide ongoing training, each jurisdiction's training requirements, or data on staff compliance with training requirements in each jurisdiction.

### Item 28. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although Maryland offers a substantial amount of no-cost ongoing training for resource parents through the Child Welfare Academy, the local departments of social services, online, and at biannual Resource Parent conferences, more than half of resource parents are not meeting the requirement for completion of 10 hours of annual training.

## Service Array and Resource Development

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

### State Systemic Factor Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

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services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of 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.

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### *Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance*

#### **Item 29. Array of Services**

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although many services are available statewide, including independent living services, services are not consistently available and accessible in all parts of the state. There are gaps in housing, transportation, and substance abuse treatment services statewide in addition to a lack of quality mental health services, including a lack of child psychiatrists and trauma-informed therapy. Stakeholders reported significant gaps in parenting classes targeted toward certain populations, e.g., adolescents and sexually abused children. In rural areas of the state, access to dental care is an issue. The availability of flex funds is useful in filling service gaps on a local basis, but flex funds are not always easily accessible.

#### **Item 30. Individualizing Services**

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The service array and resource development system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although the state could provide specific examples of service individualization, this is not consistently occurring across the state. Within the Baltimore metro area and across the state, developmentally responsive services vary. Stakeholders reported that individualized services are sometimes at the worker's discretion. Additionally, the agency is not always able to design culturally responsive services due to language barriers. This is especially acute in serving and individualizing services for the immigrant population.

### **Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

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### State Systemic Factor Performance

Maryland is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

### *Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance*

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

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The agency responsiveness to the community system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although the agency collaborates with community partners and solicits their participation through multiple committees and meetings, there is no connection between these committees and the establishment of the goals, objectives, and updates of the CFSP. The state plan and the local planning processes are not well-connected. The state attempts to balance priorities, but the local level is often not included in planning. When community partners have recommended changes to address the CFSP goals and objectives, their feedback is not always adequately addressed by the agency and has, at times, required legislative intervention.

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

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that there is coordination of federal services at both the state and local levels. The state coordinates with the state agency administering the TANF program, Developmental Disability Association, Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Housing and Community Development, and state agencies administering the Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, and Child Support programs. Locally, each jurisdiction has a local care coordinator to coordinate services. Stakeholders were positive regarding the local partnerships.

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### Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Maryland is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Two of the four items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

#### *Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Item Performance*

##### Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that private and public providers are governed by the same state regulations. More than half of Maryland's residential child care providers are noncompliant with the requirements for licensure. Stakeholders said that the major reason for noncompliance is failure to submit the required paperwork. Each local department of social services is responsible for ensuring that resource family homes meet the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) requirements, and the quality control mechanism for monitoring COMAR licensing standards varies significantly by jurisdiction. The current process for statewide monitoring of local department of social services (LDSS) licensed homes occurs on a quarterly basis. However, the process does not demonstrate that the requirements are implemented with fidelity and consistency across jurisdictions.

##### Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that Maryland complies with federal requirements for criminal background checks for licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements. The

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Office of Licensing and Monitoring reviews compliance of homes licensed under child placement agencies and residential child care providers. LDSS ensure that criminal background checks are completed prior to licensure of DHS SSA resource homes. SSA monitors ongoing compliance through review of quarterly reports and information in the state's information system. The state follows a critical incident protocol for all public and private resource family homes and residential care providers to address safety concerns for children in foster care. There are multiple ways in which the public and children can report their concerns, including an independent ombudsman.

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

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Strength for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that Maryland engages in targeted recruitment based on the needs of each jurisdiction. Recruitment plans are updated on an annual basis with state and local demographic data, and reports are used to development local recruitment plans to ensure that families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care are available. Local plans are reviewed at the state level with the local departments submitting quarterly reports for monitoring and feedback.

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

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is 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.

- Maryland received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state does not complete home studies timely. A low percentage of all incoming home study reports were completed within 60 days. The state has joined the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) and is determining how best to utilize home study reports and to complete the work. Maryland does not effectively use the AdoptUSKids website.

## Appendix A

### Summary of Maryland 2018 Child and Family Services Review Performance

#### I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items

**Outcome Achievement:** Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the state to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Item Achievement:** Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

#### **SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.**

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Safety Outcome 1</b> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	90% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 1</b> Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	90% Strength

#### **SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.**

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Safety Outcome 2</b> Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	69% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 2</b> Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	42% Strength
<b>Item 3</b> Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	69% Strength

## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland 2018 CFSR Performance

### PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Permanency Outcome 1</b> Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	35% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 4</b> Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	75% Strength
<b>Item 5</b> Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	48% Strength
<b>Item 6</b> Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength

### PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Permanency Outcome 2</b> The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	45% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 7</b> Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	89% Strength
<b>Item 8</b> Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	54% Strength
<b>Item 9</b> Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength
<b>Item 10</b> Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	64% Strength
<b>Item 11</b> Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	46% Strength

## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland 2018 CFSR Performance

### WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Well-Being Outcome 1</b> Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	31% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 12</b> Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	30% Strength
<b>Sub-Item 12A</b> Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	73% Strength
<b>Sub-Item 12B</b> Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	32% Strength
<b>Sub-Item 12C</b> Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	85% Strength
<b>Item 13</b> Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	32% Strength
<b>Item 14</b> Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	72% Strength
<b>Item 15</b> Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	31% Strength

### WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Well-Being Outcome 2</b> Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	79% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 16</b> Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	79% Strength

## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland 2018 CFSR Performance

### WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
<b>Well-Being Outcome 3</b> Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	58% Substantially Achieved
<b>Item 17</b> Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	81% Strength
<b>Item 18</b> Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	51% Strength

## II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children’s Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The Children’s Bureau determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the Children’s Bureau must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the Children’s Bureau must find that the item is functioning as required.

### STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Statewide Information System</b>	Statewide Assessment	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 19</b> Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland 2018 CFSR Performance

### CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Case Review System</b>	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 20</b> Written Case Plan	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 21</b> Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 22</b> Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
<b>Item 23</b> Termination of Parental Rights	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 24</b> Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

### QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Quality Assurance System</b>	Statewide Assessment	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 25</b> Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment	Area Needing Improvement

### STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Staff and Provider Training</b>	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 26</b> Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland 2018 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Item 27</b> Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 28</b> Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

### SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Service Array and Resource Development</b>	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 29</b> Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 30</b> Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

### AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 31</b> State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 32</b> Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland 2018 CFSR Performance

### FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
<b>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</b>	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
<b>Item 33</b> Standards Applied Equally	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
<b>Item 34</b> Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
<b>Item 35</b> Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
<b>Item 36</b> State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

### III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators<sup>8</sup>

The state's performance is considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator and provides contextual information for considering the findings. This information is not used in conformity decisions. State performance may be statistically above, below, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the Children's Bureau did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.5%	Lower	13.3%	12.4%–14.2%	FY15–16
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	9.67	Lower	17.30	14.89–20.1	15A–15B, FY15–16

<sup>8</sup> In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. Performance shown in this table reflects performance based on May 2017 revised syntax that is pending final verification.

## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland 2018 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	42.7%	Higher	38.0%	35.7%–40.4%	14B–17A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	45.9%	Higher	42.6%	39.3%–45.9%	16B–17A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	31.8%	Higher	29.2%	26.9%–31.7%	16B–17A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.1%	Lower	15.7%	12.6%–19.3%	14B–17A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.44	Lower	3.79	3.58–4.01	16B–17A

\* Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is derived from a multi-level statistical model and reflects the state's performance relative to states with similar children and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children and, for some indicators, the state's entry rate. It uses risk-adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a more fair comparison of state performance against national performance.

\*\* 95% Confidence Interval is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state's RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

\*\*\* Data Period(s) Used for State Performance: Refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1–September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1–March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1–September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.

## Appendix B

### Summary of CFSR Round 2 Maryland 2009 Key Findings

The Children’s Bureau conducted a CFSR in Maryland in 2009. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children’s Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

#### Identifying Information and Review Dates

<b>General Information</b>
<b>Children’s Bureau Region:</b> 3
<b>Date of Onsite Review:</b> June 15–19, 2009
<b>Period Under Review:</b> April 1, 2008, through June 19, 2009
<b>Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued:</b> January 5, 2010
<b>Date Program Improvement Plan Due:</b> April 5, 2010
<b>Date Program Improvement Plan Approved:</b> April 15, 2011

#### Highlights of Findings

<b>Performance Measurements</b>
A. The state met the national standards for <b>one</b> of the <b>six</b> standards.
B. The state achieved substantial conformity with <b>none</b> of the <b>seven</b> outcomes.
C. The state achieved substantial conformity with <b>two</b> of the <b>seven</b> systemic factors.

## Appendix B: Maryland 2009 CFSR Key Findings

### State's Conformance With the National Standards

Data Indicator or Composite	National Standard	State's Score	Meets or Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)	94.6 or higher	94.3	Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.78	Meets Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	83.9	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	78.9	Does Not Meet Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	96.8	Does Not Meet Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	95.3	Does Not Meet Standard

### State's Conformance With the Outcomes

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

## Appendix B: Maryland 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

### State's Conformance With the Systemic Factors

Systemic Factor	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Statewide Information System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Case Review System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Quality Assurance System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Staff and Provider Training	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Service Array and Resource Development	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

## Appendix B: Maryland 2009 CFSR Key Findings

### Key Findings by Item

#### Outcomes

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
2. Repeat Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
5. Foster Care Re-entries	Strength
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	Area Needing Improvement
7. Permanency Goal for Child	Area Needing Improvement
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives	Area Needing Improvement
9. Adoption	Area Needing Improvement
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	Area Needing Improvement
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	Strength
12. Placement With Siblings	Strength
13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
14. Preserving Connections	Area Needing Improvement
15. Relative Placement	Area Needing Improvement
16. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
17. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	Area Needing Improvement
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	Area Needing Improvement
19. Caseworker Visits With Child	Area Needing Improvement
20. Caseworker Visits With Parents	Area Needing Improvement

## Appendix B: Maryland 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
21. Educational Needs of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
22. Physical Health of the Child	Strength
23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement

### **Systemic Factors**

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
24. Statewide Information System	Area Needing Improvement
25. Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
26. Periodic Reviews	Strength
27. Permanency Hearings	Strength
28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Strength
30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Strength
31. Quality Assurance System	Area Needing Improvement
32. Initial Staff Training	Strength
33. Ongoing Staff Training	Strength
34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
35. Array of Services	Strength
36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement
37. Individualizing Services	Area Needing Improvement
38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength
39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength

## Appendix B: Maryland 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength
42. Standards Applied Equally	Area Needing Improvement
43. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Strength
44. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Strength
45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Area Needing Improvement