

Continuous Quality Improvement

Service Chapter 605

**North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Introduction 605-05

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Qualitative case reviews are a critical component to a functioning CQI Process. The purpose of this section is to identify and describe North Dakota's Onsite Case Review (OCR) process, administered by the Children and Family Services Division of the ND Department of Human Services and managed by a contracted provider. The OCR is a significant part of the state's quality assurance process for child welfare. The OCR reviews the state's child welfare practice to identify strengths and challenges in the system, and focuses on outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being.

The OCR goes beyond compliance monitoring. The OCR intends to gather and assess a range of information about child welfare practice on an ongoing basis. The expectation is for ongoing regional case reviews to be conducted by all levels of staff. Involving agency caseworkers, agency supervisors, agency directors, regional representatives of county social services, and state administrators in the review process is a proven approach to address and implement lasting improvements and practice change that will benefit the children and families served through North Dakota's child welfare system.

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APSR: The federally-required APSR (Annual Progress and Services Report) provides an annual update on the progress made by states or tribes toward the goals and objectives in their CFSPs and outlines the planned activities for the upcoming fiscal year.

Case Reviewer: Reviews case practice through both case file review and interviews with key case participants. A case reviewer cannot be a case worker or agency supervisor from the region being reviewed. Inclusive of all partner agencies and levels, with less reliance on those not currently practicing in child welfare. Two case reviewers will make up a team, reviewing up to three cases per review.

CFSP: The CFSP (Children and Family Services Plan) is a federally-required strategic plan that sets forth a state's vision and goals to strengthen its child welfare system. It outlines initiatives and activities that the state will carry out over an identified five-year period to administer and integrate programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

CFSR: The Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) are conducted by the Children's Bureau, within the United States Department of Health and Human Services, to help States improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families who receive services through the child welfare system. The Bureau conducts the reviews to ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements, to determine what is actually happening to children and families in child welfare services, and to assist states in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes. The CFSRs monitor States' conformity with the requirements of titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI): The complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. It relies on an

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organizational and/or system culture that is proactive and supports continuous learning. CQI is firmly grounded in the overall mission, vision, and values of the child welfare system. It is dependent upon the active inclusion and participation of staff at all levels and statewide Stakeholders (National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and Casey Family Programs, 2005).

Debriefing: Informal guided discussions following the onsite review, open to the entire OCR workforce and those invited from the region (i.e. key agency staff who will benefit from hearing about the findings or will have a major or shared responsibility for practice improvement responses). High-level issues noted during debriefing are included in the feedback provided to the region following the onsite review.

Entrance Conference: Orientation meeting for the OCR workforce at the start of the review week to provide an overview of the process, the schedule, and logistical information.

Exit Conference: Meeting at the conclusion of the regional onsite review to discuss preliminary findings of the case review, overarching themes related to practice strengths and challenges, and systemic strengths and challenges. This meeting is open to the entire OCR workforce, local agencies, and Stakeholders.

First Level Quality Assurance (FLQA): The process during the case review process to ensure consistency and accuracy of ratings within the Onsite Case Review Instrument (OSRI). Completed by Certified QA Leads.

FRAME: North Dakota's web-based child welfare information data system.

Key Case Participants: The members of the Child and Family Team who must be interviewed during the onsite review. Includes the child/children (generally school age), child's parent(s) and/or caregivers, child's foster parent(s), pre-adoptive parent(s), or other caregivers such as group home staff, and the family's caseworker. When the caseworker has left the agency or is no longer available to be interviewed, the supervisor will

participate in the interview. If the child is in adoptive placement, the adoption worker is also included as a key case participant.

Local Agencies: For the purposes of the Onsite Case Review, local agencies are defined as county social services, DJS, and tribal social services.

Local Site Coordinator (LSC): The designated individual in each region to serve as the main point of contact to assist with all facets of Onsite Case Review. Regional representatives of county social services will serve in this role.

OMS: Online Monitoring System. The federal web-based application to record and track OSRI information and Stakeholder input.

Onsite Case Review (OCR): One of North Dakota child welfare system's quality assurance processes. It is used to gather regional performance information from the examination of a random sample of foster care and in-home services cases to evaluate outcome achievement, and to conduct interviews with Stakeholders to evaluate the seven systemic factors. The OCR ensures that the state child welfare system meets applicable federal and state requirements and regulations.

Onsite Review: The term used to describe the activities and events surrounding the review week.

OSRI: Onsite Review Instrument is the federal case review instrument used to evaluate safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes as they relate to child welfare practice. The OSRI is the instrument completed for each case reviewed in the onsite review. Formerly referred to as the CFSR Instrument.

Period Under Review (PUR): The time frame used when making decisions about a case.

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Program Improvement Plan (PIP): A strategic plan developed in partnership with the Children's Bureau addressing areas needing improvement following the state's federal CFSR.

Preliminary Results Meeting (PRM): Meeting between the review team and caseworker to discuss the preliminary findings in the case reviewed. The caseworker's supervisor is welcome to attend.

Quality Assurance (QA): A process designed to assess the success of the total system in achieving its goals and to ensure that practice standards are met.

Quality Assurance (QA) Lead: Ensure the accuracy and consistency of ratings during the onsite review. QA Leads provide support and answers to their teams when questions arise. QA Leads are experts on the OSRI and eligible workforce members include all partner agencies and all practice levels. A maximum 1:3 ratio (one QA Lead to three case review teams) is expected.

Research Analyst: Employee of the Department of Human Services responsible for the OCR case draws.

Second Level Quality Assurance (SLQA): The process used to ensure consistency across all review sites, accuracy of ratings and/or changed ratings and resolution of disputed ratings, challenging areas of the OSRI, and statewide consistency. Completed by designated SLQA persons.

Secondary Oversight: Provided by the Children's Bureau (CB) to ensure accuracy of ratings, changed ratings, resolution of disputed ratings, assistance in understanding challenging areas of the instrument, and national consistency.

Stakeholder: A person or organization involved in, or having an interest in, the functioning of the state's child welfare system.

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Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG): The SIG is used to conduct regional interviews during the onsite component of the OCRs. It identifies questions that may be asked during Stakeholder interviews across seven systemic factors.

Statewide Data Indicators: Used to inform the Children's Bureau and the state's CQI process about North Dakota's performance relative to certain safety and permanency outcomes.

Systemic Factors: Represent key federal requirements relevant to the State's CFSP or other programs. Each systemic factor contains items that are assessed. Emphasis is placed on the functioning of the systemic factor within the state's child welfare system.

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(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The Mission of the Onsite Case Review is to provide quality assurance that ensures accurate and consistent evaluation and data of child welfare case practice and system functioning to support continuous quality improvement efforts.

Federal Mandates 605-05-15

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The goal of child welfare is to promote, safeguard and protect the overall well-being of children, to intervene on behalf of abused and neglected children, and to work with children and families to assure that every child has a permanent, safe, and nurturing environment in which to achieve their maximum potential. Quality Assurance (QA) is an important component of North Dakota's multi-faceted, system-wide CQI effort that contributes to accomplishing this goal.

Existing federal regulations require States to describe the QA system they have in place to "regularly assess the quality of services under the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and assure that there will be measures to address identified problems" as part of the CFSP (45 CFR 1357.15(u)). In addition to the CFSP requirement, title IV-E of the Social Security Act requires title IV-E agencies to monitor and conduct periodic evaluations of activities conducted under the title IV-E program and to implement standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of such children (sections 471(a)(7) and 471(a)(22) of the Act), respectively.

QA is also a systemic factor in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). As such, States are required to, at a minimum, dedicate child welfare staff to QA initiatives in order to monitor performance. QA staff must work to ensure that managers and supervisors throughout the agency use quantitative and qualitative data and information to engage all staff in the process of examining data and acting to make improvements.

Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act outline requirements related to QA in child welfare, including the following:

1. Pursuant to section 471(a)(7) of the Act, the title IV-E agency is required to monitor and conduct periodic evaluations of its title IV-E

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program. The operation of a Statewide QA process is one acceptable method for complying with section 471(a)(7) of the Act.

2. A specific requirement that the title IV-E agency implement standards to ensure that children in foster care receive quality health and safety services in section 471(a)(22) of the Act. It is important to consider the full array of statutory and regulatory requirements relevant to quality health and safety services for children in foster care, including those related to screening, assessment and provision of medical, mental health and early intervention services as indicated in ACYF-CB-IM-12-04.
3. Title IV-B regulations require State agencies to utilize QA to regularly assess the quality of services under the CFSP and assure there will be measures to address identified problems. A description of this system must be a part of the State's CFSP (45 CFR 1357.15(u)) and must be updated annually through the Annual Progress and Services Report (45 CFR 1357, 16(a)(1)-(5)).
4. Monitoring of the requirements of section 471(a)(22) of the Act and 45 CFR 1357.15(u) have been a focus of the CFSP since its inception (45 CFR 1355.34(c)(3)). ACF's expectations have been that the QA system is:
 - a. Identifiable;
 - b. In place in all jurisdictions covered by the CFSP;
 - c. Able to evaluate the adequacy and quality of services under the CFSP and able to identify the strengths and needs of the service delivery system;
 - d. Able to provide reports to administrators on the evaluated services and needs for improvement; and
 - e. Able to evaluate
5. Federal Regulation 200.331 Requirements for pass-through entities requires monitoring of the activities of the sub-recipients as necessary to ensure sub-awards are used for authorized purpose and performance goals are achieved must establish and disseminate uniform procedures to ensure that contractual service have been rendered in accordance with the contract terms.

Roles 605-05-20

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The OCR requires a collaborative approach to QA. The roles of those involved in the OCR all point to the central value of ensuring that ratings are accurate and consistent throughout the comprehensive review of child welfare cases in North Dakota. The responsibility for well-functioning case review process is shared by the following entities:

- CFS Director
- Assistant CFS Director
- CFS Administrator of the OCR
- OCR Manager
- Research Analyst
- Local Site Coordinators
- Case Reviewers
- QA Leads
- Second Level Quality Assurance Leads

CFS Director 605-05-20-05

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The CFS Director will:

1. Maintain oversight and responsibility for managing the OCR contract.
2. Oversee activities of the OCR and support efforts to identify and address areas for practice improvement.
3. Communicate OCR data and findings statewide with child welfare agencies and Stakeholders.

Assistant CFS Director 605-05-20-10

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Assistant CFS Director will:

1. Acquire and maintain certification as a Reviewer and QA Lead.
2. Participate in the onsite review as a Reviewer or QA Lead a minimum of once annually.
3. Integrate data and findings of the OCR into regional and statewide continuous quality improvement efforts.
4. Work directly with federal partners on establishing a baseline measurement of select OSRI items and approved measures of improvement as identified in the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

CFS Administrator of the OCR 605-05-20-15

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CFS Administrator of the OCR will:

1. Maintain expertise in the case review process.
2. Develop, disseminate and maintain the ND Onsite Case Review policy manual chapter.
3. Provide training to Reviewers and QA Leads a minimum of once annually in partnership with the OCR Manager.
4. Collaborate with the OCR Manager and Research Analyst to establish and maintain case draw methodology to ensure:
 - a. The state child welfare target population's cases subject to the OCR are comprehensive;
 - b. That key program areas within the population are represented as determined by the CFS Administrator of the OCR and OCR Manager;
 - c. Cases are sampled using a clearly defined sampling process; and
 - d. Compliance with 45 CFR § 1355.33(c) requiring an onsite review of a random sample of foster care and in-home cases for evaluating safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.
5. Collaborate with the OCR Manager and Research Analyst to complete random case samples for each onsite review to include:
 - a. Foster care cases using the state's case management system (FRAME) for a specified sample period; and
 - b. In-home cases using FRAME for a specified sample period plus an additional 45 days after the sample period ends within the period under review.
6. Provide second level quality assurance (SLQA), in collaboration with the OCR Manager.
7. Collaborate with OCR Manager to develop strategies and implement a process for Stakeholder engagement related to gathering data on an ongoing basis to inform on the seven systemic factors.

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8. Monitor OCR data and report findings to CFS Director, Assistant CFS Director, and CFS Administrators.

OCR Manager 605-05-20-20

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OCR Manager will:

1. Maintain expertise in the case review process.
2. Develop, disseminate, and maintain the ND OCR procedures manual.
3. Provide training to Reviewers and QA Leads a minimum of once annually in collaboration with the CFS Administrator of the OCR.
4. Collaborate with the CFS Administrator of the OCR and Research Analyst to establish and maintain case draw methodology to ensure:
 - a. The state child welfare target population's cases subject to the OCR are comprehensive;
 - b. That key program areas within the population are represented as determined by the CFS Administrator of the OCR and OCR Manager;
 - c. Cases are sampled using a clearly defined sampling process; and
 - d. Compliance with 45 CFR § 1355.33(c) requiring an onsite review of a random sample of foster care and in-home cases for evaluating safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.
5. Collaborate with the CFS Administrator of the OCR and Research Analyst to complete random case samples from FRAME for each onsite review to include:
 - a. All eligible foster care cases for a specified sample period; and
 - b. All eligible in-home services cases for a specified sample period plus an additional 45 days after the sample period ends within the period under review.
6. Collaborate with CFS Administrator of the OCR to develop strategies and implement a process for Stakeholder engagement related to gathering data on an ongoing basis to inform on the seven systemic factors.
7. Organize and execute each onsite review conducted statewide.

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8. Manage and provide oversight to the OCR workforce to include Reviewers and QA Leads.
9. Manage the annual OCR schedule.
10. Oversee, coordinate, and manage all logistical arrangements for each onsite review in collaboration with the LSC.
11. Provide orientation to local agency workforce prior to each onsite review.
12. Provide OCR support materials for Reviewers and QA Leads.
13. Facilitate entrance conferences, Stakeholder meetings, debrief meetings, and exit conferences at each onsite review.
14. Provide second level quality assurance (SLQA), in collaboration with the CFS Administrator of the OCR.
15. Provide a final report of onsite review findings to the LSCs, agencies, Assistant Director of CFS, and CFS Administrator of the OCR.
16. Provide an annual statewide report of cumulative onsite review findings to the Assistant Director of CFS and the CFS Administrator of the OCR.

Research Analyst 605-05-20-25

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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Research Analyst will:

1. Collaborate with the CFS Administrator for the OCR and the OCR Manager to establish and maintain case draw methodology to ensure:
 - a. The state child welfare target population's cases subject to the OCR are comprehensive;
 - b. That key program areas within the population are represented as determined by the CFS Administrator of the OCR and OCR Manager;
 - c. Cases are sampled using a clearly defined sampling process; and
 - d. Compliance with 45 CFR § 1355.33(c) requiring an onsite review of a random sample of foster care and in-home cases for evaluating safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

2. Complete random case samples from FRAME for each onsite review to include:
 - a. All eligible foster care cases for a specified sample period; and
 - b. All eligible in-home services cases for a specified sample period plus an additional 45 days after the sample period ends within the period under review.

Local Site Coordinators 605-05-20-30

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The regional representatives of county social services will function as the Local Site Coordinators (LSCs) for their respective regions per NDAC 75-05-05-03.4(f). The LSCs will:

1. Work closely with the OCR Manager to:
 - a. Manage logistical arrangements for the regional onsite review.
 - i. Physical space for use by the OCR workforce.
 - ii. Necessary accommodations for OCR workforce to include schedule for the week, case-related interview schedules, space to conduct interviews, internet connectivity, telephone availability, information on local eateries, other pertinent information as necessary.
 - iii. iii. Collaborate in the development of regional Stakeholder meeting invitation lists and assist with securing arrangements for Stakeholder feedback as requested by the OCR Manager.
 - b. Ensure interviews with key case participants are scheduled and handle any needed. rescheduling of case-related interviews
 - c. Serve as the onsite liaison during the review week.
 - d. Remain flexible and available throughout the review week.

Case Reviewers 605-05-20-35

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The child welfare workforce, regional representatives of county social services, CFS administrators, and partner agency staff will serve as case reviewers. Case Reviewers will:

1. Acquire and maintain OCR certification through required trainings offered by CFS and CFSTC.
2. Demonstrate competency in navigating FRAME, the OMS, and the OSRI.
3. Possess strong written and verbal communication skills.
 - a. Ability to adequately describe rationale for ratings within the OSRI.
 - b. Ability to conduct face-to-face and phone interviews with key case participants in a respectful and neutral manner, with a focus on the OSRI items.
 - c. Ability to appropriately discuss preliminary ratings with the caseworker and supervisor at the conclusion of the case review.
4. Gather and reconcile information needed to answer the relevant questions using the guidance within, and supplemental to, the OSRI and the support and guidance of the QA team.
5. Share the responsibility for ensuring that ratings are accurate and consistent through comprehensive and informed review of cases and two levels of QA.
6. Participate in Entrance Conferences, Preliminary Results Meeting with caseworkers and supervisors, Debriefings, and Exit Conferences.

QA Leads 605-05-20-40

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The child welfare workforce, regional representatives of county social services, CFS administrators, and partner agency staff will serve as QA Leads. QA Leads will:

1. Maintain knowledge of the federal regulations and guidance, and state policy pertinent to the case review process and seek assistance from SLQA as necessary to ensure consistent and accurate case ratings.
2. Demonstrate competency in navigating FRAME, the OMS, and the OSRI.
3. Provide support and guidance to review teams on how to rate cases accurately and consistently, to include:
 - a. Responding timely to review team questions;
 - b. Working with review teams on clarifying issues; and
 - c. Assisting reviewers in reconciling information in order to arrive at appropriate case ratings.
4. Provide opportunities for use of professional judgment to reconcile information and case ratings.
5. Participate in Entrance Conferences, Debriefings, and Exit Conferences.

**Second Level Quality Assurance Leads 605-05-20-45
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)**

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The CFS Administrator of the OCR and the OCR Manager will serve as Second Level QA (SLQA). Additional SLQA staff will be identified as expertise is gained by the child welfare workforce. SLQA designees will:

1. Maintain advanced knowledge of the federal regulations and guidance, and state policy pertinent to the case review process.
2. Demonstrate competency in navigating FRAME, the OMS, and the OSRI.
3. Provide technical assistance to QA Leads to ensure consistent and accurate case ratings.
4. Retain final authority for ensuring that ratings are accurate, which may include changing case ratings when joint resolution at the onsite review cannot be reached.
5. Participate in Entrance Conferences, Debriefings, and Exit Conferences.
6. Understand the OMS reports and use this data to provide timely feedback on the onsite review results to local agencies, as well as provide input for the state's CFSP and APSR.

RESOURCES 605-05-25

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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A range of resources are used to conduct the onsite review:

- FRAME
- Agency Case Records
- Case Related Interviews
- Onsite Review Instrument
- Stakeholder Interview Guide
- Online Monitoring System

FRAME 605-05-25-05

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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FRAME, a web-based application, is the comprehensive child welfare statewide information system for county and DJS child welfare staff. FRAME hosts the information for Child Protective Services, In-home services, Family Preservation services, and Foster Care services. The child welfare agency will ensure the Reviewers have the correct FRAME case number for each of the cases being reviewed. During the onsite review, Reviewers will access FRAME to obtain case-specific information necessary to rate OSRI items and outcomes.

Agency Case Records 605-05-25-10
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The child welfare agency will make available all case records, both paper and electronic, or combination of the two, needed to obtain case-specific information necessary to rate OSRI items and outcomes.

The OCR Manager and Local Site Coordinator will arrange a secure site for overnight case record storage.

Case Related Interviews 605-05-25-15

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OCR team members are responsible for interviewing the individuals involved in the cases to which they are assigned. The LSCs schedule the case-related interviews to take place after each case record is reviewed, which enables Reviewers to identify relevant issues to explore with each person interviewed. The OCR Procedures Manual details the requirements for case related interviews.

The LSC or designee will prepare the individuals to be interviewed, including helping them to understand the purpose of the review. The interviewees will be informed that their participation is voluntary but critical to the success of the review. Once the LSC has scheduled the interviews, the appointments will be confirmed with the interviewees in writing.

Onsite Review Instrument 605-05-25-20

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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North Dakota uses the federal Online Monitoring System (OMS) and Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) for the onsite review. The automated review instrument allows Reviewers to enter information about case record reviews and case-related interviews into a tablet or computer. The OSRI provides ongoing trend data on child welfare practice. The OSRI includes eighteen items related to child safety, permanency, and well-being (table below). All onsite reviews are completed using the federal Online Monitoring System (OMS) at <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/>.

Outcome	Review Item	Item Description
<p>Safety Outcome 1</p> <p>Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect</p>	Item 1	<p>Timeliness of initiating investigations (assessments) of reports of child maltreatment</p> <p><i>Were the agency’s responses to all child maltreatment reports initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the timeframes established by agency policies and state statutes?</i></p>
<p>Safety Outcome 2</p> <p>Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate</p>	Item 2	<p>Services to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care</p> <p><i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children’s entry into foster care or re-entry after a</i></p>

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		<i>reunification?</i>
	Item 3	<p>Risk and safety assessment and management</p> <p><i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care?</i></p>
<p>Permanency Outcome 1</p> <p>Children have permanency and stability in their living arrangements</p>	Item 4	<p>Stability of foster care placement</p> <p><i>Is the child in foster care in a stable placement and were any changes in the child’s placement in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal?</i></p>
	Item 5	<p>Permanency goal for the child</p> <p><i>Did the agency establish appropriate permanency goals for the child in a timely manner?</i></p>
	Item 6	<p>Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption or other planned permanent living arrangement</p> <p><i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child?</i></p>
Permanency Outcome 2	Item 7	Placement with siblings

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The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children		<i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings?</i>
	Item 8	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care <i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationships with these close family members?</i>
	Item 9	Preserving connections <i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends?</i>
	Item 10	Relative Placement <i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to place the child with relatives when appropriate?</i>
	Item 11	Relationship of child in care with parents <i>Did the agency make concerted</i>

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		<p><i>efforts to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregivers from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation?</i></p>
<p>Well-Being Outcome 1</p> <p>Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs</p>	<p>Item 12</p>	<p>Needs and services of child, parent, and foster parents</p> <p><i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess the needs of and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency’s involvement with the family?</i></p>
	<p>Item 13</p>	<p>Child and family involvement in case planning</p> <p><i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to involve the parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis?</i></p>
	<p>Item 14</p>	<p>Caseworker visits with child</p> <p><i>Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals?</i></p>

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	Item 15	<p>Caseworker visits with parents</p> <p><i>Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals?</i></p>
<p>Well-Being Outcome 2</p> <p>Children receive appropriate</p>	Item 16	<p>Educational needs of the child</p> <p><i>Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs and appropriately address identified needs in case planning and case management activities?</i></p>
<p>Well-Being Outcome 3</p> <p>Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs</p>	Item 17	<p>Physical health of the child</p> <p><i>Did the agency address the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs?</i></p>
	Item 18	<p>Mental/behavioral health of the child</p> <p><i>Did the agency address the mental/behavioral needs of the children?</i></p>

Stakeholder Interview Guide 605-05-25-25

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

[View Archives](#)

The OMS includes eighteen items related to seven Systemic Factors (table below) that directly affect the State’s capacity to deliver services leading to improved outcomes for children and families. Stakeholder will be obtained during all onsite reviews to evaluate system performance related to the Systemic Factor items. Documentation of Stakeholder feedback will be completed on the Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG) portion of the federal OMS.

Systemic Factor	Item	Item Description
Statewide Information System	Item 19	Statewide Information System <i>How well is the statewide information system functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics,</i>
Case Review System	Item 20	Written Case Plan <i>How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) and includes the required provisions?</i>
	Item 21	Periodic Reviews <i>How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs</i>

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		<i>no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?</i>
	Item 22	<p>Permanency Hearings</p> <p><i>How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?</i></p>
	Item 23	<p>Termination of Parental Rights</p> <p><i>How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occur in accordance with required provisions?</i></p>
	Item 24	<p>Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers</p> <p><i>How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child?</i></p>
Quality Assurance System	Item 25	<p>Quality Assurance System</p> <p><i>How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services</i></p>

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		<p><i>included in the CFSP are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures?</i></p>
<p align="center">Staff and Provider Training</p>	<p>Item 26</p>	<p>Initial Staff Training</p> <p><i>How well is the *staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions?</i></p> <p><i>*Staff, for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted/non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.</i></p>
	<p>Item 27</p>	<p>Ongoing Staff Training</p> <p><i>How well is the *staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the</i></p>

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	<p><i>skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?</i></p> <p><i>*Staff, for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted/non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.</i></p> <p><i>Staff, for purposes of assessing this item, also include direct supervisors of all contracted/non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.</i></p>
Item 28	<p>Foster and Adoptive Parent Training</p> <p><i>How well is the staff and provider training system functioning to ensure that training is occurring statewide 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</i></p>

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		<i>their duties in regard to foster and adopted children?</i>
Service Array and Resource Development	Item 29	<p>Array of Services</p> <p><i>How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP?</i></p> <p><i>Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs; Services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment; Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable; and Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.</i></p>
	Item 30	<p>Individualizing Services</p> <p><i>How well is the service array and resource development system functioning statewide to ensure that the services in item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency?</i></p>
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Item 31	<p>State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR</p>

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		<p><i>How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service 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, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?</i></p>
	<p>Item 32</p>	<p>Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs</p> <p><i>How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?</i></p>
<p>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</p>	<p>Item 33</p>	<p>Standards Applied Equally</p> <p><i>How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?</i></p>
	<p>Item 34</p>	<p>Requirements for Criminal</p>

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		<p>Background Checks</p> <p><i>How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that 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?</i></p>
	Item 35	<p>Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes</p> <p><i>How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide?</i></p>
	Item 36	<p>State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placement</p> <p><i>How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent</i></p>

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		<i>placements for waiting children is occurring statewide?</i>
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Online Monitoring System 605-05-25-30 (New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The Online Monitoring System (OMS) is a Web-based application consisting of the Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI), the Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG), and reporting tools. The OMS provides online automated OSRI and SIG tools so that state participants can conduct case review activities consistently. The OMS is a resource for continuous quality improvement (CQI) purposes.

The OMS is accessible online to authorized users on any platform with minimum system specifications including personal computers, networked computers, tablets, and other mobile devices. The OMS provides authorized users access to a comprehensive system for case-level review data entry, automated rating calculations, stakeholder interview documentation, and reports.

Basic OSRI reports will include:

- Case-level data
- Site-level data
- State-level data

Basic SIG reports will include:

- Interview-level data
- State-level data

Onsite Review Components 605-05-30
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The key components of the onsite review are:

- Case Sample
- Case Preparation
- Onsite Review
- Stakeholder Feedback
- Final Report
- Annual Report

Case Sample 605-05-30-05

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

[View Archives](#)

The case sample methodology will be jointly determined by the Children's Bureau and CFS. A minimum of 65 cases will be reviewed annually in the eight regions of the state. County social services, Division of Juvenile Services foster care cases, and Tribal IV-E foster care cases will be included in the case sample. FRAME will be used for the sample of foster care and in-home services cases. The case sample percentages of foster care and in-home services will reflect the state's child welfare population.

The sampling period will be a rolling quarterly sampling period beginning the first day of the month and extending through the first six months of the PUR. In-home services cases will have an additional 45 days from the end of the sampling period to ensure the cases have been opened a sufficient number of days.

The Research Analyst will complete the case sample for each Onsite Review and the OCR Manager will work with the LSCs to review and finalize the case sample using the case elimination criteria defined in the OCR Procedures Manual.

Case Preparation 605-05-30-10
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The OCR Manager will collaborate with the regional LSCs to support child welfare agencies in preparing cases for the Onsite Review. The key activities of case preparation include:

- Orientation
- Local Arrangements
- Scheduling Case-Related Interviews
- Preparing the Case Record

Orientation 605-05-30-10-05

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The OCR Manager will facilitate an orientation meeting with the regional child welfare agencies prior to the Onsite Review. The OCR Procedures Manual will serve as a reference for the orientation meeting.

Local Arrangements 605-05-30-10-10

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The OCR Manager and LSCs will collaborate to make local arrangements, including:

- Lodging accommodations for OCR workforce.
- Location and schedule for Entrance Conference, Debriefing, and Exit Conference.
- Arrangements for office space for Case Reviewers, QA Leads, and Stakeholder meetings.
- OCR workforce access to the site during non-business hours.
- Arrangements for private office space for case-related interviews, including access to a telephone for phone interviews.
- Technical requirements for the OSRI and FRAME, and ensure internet connections and power sources will be available to OCR workforce.

Case Related Interviews 605-05-30-10-15

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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Through the review process, a full understanding of what occurred that affected child and family outcomes in a particular case is paramount. It is critical to obtain information from a variety of sources before making initial determinations about outcomes.

Case-related interviews with key individuals involved in the case provide an opportunity to determine what has occurred in the case, confirm case record documentation, collect information that might be missing from the record, and obtain input about case participants' experiences. The interview information will be weighed equally with information obtained from the case record documentation. The OCR Procedures Manual will specify who must be interviewed for foster care cases and in-home services cases.

Case Record Preparation 605-05-30-10-20

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The child welfare agency will make available at the review sites all electronic and paper case records to be reviewed. The case records will be complete, including applicable information for periods preceding the period under review. Case records also should be as organized and up-to-date as possible, including any files maintained separately, such as separate child protective services or adoption files or separate child and family records. The child welfare agency will confirm that any sealed foster care or adoption file is available if the case is part of the case review sample.

If the child welfare agency uses electronic files instead of, or in addition to, paper files, the OCR Manager and Local Site Coordinator must make computers and technical support available to Reviewers so that they can view the electronic records; obtain hard copies of the files or the portions of the files containing information relevant to the review; or use a combination of these two approaches.

Onsite Review 605-05-30-15

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The onsite review is the OCR review week event and involves the following activities:

- Entrance Conference
- Reviewing the Case
- First Level Quality Assurance
- Preliminary Results Meeting
- Debriefing
- Exit Conference
- Second Level Quality Assurance

Entrance Conference 605-05-30-15-05

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The Entrance Conference is a meeting of the OCR workforce and LSCs. This informal meeting will primarily focus on logistics and information pertinent to the review week.

Reviewing the Case 605-05-30-15-10
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The review team shares responsibility for ensuring that ratings are accurate and consistent through comprehensive and informed review of cases and two levels of quality assurance. Reviewers gather and reconcile the information needed to answer the relevant questions using the guidance within, and supplemental to, the OSRI and the support and guidance of the quality assurance team.

In reviewing each case, Reviewers need to focus broadly on the child welfare system as it works in concert with its partners such as the courts, law enforcement, and service providers. It is important to identify how the system supported or prevented positive outcomes for the children and family in the case being reviewed.

Each of the outcomes includes one or more items that guide Reviewers in assessing the child welfare system's performance in working with the child and family. The OSRI includes detailed guidance on how to assess performance for each case being reviewed.

Reviewers must gather and analyze available information to rate each item appropriately through reviewing the case file and interviewing key case participants.

First Level Quality Assurance 605-05-30-15-15
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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All cases reviewed for the onsite review must undergo First Level Quality Assurance (FLQA). FLQA ensures that Reviewers are accurately rating cases and properly applying federal instructions. FLQA must be conducted on all cases by the QA Leads.

The OCR Manager and CFS Administrator of the OCR are responsible for fielding questions and conducting group debriefings with QA Leads throughout the review week. They are also responsible for communication with the QA Leads as rating issues arise. This communication should include a joint assessment of the reasons for any rating issues and how these could be addressed.

Preliminary Results Meeting 605-05-30-15-20
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The Preliminary Results Meeting (PRM) is held after the Review have completed the OSRI. During the PRM the Reviewer Team will meet with the caseworker to discuss the preliminary findings in the case reviewed. The caseworker's supervisor is also welcome to attend.

Debriefing 605-05-30-15-25

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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Debriefing meetings on case and systemic findings are held on the final day of the onsite review week. The debriefings are informal guided discussions noting high-level issues and equipping the OCR Manager with information necessary for the Exit Conference. The debriefings provide a forum to:

- Gather and share preliminary information about local review findings, including strengths and areas needing improvement;
- Discuss trends and systemic issues identified during the case reviews;
- Provide an opportunity to learn the story behind the numbers; and
- Collect feedback on the review process.

Exit Conference 605-05-30-15-30

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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An Exit Conference is facilitated by the OCR Manager on the final day of the onsite review week. It is a meeting with local child welfare agencies, Stakeholders and the OCR workforce. The OCR Manager will discuss preliminary findings of the case review, overarching themes related to practice strengths and challenges, and systemic strengths and challenges observed in the region.

Second Level Quality Assurance 605-05-30-15-35
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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All cases reviewed for the onsite review undergo Second Level QA (SLQA). SLQA ensures that the cases reviewed are accurate, consistent, and adhere to the guidance provided for use of the OSRI. These activities are intended to ensure the integrity of the completed instruments, the information contained therein, and the accuracy of the ratings. SLQA is in addition to FLQA activities that are the foundational work between reviewers and the QA team to ensure initial completion of the instrument for an individual case.

Stakeholder Feedback 605-05-30-20

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The OCR Manager is responsible for overseeing the Stakeholder feedback process. The LSCs will collaborate with the OCR Manager in the development of invitation lists and securing arrangements for meetings. Stakeholder feedback will be obtained through regional surveys, face-to-face meetings, or conference calls. The OCR Manager and CFS Administrator of the OCR will collaboratively facilitate Stakeholder meetings. Stakeholders include caseworkers, foster caregivers, youth in foster care, the legal system, agency administrators, community providers, and other Stakeholders who are knowledgeable regarding the statewide functioning of the agency with respect to the systemic factors.

Information is collected using the Stakeholder Interview Guide (SIG). The questions in this guide are critical to the identification of potential Stakeholders. The guide also provides information regarding preparation for Stakeholder interviews, and a Stakeholder interview guide structure. The Stakeholder Interview Guide instrument and supplemental guidance are available at <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/>.

Final Report 605-05-30-25

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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Following each regional onsite review a final report is written by the OCR Manager. The report reveals cumulative ratings on all 18 items of the OSRI, Stakeholder feedback, and themes identified that relate to practice and systemic strengths and challenges. The OCR Manager will disseminate the final report to the LSCs, agencies, Assistant Director of CFS, and the CFS Administrator of the OCR.

Annual Report 605-05-30-30

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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Cumulative data from all regional onsite reviews is provided by the OCR Manager to the state annually in the Statewide OCR Summary Report. This report is posted on the DHS website under "CFS Division Publications."

SAFEGUARDS 605-05-35

Confidentiality 605-05-35-05

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The Department's policy is to protect the privacy of individuals to the fullest extent possible. An ever-present condition of the OCR workforce is the safeguarding of client-related information. All participants of the OCR workforce are expected to be extremely careful in their daily handling of client information so that unwarranted and potentially illegal disclosures are avoided.

Disclosure of identifying information contained in a client's record to individuals or entities outside the Department is prohibited except as authorized by law. Disclosure of identifying information within the Department is on a "need to know" basis to facilitate performance of job duties.

All federal and state regulations regarding the confidentiality of case information are applicable to the OCR. North Dakota Century Code contains specific statutes impacting confidentiality of certain information in files reviewed during the onsite review week. There are State and Federal penalties for the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information. In addition, violations of confidentiality will be investigated by the Department, and if warranted, appropriate disciplinary action taken.

All participants of the OCR workforce will sign a Confidentiality Statement at each Onsite Review to acknowledge their understanding of the confidentiality of child welfare records and information.

For more information on confidentiality, access this [link](#).

Conflict of Interest 605-05-35-10

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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A conflict of interest is defined as a circumstance in which an OCR workforce member's personal interests or direct professional involvement with a case and case participants materially affect the objectivity or capacity of the individual to serve as an OCR Reviewer or QA Lead in carrying out the duties of the Department's QA system. Any individual having a conflict-of-interest shall report the conflict to the OCR Manager and the OCR Manager will immediately re-assign the case. The OCR Manager will ensure that any individuals having a conflict-of-interest will not participate in any team or reviewer de-briefing of cases that affects ratings of cases.

All individuals participating in the onsite review will sign a Conflict of Interest Statement for each case reviewed attesting that he/she has:

1. Never been directly or indirectly involved in casework activities related to this case or any of the family participants in this case;
2. Not participated in decisions related to this case or any of the family participants in this case;
3. No personal interest in this case or any of the family participants in this case; and
4. No direct professional involvement with the case or any of the family participants under review.

The OCR Manager will resolve any questions or concerns about when a conflict of interest arises

Safety Considerations 605-05-35-15

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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The Reviewer will immediately report child safety concerns uncovered during the review to their QA Lead. The QA Lead will inform the Local Site Coordinator and local agency. In the event of an imminent safety concern involving possible child maltreatment, Reviewers must directly report the concerns to the local social service agency. The QA Lead will be responsible to inform the OCR Manager of the situation.

Ethical or Employment Related Concerns 605-05-35-20
(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

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In the course of a review, if a team identifies ethical or employment related concerns, reviewers shall inform their QA Lead who, in turn, notifies the OCR Manager. The OCR Manager will involve the applicable agency of hire's administrator/director for further follow up. In the event the concern involves an employee licensed by a state board, the Reviewers will be supported in ensuring the concern is also appropriately reported.

REFERENCES 605-05-40

(New 1/1/18 ML #3521)

[View Archives](#)

The CFS Division acknowledges the following resources utilized in the completion of this policy chapter:

- Children’s Bureau, Children and Family Services Procedures Manual, November 2015
- JBS International, Children and Family Services Review Handbook for CFSR Reviewers, QA Specialists, and Note-Taking Specialists, March 2017
- Florida Department of Children and Families, Windows Into Practice Guidelines for Quality Assurance Reviews, FY 2016/2017