

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report: Arizona Child and Family Services Review
February 2008

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Arizona. 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 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to 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 (CB) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Arizona CFSR was conducted the week of August 6, 2007. The period under review for the case reviews was from April 1, 2006 to August 6, 2007. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2004, FY 2005, and the CFSR 12-month target period ending March 31, 2006.
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care cases and 25 in home services cases) at three sites throughout the State: 31 cases in Maricopa County, 17 cases in Pima County and 17 cases in Pinal County.
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including, but not limited to, children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel and attorneys.

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance on 23 items relevant to 7 outcomes and 22 items pertaining to 7 systemic factors. In the Systemic Factors Section of the report, each item incorporated in each systemic factor is rated as either a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement, based on whether State performance on the item meets Federal policy requirements. Information relevant to each item comes from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews conducted during the week of the onsite CFSR. The overall rating for the systemic factors 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 (i.e., a score of 3 or 4), or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2).

Items relevant to the 7 outcomes are discussed in the Outcomes Section of the report. An overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as a Strength. Performance ratings for each of the 7 outcomes are based on item ratings for each case. A State may be rated as having Substantially

Achieved, Partially Achieved, or Not Achieved the outcome. The determination of whether a State is in substantial conformity with a particular outcome is based on the percentage of cases that were determined to have substantially achieved the outcome. Specifically, for a State to be in substantial conformity with an outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome.

ACF has set very high standards of performance for the CFSR Review. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be acceptable. The focus of the CFSR process is on continuous quality improvement; high standards are set to ensure ongoing attention to the goal of achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency and well-being.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95 percent standard established for the CFSR onsite review at the end of their PIP implementation. CB recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often are time-consuming to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with CB to establish a specified amount of improvement or implement specified activities for their PIP. That is, for each outcome or item that is an area needing improvement, each State (working in conjunction with CB) specifies how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the areas needing improvement, and determines the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its PIP and still not perform at the 95 percent (for outcomes) or 90 percent (for items) level as required by the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR assesses a State's current level of functioning with regard to achieving desired child and family outcomes by once more applying high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case-review methodology. This is intended to serve as a basis for continued planning in areas in which the State still needs to improve. The goal is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the closing of the PIP.

Because many changes have been made in the onsite CFSR 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 CFSR is not directly comparable to their performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of percentages. Key changes in the CFSR process that make it difficult to compare performance 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 non-custodial parents.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

The 2007 CFSR identified several areas of high performance in Arizona with regard to achieving outcomes for children. Arizona meets the national standards for both national data indicators pertaining to safety—the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. The State also meets the national standards for two of the national data indicators pertaining to permanency—Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions, and Permanency Composite 3: Achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. In addition, although Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the 7 CFSR outcomes, the State did achieve overall ratings of Strength for the individual indicators pertaining to repeat maltreatment (item 2), placing children in close proximity to their parents (item 11), and placement with siblings (item 12).

The CFSR also identified areas of concern with regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. The State did not meet the national standards for data indicators pertaining to the timeliness and permanency of reunification (Permanency Composite 1), and placement stability (Permanency Composite 4). In addition, Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was determined to be substantially achieved in only 42.5 percent of the cases reviewed and Well-Being Outcome 1 was determined to be substantially achieved in only 45.1 percent of the cases. Concerns also were identified with regard to Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate), which was determined to be substantially achieved in only 63.1 percent of the cases and Well Being Outcome 2 (Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs), which was determined to be substantially achieved in only 62.9 percent of the cases.

The State's low performance in these areas may be due in part to the lack of services and to delays in service provision across the State. Concerns about service delays and gaps were particularly apparent with regard to mental health services and substance abuse treatment services. This was found to impact achieving permanency for children in a timely manner. In addition, both the case reviews and stakeholder interviews identified a lack of services to support foster parents in stabilizing placements for children with behavioral problems. The service gaps and delays also appear to affect the State's performance with regard to addressing risk of harm issues when children remain in their homes. Case review findings indicated that many children remain at risk of harm in their own homes because the services that are provided to the families often are not sufficient to address all of the safety and risk issues in the home. Both the case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that, although needs assessments generally are being conducted, the services that are recommended through the assessments are not always being provided, often because of a scarcity of these services.

Concerns also were noted with regard to the use of psychotropic medications for children in foster care without sufficient procedures in place for monitoring and ensuring that therapeutic services are provided in conjunction with medications. Some stakeholders reported that psychotropic medications are prescribed for children in foster care by pediatricians without the knowledge of the caseworkers. Nine of the children in the 40 foster care cases were on medications related to behavioral or mental health concerns.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

With regard to systemic factors, Arizona was found to be in substantial conformity with the factors of Statewide Information System; Quality Assurance System; Training; Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Arizona was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Case Review System and Service

Array. With regard to the Case Review System, a key concern identified by stakeholders and case reviewers pertained to the inconsistent involvement of parents in developing the case plan. In addition, although the State has a process in place for filing termination of parental rights (TPR) for children who are in foster care, there often are delays in filing and when TPR is not filed, compelling reasons are not documented in the case file on a consistent basis.

The specific findings with regard to the State's performance on the 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 7 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 2001 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 indicators. 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 (item 2).

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 78.1 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance varied across sites. The outcome was substantially achieved in 100 percent of Pinal County cases and 82 percent of Maricopa County cases, compared to 50 percent of Pima County cases. However, Arizona met the national standards for the two data indicators relevant to Safety Outcome 1. These indicators pertain to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Arizona was in substantial conformity with this outcome during its 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address the outcome in its PIP.

The results of the 2007 CFSR onsite case review indicate that DCYF is not consistent with regard to responding to maltreatment allegations within the timeframes established by State policy. However, the case review findings also indicate that DCYF responded to allegations classified as high risk (priority 1) in a timely manner; delays were found when reports were assigned moderate or low-risk levels.

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

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the issue of child welfare agency efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to reduce the risk of harm to the children.

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 63.1 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance on this item did not vary substantively across counties. Arizona was in substantial conformity with this outcome for the 2001 CFSR and did not address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

The findings of the onsite CFSR case review indicate that in many cases services were provided to address the safety and risk concerns in the family and caseworkers were effectively assessing risk in the foster care homes. However, the findings also indicate that this was not done in all cases. A frequent observation of CFSR case reviewers was that the agency provided services to the family, but often these services were not sufficient to address all of the safety and risk concerns in the family, leaving the children at risk in their homes.

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

There are 6 indicators incorporated in the assessment of permanency outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency's efforts to prevent foster care re-entry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency's efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or to ensure that children who have "other planned living arrangements" as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 42.5 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for the CFSR 12-month target period, the State did not meet the national standards for Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification, and Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability.

However, Arizona did meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions, and Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.

Although Arizona's performance on this outcome was fairly low in all sites, there was variation across sites. The outcome was found to be substantially achieved in 60 percent of Pima County cases compared to 40 percent of Maricopa County cases and 30 percent of Pinal County cases.

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2001 CFSR. Arizona implemented the following strategies in its PIP to address the concerns found in 2001:

- Reviewed and revised the training and handouts pertaining to data entry regarding removal status.
- Improved aftercare planning and services for families at the time of foster care discharge and/or case closure.
- Awarded performance contracts for foster and adoptive home recruitment, study and licensing/certification services in Maricopa County (District 1).
- Implemented the *Family-Centered Interview and Documentation Guide* and *Strengths and Risks Assessment Tool* to better manage out-of-home care.
- Revised the IV-B training plan to include staff at child care institutions and foster parents.
- Provided training on placement support policy and placement transition procedures for staff and supervisors.
- Acquired a foster and adoptive parent training curriculum that includes specific modules related to medically fragile children, sexual abuse victims and children with behavioral and mental health needs.
- Included concurrent planning in the core training for case managers.
- Worked with the Court Improvement Program to reduce the length of time for the TPR appeals process.

The 2007 CFSR identified some concerns that also were found in the 2001 CFSR. For example, in both the 2001 and the 2007 CFSRs, the case reviews found the following:

- In some cases, foster parents were not adequately prepared or supported to meet the needs of children in their care.
- There was little evidence of concurrent planning. Although concurrent goals were listed in the case plan, in most cases the caseworkers were not working toward the goals simultaneously.
- Adoptions were not being achieved in a timely manner due primarily to a lack of diligent effort to find adoptive homes for children who were not going to be adopted by relatives or foster parents.

The case reviews in the 2007 CFSR also found the following:

- There were many cases in which children were on runaway status during the period under review or had run away at some time during the period under review.
- The goal of reunification was not being changed in a timely manner even when the prognosis for reunification was poor.
- Fifty percent of the youth with a goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA) had not received independent living services although they were old enough to be eligible for those services.
- The lack of available services for parents was a barrier to achieving reunification in a timely manner in many cases.

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

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates 6 indicators that assess the child welfare agency's performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11); (2) placing siblings together (item 12); (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and (6) promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 71.1 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 90 percent of Pinal County cases, compared to 72 percent of Maricopa County cases and 50 percent of Pima County cases.

Arizona also did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. During the 2001 CFSR, only item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. To address the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR, as part of its PIP, Arizona implemented a training curriculum for caseworkers that focuses on the process of engaging extended family members and significant others as resources and supports for the child and on the importance of developing visitation plans.

In the 2007 CFSR, all items incorporated in this outcome were rated as an Area Needing Improvement except for item 11 (proximity of placements) and item 12 (placements with siblings). Key findings of the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- Most of the children in the cases were placed in close proximity to their parents or other relatives (item 11).
- Most of the children in the cases were placed with siblings, if appropriate and safe (item 12).
- There were many cases in which the frequency of visitation between the child and parents and between siblings was inadequate to meet the needs of the child (item 13).
- Fathers were more likely than mothers to have had no visits with their children during the period under review (item 13).
- For the most part, the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections with extended family members (e.g., through phone contacts and visits) (item 14).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to seeking both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for the child (item 15).
- There were many cases in which reviewers determined that the agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship between children and their mothers and fathers (item 16).

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

Well Being Outcome 1 incorporates 4 indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator examines the child welfare agency's efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker's contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 41.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome did not vary across sites or as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services).

Arizona also did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during its 2001 CFSR. For the 2001 CFSR, items 17, 18 and 20 were rated as Areas Needing Improvement; item 19 was rated as a Strength. To address the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Increased the number of referrals of cases for Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) meetings.
- Provided supervision and training to caseworkers to improve the quality of their contacts with parents and children.
- Prepared and disseminated a *Family-Centered Interview and Documentation Guide* that includes questions case managers can ask of parents, children and others to engage them in a comprehensive family-centered assessment.
- Provided training on the *Family-Centered Strengths and Risks Assessment Interview and Documentation Guide*.
- Expanded the use of mediation services in permanency planning in Maricopa and Yavapai Counties.

In the 2007 CFSR, all items incorporated in this outcome were rated as Areas Needing Improvement. The case reviews in the 2007 CFSR resulted in the following findings:

- The agency was not consistent in assessing and meeting the services needs of mothers, fathers, children and foster parents. Fathers were less likely than the others to have their needs assessed and/or met.
- The agency did not always make diligent efforts to involve mothers, fathers and age-appropriate children in developing the case plan, with fathers being less likely to be involved than mothers or children.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children was not consistent across cases.
- There was a general lack of caseworker visits with mothers and fathers, but particularly with fathers.

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

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to address and meet the educational needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases (item 21).

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. Reviewers determined that 77.3 percent of the cases reviewed substantially achieved this outcome. This is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. There were no substantive differences in performance on this outcome across sites. However, there was considerable variation in performance by type of case. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 90 percent of the applicable foster care cases, compared to 46 percent of the applicable in-home services cases.

The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in the 2001 CFSR. To address the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR, the State developed the following strategies in its PIP.

- Reduced the number of school changes due to placement changes.
- Revised State policy and procedures for educational services for children in out-of-home care

Some of the concerns noted in the 2001 CFSR also were noted in the 2007 CFSR. Specifically, in both the 2001 CFSR and the 2007 CFSR, case reviewers found several cases in which either children's educational needs were not assessed or their educational needs were assessed, but there was a lack of follow up services to address the identified needs.

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

This outcome incorporates two indicators that assess the child welfare agency's efforts to meet children's physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs.

Arizona did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 62.9 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome did not vary substantively across sites or as a function of the type of case.

Arizona also did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR. To address the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Improved the availability of transportation services for children to access health care providers in rural areas.
- Increased case manager and caregiver access to medical and dental history information by using an electronic transfer of information system.
- Provided training to supervisors and case managers regarding the process of referring children for mental health assessments and ensuring that mental health assessments are received.
- Developed a standardized response procedure to be used when there is an allegation of sexual abuse between children in an out-of-home care placement.
- Improved mental health service planning and provision for children with higher or more complex needs.
- Increased access to child specific title XIX mental health services by revising title XIX/behavioral health policy and procedures and training some supervisors and case managers and notifying all staff in writing of the changes.
- Increased access to mental health services by developing a 24 hour urgent response policy that requires the Child Protective Services (CPS) case manager to make a referral to the Regional Behavioral Health Association when a child is removed from a placement or a placement disrupts.

The results of the 2007 CFSR indicate a lack of consistent assessment and service provision pertaining to children's physical and mental health needs.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating a statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for children in foster care.

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The State also was in substantial conformity with this outcome in the 2001 CFSR. Stakeholders noted that the Arizona statewide information system, known as CHILDS, provides information on client demographics and the location and current status of children in foster care. CHILDS also generates management reports to track outcome measures and statistical client information.

Case Review System

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of a Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

Arizona is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor during its 2001 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its PIP.

In the 2007 CFSR, it was determined periodic reviews of the status of each child in foster care are being held at least every 6 months and usually more often. Reviews are held both by the Foster Care Review Board and by the courts. In addition, it was determined that permanency hearings are being held in a timely manner for the most part, with the initial permanency hearing taking place 12 months from the point of the child's removal from the home, and additional permanency hearings occurring every 12 months thereafter. However, stakeholders interviewed in two of the counties included in the on-site CFSR indicated that the courts in those counties often grant continuances to attorneys, which results in extending the timeframe for the permanency hearings.

Despite these areas of Strength, the following concerns were noted:

- Although case plans were reported to be developed for all children and many efforts have been implemented in the State to increase engagement of families in the case planning process, information from stakeholder interviews, the Statewide Assessment and the onsite case reviews indicates that parent involvement in case planning remains a challenge for the State.
- Although the State has a system in place to file for TRP in a timely manner, there are delays in some counties and the agency is not consistent in documenting compelling reasons for not filing TPR.

- Although foster parents and relative caregivers are given the opportunity to provide input into Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) reviews and court hearings, there is a lack of consistency in the notification process so that foster parents and relative caregivers are not routinely receiving notification of these hearings, particularly court hearings.

Quality Assurance System

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System is based on whether the State has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30), and whether the State is operating a statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The State was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2001 CFSR and addressed the factor in its PIP through the following strategies:

- Instituted a statewide continuous quality improvement process that meets Council on Accreditation standards.
- Designed and implemented a statewide peer case record review of a random selection of investigation and ongoing cases.
- Increased clinical supervision of case management activities related to safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.

In the 2007 CFSR, it was determined that the State has licensing standards and other provisions in place to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care. However, some concerns were expressed by stakeholders regarding a lack of agency policy and standardized procedures relevant to children who are prescribed psychotropic medications. The CFSR also found that the State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports and evaluates program improvement measures implemented. One component of this system is a case review process that is similar to the Federal CFSR, although it does not include interviews with case-related stakeholders. Case reviews are conducted for each District in the State and action plans are developed for outcome areas found to need improvement.

Training

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of the State's new caseworker training program (item 32), ongoing training for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of training. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor during the 2001 CFSR and therefore was required to address the factor in its PIP. To address the identified concerns, Arizona revised its initial training curriculum for both caseworkers and supervisors.

The 2007 CFSR determined the following with regard to this factor:

- The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and addresses the services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

- All caseworkers must complete the training before they are assigned a caseload.
- Supervisor core training is provided to all supervisory staff within the first 12 months of becoming a supervisor.
- Ongoing training is available for all staff and the agency requires that direct service staff receive 24 hours of in-service training each year.
- The State requires that current or prospective foster and adoptive parents receive training before a child is placed in their home, and that they participate in 6 hours of in-service training annually. The State also requires that staff of State-licensed or -approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E receive training that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties.

Service Array

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions: (1) Does the State have in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? (2) Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? (3) Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Arizona is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address the factor in its PIP. The general finding of the 2007 CFSR was that, although services to children and family are generally individualized to meet the unique needs of children and parents, particular concerns were identified by stakeholders and in the Statewide Assessment regarding the quality and availability of mental and behavioral health services, particularly when in-patient treatment is needed or when intensive levels of mental health services are necessary. In addition, there are variations in the accessibility of services across the State, as well as waiting lists for services, including psychological evaluations, which can take several months to schedule. Stakeholders interviewed in Maricopa County reported extensive delays in providing independent living services to adolescents in foster care.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan (items 38 and 39), and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2001 CFSR. The general finding in the 2007 CFSR was that the State engages in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders to obtain their input regarding the goals and objectives of the CFSP and to obtain feedback in the course of developing their annual reports of progress and services (39). The CFSR also found that there is coordination between DCYF and other Federal and Federally assisted programs to meet the service needs of the children and families served by the agency (item 40).

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).

Arizona is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor during the 2001 CFSR. The 2007 CFSR determined that the State has clear standards for foster family homes and child care institutions and that these standards are implemented in a uniform manner and are applicable for both non-relative and relative licensed foster homes. Arizona's Statewide Assessment notes that the agency allows relatives to either pursue licensure as foster parents and receive a foster care maintenance payment, or be approved as an unpaid court-approved kinship placement. Relatives who do not wish to pursue licensure can still provide a home to related children in need of foster care services by meeting established standards for court approval. Relatives who wish to become licensed foster parents must complete the same process as all other licensed foster parents. The CFSR also determined that the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances for foster parents, relative caregivers and residential facility staff. In addition, Arizona was determined to have diligent foster and adoptive parent recruitment efforts and to appropriately place children across jurisdictions within the State and in other States.

Table 1. Arizona CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Rating	
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met national standards?</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>
Safety Outcome 1-Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	NO	78.1	YES		
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				ANI	78
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				Strength	100
Safety Outcome 2 – Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	NO	63.1			
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	78
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	65
Permanency Outcome 1- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	NO	42.5	Met 2, did not meet 2		
Item 5: Foster care re-entry				Strength	100
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	57.5
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	80
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship and placement with relatives				ANI	74
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	37.5
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	36
Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	NO	71.1			
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	97
Item 12: Placement with siblings				Strength	95
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	69
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	84
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	73
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	61

*95 percent 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.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases must be rated as a Strength.

Table 2. Arizona CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Rating**	Percent Strength
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved</i>		
Well Being Outcome 1 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	NO	41.5		
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	46
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	52
Item 19: Worker visits with child			ANI	66
Item 20: Worker visits with parents			ANI	43
Well Being Outcome 2 - Children receive services to meet their educational needs	NO	77.3		
Item 21: Educational needs of child			ANI	77
Well Being Outcome 3 - Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	NO	62.9		
Item 22: Physical health of child			ANI	75
Item 23: Mental health of child			ANI	72

*95 percent 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.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of strength, 90 percent of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of item 21) must be rated as a Strength. Because item 21 is the only item for Well Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95 percent strength rating applies.

Table 3: Arizona CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM	YES	4	
Item 24: State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, 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.			Strength
CASE REVIEW SYSTEM	NO	2	
Item 25: Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parents that includes the required provisions.			ANI
Item 26: Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.			Strength
Item 27: Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the States has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.			Strength
Item 28: Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act			ANI
Item 29: Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.			ANI
QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM	YES	3	
Item 30: The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children.			Strength
Item 31: The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identified strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluations program improvement measures implemented.			Strength
TRAINING	YES	4	
Item 32: The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.			Strength
Item 33: The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.			Strength
Item 34: The States provides training 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.			Strength

Table 3: (Continued)			
Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity	Score	Item Rating
SERVICE ARRAY	NO	2	
Item 35: The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.			ANI
Item 36: The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP.			ANI
Item 37: The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.			Strength
AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY	YES	4	
Item 38: In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, services 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 and objectives of the CFSP.			Strength
Item 39: The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP.			Strength
Item 40: The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.			Strength
FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION	YES	4	
Item 41: The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.			Strength
Item 42: The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.			Strength
Item 43: 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.			Strength
Item 44: The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom adoptive homes are needed.			Strength
Item 45: The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.			Strength

*Scores range from 1 to 4. A score of 1 or 2 means that the factor is not in substantial conformity. A score of 3 or 4 means that the factor is in substantial conformity.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)