

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CFDA 93.556 PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES

I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program provides funds to States and Indian tribes (tribes and tribal consortia) to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement. The program includes: family support, family preservation, time-limited family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services.

II. PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Administration and Services

The Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a component of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), administers the PSSF. To be eligible for funds, each State and tribe must submit a five-year comprehensive plan, the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). This plan encompasses planning and service delivery for the full child welfare services spectrum. This includes: child welfare services under Title IV-B, Subparts 1 and 2; a child welfare staff development and training plan; a diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families plan that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed; and child abuse and neglect prevention, foster care, adoption, and foster care independence services, including an education and training voucher program for foster care youth. An Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) is required that identifies the specific accomplishments and progress made in the past fiscal year toward meeting each goal and objective in the 5-year comprehensive plan and any revisions in the statement of goals and objectives or to the training plan, if necessary, to reflect changed circumstances.

The Associate Commissioner of the ACF Children's Bureau has approval authority for the title IV-B plans. Following ACF approval, allotments are based on the number of children in the States who received food stamps in the previous three years. Grants may also be made to tribes that qualify under the allotment formula; no tribe may be funded if its allotment is less than \$10,000. PSSF services are based on several key principles. The welfare and safety of children and of all family members should be maintained while strengthening and preserving the family. It is advantageous for the family as a whole to receive services, which identify and enhance its strengths while meeting individual and family needs. Services should be easily accessible, often delivered in the home or in community-based settings, and they should respect cultural and community differences. In addition, they should be flexible, responsive to real family needs, and linked to other supports and services outside the child welfare system. Services should involve community organizations and residents, including parents, in their design and delivery. They should be intensive enough to keep children safe and meet family needs, varying between preventive and crisis services.

Source of Governing Requirements

PSSF is authorized under Title IV-B, Subpart 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended, and is codified at 42 USC 629a through 629e. Implementing program regulations are published at 45 CFR parts 1355 and 1357.

III. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

In developing the audit procedures to test compliance with the requirements for a Federal program, the auditor should first look to Part 2, Matrix of Compliance Requirements, to identify which of the 14 types of compliance requirements described in Part 3 are applicable and then look to Parts 3 and 4 for the details of the requirements.

A. Activities Allowed or Unallowed

1. *Community-based Services* - Programs delivered in accessible settings in the community and responsive to the needs of the community and the individuals and families residing therein. These services may be provided under public or private non-profit auspices (45 CFR section 1357.10(c)).
2. *Family Preservation Services* - Services for children and families designed to protect children from harm and help families (including foster, adoptive, and extended families) at risk or in crisis, including (42 USC 629a(a)(1)):
 - a. Pre-placement preventive services programs, such as intensive family preservation programs, designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain with their families, where possible;
 - b. Service programs designed to help children, where appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be appropriate for a child, in some other planned, permanent living arrangement;
 - c. Service programs designed to provide follow-up care to families to whom a child has been returned after a foster care placement;
 - d. Respite care of children to provide temporary relief for parents and other caregivers (including foster parents);
 - e. Services designed to improve parenting skills (by reinforcing parents' confidence in their strengths, and helping them to identify where improvement is needed and to obtain assistance in improving those skills) with respect to matters such as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health, and nutrition; and

- f. Case management services designed to stabilize families in crisis such as transportation, assistance with housing and utility payments, and access to adequate health care.
3. *Family Support Services* - Community-based services to promote the well-being of children and families designed to increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families), to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, to afford children a stable and supportive family environment, to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages, and otherwise to enhance child development. Family support services may include (42 USC 629a(a)(2); 45 CFR section 1357.10(c)):
 - a. Services, including in-home visits, parent support groups, and other programs designed to improve parenting skills (by reinforcing parents' confidence in their strengths, and helping them to identify where improvement is needed and to obtain assistance in improving those skills) with respect to matters such as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health, and nutrition;
 - b. Respite care of children to provide temporary relief for parents and other caregivers;
 - c. Structured activities involving parents and children to strengthen the parent-child relationship;
 - d. Drop-in centers to afford families opportunities for informal interaction with other families and with program staff;
 - e. Transportation, information and referral services to afford families access to other community services, including child care, health care, nutrition programs, adult education literacy programs, legal services, and counseling and mentoring services; and
 - f. Early developmental screening of children to assess the needs of such children, and assistance to families in securing specific services to meet these needs.
4. *Time-Limited Family Reunification Services* - Services and activities that are provided to a child who is removed from his/her home and placed in a foster family home or a child care institution and to the parents or primary caregiver of such a child, in order to facilitate the reunification of the child safely and appropriately within a timely fashion. These services are provided only during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child, pursuant to 42 USC 675(5)(F), is considered to have entered foster care. The services and activities are the following (42 USC 629a(a)(7)):
 - a. Individual, group, and family counseling;

- b. Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services;
 - c. Mental health services;
 - d. Assistance to address domestic violence;
 - e. Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries; and
 - f. Transportation to or from any of the services and activities described above.
5. *Adoption Promotion and Support Service* - Services and activities designed to encourage more adoptions out of the foster care system, when adoption promotes the best interest of the child, including such activities as pre- and post-adoptive services and activities designed to expedite the adoption process and support adoptive families (42 USC 629a(a)(8)).
6. *Administrative Costs*- Administrative costs (defined as costs of auxiliary functions as identified through an agency's accounting system that are allocable, in accordance with the agency's approved cost allocation plan, to the title IV-B, subpart 2 program cost centers; necessary to sustain the direct effort involved in administering the State plan or an activity providing service to the programs; and centralized in the grantee department or in some other agency) are allowable. Administrative costs include, but are not limited to, the following: procurement; payroll; personnel functions; management; maintenance and operation of space and property; data processing and computer services; accounting; budgeting; and auditing (45 CFR sections 1357.32(h)(1) and (2)). See III.G.3 for a limitation on the amount of administrative costs.
7. *Program Costs* - Program costs are costs, other than administrative costs, incurred in connection with developing and implementing the CFSP (e.g., delivery of services, planning, consultation, coordination, training, quality assurance measures, data collection, evaluations, and supervision) (45 CFR section 1357.32(h)(3)).
8. Funds awarded under Title IV-B, Subpart 2, may not be used for the purchase or construction of facilities (45 CFR section 1357.32(e)).

G. Matching, Level of Effort, Earmarking

1. Matching

Funds are federally reimbursed at 75 percent of allowable expenditures. The State's contribution may be in cash, donated funds, and non-public third party in-kind contributions (45 CFR section 1357.32(d)).

2.1 Level of Effort - Maintenance of Effort – Not Applicable

2.2 Level of Effort – *Supplement Not Supplant*

- a. States may not use Federal funds under title IV-B, Subpart 2, to supplant Federal or non-Federal funds for existing services.
 - (1) “Non-Federal” funds are defined at 42 USC 629a(a)(9) as “State funds, or at the option of a State, State and local funds.” Although State matching may be in the form of cash, donated funds, or non-public third party in-kind contributions, the “supplement not supplant” requirement is limited to non-Federal funds as defined in 42 USC 629a(a)(9).
 - (2) The base year for determining compliance with this requirement is the amount of funds that the State expended for services in the State’s fiscal year 1992 (42 USC 629b(a)(7); 45 CFR section 1357.32(f)). The regulations have not been updated to reflect the amendments to the Social Security Act made by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) that added two new service categories (i.e., time-limited family and reunification services and adoption promotion and support services) to those specified in 45 CFR section 1357.32(f); however, the base year (1992) remains the same for all four service areas under title IV-B, subpart 2 (42 USC 629b(a) and (b)(1); ACYF-CB-PI-99-07).
- b. The State may not use the amount specified in III.G.3.c. below to supplant any Federal funds paid to the State under part E that could be used for monthly caseworker visitation with children who are in foster care and activities designed to improve caseworker retention, recruitment, training, and ability to access the benefits of technology (Pub. L. No. 109-288, section 3(c)(2)(B)).

3. Earmarking

- a. Unless approved by ACF, States must expend a significant portion of their grant, defined as 20 percent, on each of the following: (1) programs of family preservation services, (2) community-based family support services, (3) time-limited family reunification services, and (4) adoption promotion and support services (42 USC 629b(a)(4); 45 CFR section 1357.15(s); ACYF-CB-PI-03-05 (found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2003/pi0305.htm)).
- b. States may not expend more than 10 percent of Federal funds for administrative costs (42 USC 629b(a)(4)). There is no limitation on the percentage of administrative costs that may be reported as State match.

- c. A State shall use the special allocation provided pursuant to Pub. L. No. 109-288 to support monthly caseworker visits with children who are in foster care with a primary emphasis on activities designed to improve caseworker retention, recruitment, training, and ability to access the benefits of technology (42 USC 629f(b)(4)).

H. Period of Availability of Federal Funds

Funds must be expended by September 30 of the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the funds were awarded (45 CFR section 1357.32(g)), with the exception of those FY 2006 funds provided by the special allocation pursuant to Pub. L. No. 109-288. These latter funds must be expended by September 30, 2009 (Pub. L. No. 109-288, section 3(c)(2)(A)).

L. Reporting

1. Financial Reporting

- a. SF-269, *Financial Status Report* - Applicable
- b. SF-270, *Request for Advance or Reimbursement* - Not Applicable
- c. SF-271, *Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement for Construction Programs* - Not Applicable
- d. SF-272, *Federal Cash Transactions Report* - Payments under this program are made by the HHS Payment Management System (PMS). Reporting equivalent to the SF-272 is accomplished through the PMS and is evidenced by the PSC-272 series of reports.

2. Performance Reporting - Not Applicable

3. Special Reporting - Not Applicable