

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Final Report: Hawaii Child and Family Services Review**  
**September 2009**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Hawaii. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families within HHS.

The Hawaii CFSR was conducted the week of June 1, 2009. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2008, to June 5, 2009. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending March 31, 2008
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in Kauai County, 17 cases in Maui County, and 31 cases in Oahu County
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Native Hawaiian representatives, and attorneys

**Background Information**

The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to its substantial conformity with seven child and family outcomes and seven systemic factors. For the outcome assessments, each outcome incorporates one or more of the 23 items included in the review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on the results of the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The evaluation options for these outcomes are "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," or "not achieved." For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met.

There are 22 items that are considered in assessing the State's substantial conformity with the seven 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 whether State performance on the item meets the Federal program requirements. A determination of the rating is based on information provided in the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFRS. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Overall performance on each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either "in substantial-conformity" with that factor (a score of 3 or 4) or "not in substantial conformity" with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

Rating the Systemic Factor			
Not in Substantial Conformity		In Substantial Conformity	
1	2	3	4
None of the CFSP or program requirements is in place.	Some or all of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, but more than one of the requirements fail to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, and no more than one of the requirements fails to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement.

A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome or systemic factor must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome or systemic factor.

Because many changes were made in the CFRS process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State's performance in the second round of the CFRS is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round. Key changes in the process that make comparing performance difficult across reviews are the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents

### Key CFRS Findings Regarding Outcomes

The 2009 CFRS identified several areas of high performance with regard to Hawaii's performance in achieving the outcomes assessed during the review. These were the following:

- Item 2 pertaining to repeat maltreatment was rated as a Strength.
- Item 5 pertaining to foster care reentry was rated as a Strength.
- Item 11 pertaining to proximity of foster care placement was rated as a Strength.
- The State met the national standards for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence.
- The State met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to permanency with regard to timeliness of adoptions, achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and placement stability.

The effects of the resources that Hawaii dedicated to improving child welfare policy and practice since the first round of CFSRs were evident in the Statewide Assessment and the Onsite Review. Particularly noteworthy and commendable are the State's efforts in implementing differential response and engaging the Native Hawaiian Community and other key stakeholders, including youth and foster/adoptive parents, to strengthen the child welfare system and decrease the disproportionality of Native Hawaiians in foster care.

Although the State's performance on Safety Outcome 1 and Well-Being Outcome 2 did not meet the required level for substantial conformity, performance on these outcomes was fairly high: 87.0 percent of cases were substantially achieved for Safety Outcome 1, and 89.2 percent were substantially achieved for Well-Being Outcome 2.

The 2009 CFSR also identified the following key concerns with regard to the State's performance in achieving the desired outcomes for children and families:

- The State was not in substantial conformity with any of the Outcomes.
- Well-Being Outcome 1 was rated as substantially achieved in 40.0 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Permanency Outcome 1 was rated as substantially achieved in 47.5 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Item 9 pertaining to adoption was rated as a Strength in 23 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Item 17 pertaining to providing for the needs and services of children, parents, and foster parents was rated as a Strength in 43 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Item 20 pertaining to caseworker visits with parents was rated as a Strength in 44 percent of the cases reviewed.
- The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.
- The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicator pertaining to the timeliness and permanency of reunification (Permanency Composite 1).

The State's low performance with regard to these CFSR outcomes and national data standards may be attributed in part to the following key factors:

- Services for families are not sufficient, particularly in the areas of family support services, visitation support services, substance abuse treatment services, domestic violence treatment services, mental health treatment services, therapy, parenting programs, Independent Living (IL) services, foster and transitional homes for youth, therapeutic foster homes, and transportation services.

- There is a lack of resources to reach families in rural and remote areas of the State.
- There are delays in establishing paternity, and the State does not consistently search for fathers or involve fathers in case planning.
- There are high caseworker caseloads, especially in permanency units.

## Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

With regard to systemic factors, Hawaii is in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Statewide Information System; Quality Assurance System; Service Array and Resource Development; Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Case Review System and Staff and Provider Training.

The specific findings regarding the State's performance on safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance with regard to the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR. In the following section, key findings are summarized for each outcome and systemic factor. Information also is provided about the State's performance on each outcome and systemic factor during the Federal fiscal year 2003 CFSR.

### I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two items. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month time period (item 2). Safety Outcome 1 also incorporates two national data indicators for which national standards have been established. These data indicators measure the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Hawaii is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87.0 percent of the applicable cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 100 percent of applicable Maui County cases, 83 percent of applicable Kauai County cases, and 82 percent of applicable Oahu County cases. In addition to case review findings, Hawaii met the national standards for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence, but did not meet the national standards for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. Key findings for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 87 percent of applicable cases reviewed.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases reviewed.

Hawaii also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- DHS did not consistently respond to maltreatment reports in accordance with State-established timeframes, especially when the maltreatment report was classified as "high risk."
- The State did not meet the national standards for the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period.
- The State did not meet the national standards for the percentage of children maltreated while in foster care.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Implemented standardized intake, safety, and risk/strength assessments
- Piloted Crisis Response Teams to respond within 24 hours to reports requiring immediate face-to-face assessment
- Expanded and enhanced the Differential Response System, including implementation of voluntary case management services
- Improved data collection efforts regarding repeat maltreatment and maltreatment in foster care

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

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

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two items. One item assesses State efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing the family with services to ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes (item 3). The other item assesses efforts to manage safety and reduce risk of harm to children in their own homes and in their foster care placements (item 4).

Hawaii is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 61.5 percent of cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 71 percent of Maui County cases, 59 percent of Kauai County cases, and 58 percent of Oahu County cases. Key findings for this outcome in the 2009 CFSR were the following:

- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 69 percent of applicable cases reviewed.
- Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 65 percent of cases reviewed.

Hawaii also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- There was a lack of appropriate service provision with regard to reducing the risk of harm to the children remaining in their homes.
- There was a lack of adequate attention to potential risk factors in the child's home or during a child's visitation with parents.

