

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
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## **ND foster care program in substantial compliance after federal review**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services announced today the state’s Title IV-E foster care program is in substantial compliance following a federal eligibility review in June by the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families. States that receive funding through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act are required by federal regulation to undergo a review every three years.

Federal officials reviewed 80 foster care case files to determine if the state is in compliance with federal eligibility requirements and to ensure that proper payments were made for the daily care and supervision on behalf of eligible children placed in licensed or approved family foster homes or residential child care facilities.

The review team determined that all 80 cases met eligibility requirements and were in full compliance as non-error cases. Federal regulation allows states no more than four errors during a review period. The cases were randomly selected for review from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2016.

“The positive outcome of this review is the result of hard work and collaboration on all levels from the county, state, foster care providers, partnering agencies, Tribes, and North Dakota courts,” said Chris Jones, the department’s executive director. “It is evident that the well-being of children in foster care is a top priority for everyone.”

The federal review team noted several areas of strengths. North Dakota was monitoring payments and following its quality assurance policy. All foster care settings were fully licensed and criminal background checks were well documented prior to claiming Title IV-E foster care payments to ensure the safety of children while in placement. In addition, clearly defined eligibility determination procedures were in place for state and tribal cases authorized by the financially responsible county.

Kelsey Bless, the department’s foster care permanency administrator, said the department will continue to collaborate with its partners to be good stewards of federal and state dollars.

“The department offers statewide in-person worker training, technical assistance, monthly foster care eligibility conference calls and will continue to oversee the coordination of three quality assurance file reviews annually,” she said.

The final North Dakota Title IV-E report is online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/family.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/family.html). The state’s next scheduled federal Title IV-E review will be in 2020.

Child welfare services, including foster care, are provided through a partnership with county social services, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Juvenile Services, Tribal social services, Juvenile Court system and licensed or approved statewide providers.

According to department records, there are about 1,500 children and youth in foster care in North Dakota. About 490 of them are determined to be Title IV-E eligible for federal monthly maintenance payments to providers.

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