



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

June 13, 2017

Bobby D. Cagle
Director
Georgia Division of Families and Children
2 Peachtree Street, Suite 19-490
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Director Cagle:

This letter acknowledges the receipt and approval of Georgia's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The state conducted the CFSR during the time period of April 1, 2016 through September 20, 2016. Following the review the CFSR Final Report, issued on January 7, 2016, identified the outcomes and systemic factors that were found to be out of substantial conformity. Per 45 CFR 1355.35(a), Georgia is required to develop a PIP to address these issues.

Georgia submitted an initial PIP to the Children's Bureau (CB) on March 7, 2016. Following a period of discussions, which included negotiations and PIP revisions, the state submitted a final version of the PIP on April 26, 2017.

In accordance with 45 CFR 1355.36, an estimated minimum penalty of \$6,242,039 for federal fiscal years 2015 and 2016 is applicable to the level of non-conformity identified in the final report. However, we are suspending the withholding of funds during the PIP implementation period and the subsequent period of non-overlapping data. If it is determined that Georgia is successful in rectifying the areas of nonconformity during that time, we will rescind the withholding of federal funds associated with those areas.

The final Georgia PIP, inclusive of the measurement plan, is approved effective June 6, 2017. As negotiated with the state, the Georgia PIP implementation period commenced on April 1, 2017. Consistent with 45 CFR 1355.35(d)(4), the state and the CB have agreed that the first measurement period will be the first six months of reviews, April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017. Following the first six-month period, the state will utilize using a rolling monthly sampling period, advancing measurement periods each month after the first 6 months. These reports will support the monitoring and evaluation of PIP completion per 45 CFR 1355.35(e)(2). Consistent with CFSR Technical Bulletin #9, we encourage the state to monitor its performance on statewide data indicators to provide additional context for the state's continuing work. The state must keep the CB informed of progress and challenges associated with the implementation and achievement of PIP strategies, key activities and improvement goals via routine calls and onsite meetings throughout the PIP implementation period.

Georgia has been proactive in refining practices that will lead to improved outcomes within their child welfare system. Initiatives such as the Blueprint for Change and implementation of Solution Based Casework as the Georgia practice model provide the foundation for short-term and long-term strategies to enhance practice.

Stakeholder interviews and observations during their state conducted CFSR supported a strength rating for the Quality Assurance (QA) systemic factor. Georgia effectively demonstrated that their QA System is functioning effectively throughout the state. In addition to operating statewide, the state's QA system also has standards to evaluate the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, and provides relevant feedback/reports. During the monitoring of the PIP, Georgia will utilize their QA system to review CFSR cases.

Thank you for your commitment to improving Georgia's child welfare system. Enclosed is a copy of the approved PIP and the PIP Agreement Form. If you have any questions regarding this or other related matters, please contact Shalonda Cawthon, Child Welfare Regional Program Manager, at (404) 562-2242 or by e-mail at shalonda.cawthon@acf.hhs.gov. You may also contact Tracy Fava, Child and Family Program Specialist, at (404) 562-2843 or at tracy.fava@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Milner", with a stylized, cursive script.

Jerry Milner
Associate Commissioner
Children's Bureau

cc: Linda Mitchell, Acting Supervisory Program Specialist, CFSR Unit, CB; Washington, DC
Steven Reed, Director of Quality Management; DFCS; Atlanta, GA
Shalonda Cawthon, Child Welfare Regional Program Manager; CB, Region 4; Atlanta, GA
Esther Sherrard, Child and Family Program Specialist, CFSR Unit, CB; Washington, DC
Tracy Fava, Child and Family Program Specialist; CB, Region 4; Atlanta, GA