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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

November 20, 2014

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 14-84

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES
ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS

SUBJECT: CHILD WELFARE SERVICES CASE REVIEWS

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE (ACIN) No. I-40-14

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to disseminate information to counties about implementing a qualitative case review process for child welfare services by child welfare and probation agencies and outline State Fiscal Year (SFY 2014-2015) activities. Additional information on procedures and requirements will be issued in a separate ACL closer to statewide implementation.

ACIN I-40-14 outlined the benefits of developing qualitative case reviews for the purpose of examining practices and ensuring conformity with Title IV-E and Title IV-B requirements. Additionally, the CDSS encouraged the dedication of county staff to the case review process. This ACL provides additional details about the implementation of qualitative case reviews and the associated change to the 2014-15 Budget Act providing staff resources for this purpose.

The Children's Bureau (CB) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) issued Information Memorandum (IM) ACYF-CB-IM-12-07 (<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/PIP/InfoMemo1207.pdf>), with the goal of strengthening State's quality assurance processes through the model of continuous quality improvement (CQI). ACF also issued Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Technical Bulletin #7 (<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/PIP/TechnicalBulletin7.pdf>), providing instructions and guidance regarding the expectation that States conduct case file reviews as a part of their quality assurance process.

On October 10, 2014, ACF released CFSR Technical Bulletin #8 issuing the final federal regulations for the third round of CFSR calling for States to utilize information

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- [] State Law Change
[] Federal Law or Regulation Change
[] Court Order
[] Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
[x] Initiated by CDSS

from their CQI and case review processes to track performance improvements and set the baseline for Round 3 Program Improvement Plans.

Based upon this new guidance, the CDSS will be using qualitative case reviews conducted by counties to meet the case review requirements for the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The State is scheduled to complete the federal Case Review and Statewide Assessment components of the CFSR in 2016 but must have its process developed and operational in 2015 to meet federal CFSR requirements.

In early 2014 CDSS convened a State/county workgroup including county child welfare and probation staff to discuss the new federal requirements and the state's future case review process. Beginning October 2014 five counties will be early implementers and will begin testing the processes for conducting case reviews. These early implementing counties are: Butte, El Dorado, Madera, Monterey and San Francisco. These counties have volunteered to assist the state with development of the processes necessary for carrying out the reviews. This includes the pre-review case selection, staff training, and testing of the federal assessment instrument. Furthermore these counties will complete a number of case reviews with interviews of case participants. Based on this testing the state will work with counties, CalSWEC, and Regional Training Academies (RTAs) to develop a formal training curriculum and process guide for conducting case reviews in the counties. It is expected that statewide implementation of case reviews will occur no later than August 31, 2015.

During the current SFY, the 53 counties who are not early implementers will be expected to prepare for the introduction of the case review process through development of administrative structures including the hiring of case review staff and training.

For new requirements imposed on 2011 Realignment programs by the federal government, the non-federal share of costs are to be split equally between the State and local governments. As such, the 2014-15 Budget Act included a general fund appropriation for the State's share of costs for county staff to conduct qualitative case reviews. Although Child Welfare agencies will be the recipients of the State allocation, local agencies will need to determine how best to use the resources to ensure that both Child Welfare agencies and Probation Departments are represented in the case reviews. CDSS will release a County Fiscal Letter (CFL) following this ACL with detailed Child Welfare Services Case Review allocation information and claiming instructions for counties.

Questions regarding qualitative case reviews should be directed Dave McDowell, Chief of Performance and Program Improvement at dave.mcdowell@dss.ca.gov or (916) 651-8099.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

GREGORY E. ROSE, Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division