



Federal Review Finds District Child Welfare Performing in Top Half Compared to Other Systems

Among 42 states and jurisdictions, the District of Columbia is the only one meeting 100 percent of national standards for child welfare systems—and the District is also performing in the top half on all national measures of positive outcomes for child welfare clients. These findings about the performance of District services for abused and neglected children and their families reflect current data from the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducts in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. To date, DHHS has released results for 42 states and jurisdictions, including the District, in the second-round CFSR that started in 2007.

District Ranks Second and Third on Two of Seven National Outcome Measures

On the seven national child welfare outcome measures, District rankings ranged from two to 18 among the 42 states/jurisdictions reviewed to date (Table 1). Highlights of these rankings demonstrate strong local performance compared to other child welfare systems.

- The District ranked **second** in safely maintaining children in their homes when possible and appropriate, meaning local child welfare removes children and separates families at a lower rate than all but one other system reviewed to date.
- The District ranked **third** in providing adequate services to meet the physical and mental health needs of children involved in the child welfare system.
- On the remaining five outcome measures, the District ranked in the **top half** of the 42 states/jurisdictions reviewed to date.
- On all seven outcome measures, District rankings were **above both the average and median percentages** of cases substantially achieving each outcome across the 42 states/jurisdictions reviewed to date.

District Alone Meets All National System Standards

Of the 42 states/jurisdictions reviewed to date in the second-round CFSR, the District is the only one meeting all seven national system standards. Scores of three and four represent substantial conformity (Table 2). The District scored highest for quality assurance; responsiveness to the community; and foster/adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention. This is a substantial improvement over the first-round CFSR in 2001, when the District met four (57%) of these seven system standards.

CFSR Background

The DHHS Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is mandated by law to conduct cyclical reviews of child welfare systems in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to improve national performance in addressing child abuse and neglect. Reviewers evaluate state performance against a rigorous set of standards designed to improve outcomes for the nation's most vulnerable children and families. ACF launched the first Child and Family Service Review cycle in 2001, and the second in 2007. The District's intensive, week-long, second-round CFSR in June 2007 looked at the citywide child welfare network (which includes the Child and Family Services Agency, Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, and numerous local public and private entities) through examination of case records and interviews of client families, social workers, services providers, and other stakeholders.

Table 1:
National Child Welfare Outcome Measures

Outcome	District of Columbia		42 States/Jurisdictions Reviewed to Date	
	Ranking Compared to Others Reviewed to Date	Percentage of District Sample Cases Achieving Outcome	Average Percentage of Sample Cases Achieving Outcome	Median Percentage of Sample Cases Achieving Outcome
<u>Safety Outcome 1:</u> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	15	80.80%	72.85%	74.60%
<u>Safety Outcome 2:</u> Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	2	81.50%	66.07%	68.20%
<u>Permanency Outcome 1:</u> Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	17	41.00%	38.55%	37.50%
<u>Permanency Outcome 2:</u> The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	16	71.80%	65.45%	67.50%
<u>Well Being Outcome 1:</u> Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	9	49.20%	43.55%	43.85%
<u>Well Being Outcome 2:</u> Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	18	88.00%	87.06%	87.35%
<u>Well Being Outcome 3:</u> Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	3	87.30%	75.37%	75.45%

Source: DHHS Administration for Children and Families; March 17, 2010

Table 2:
National Child Welfare System Standards

Factor	District of Columbia Rating
Statewide Information System	3
Case Review System	3
Quality Assurance System	4
Training	3
Service Array	3
Responsiveness to the Community	4
Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention	4

Source: DHHS Administration for Children and Families; March 17, 2010