



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
1250 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

JUL - 1 2013

Mr. Ricky Berry
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Human Services
P. O. Box 352
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Dear Mr. Berry:

This letter is in regard to the Mississippi Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that was approved by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, on April 1, 2011. As of March 31, 2013, Mississippi completed Quarter 8 of the PIP and submitted a status report and associated matrix by April 30, 2013, as required. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a status report on progress the State has made in meeting the terms and conditions of the PIP.

Action Steps and Strategies

Mississippi has fully completed all action items and benchmarks listed in the PIP.

Performance Measures

Mississippi has achieved the PIP goal associated with the National Data Standard, Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care.

Mississippi has met the following Item Specific Goals:

- CFSR Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry into Foster Care
- CFSR Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management
- CFSR Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child
- CFSR Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents
- CFSR Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning
- CFSR Item 20: Caseworker Visits with Parents

Mississippi has *not* met the following CFSR PIP goals:

The CFSR PIP goal associated with the National Standard for Placement Stability and the CFSR PIP goals associated with:

- CFSR Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
- CFSR Item 10: Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
- CFSR Item 19: Caseworker Visits with Child

Since there are four data measures to be met, Mississippi now moves into the non-overlapping period, which ends March 31, 2014. During this time, the Children's Bureau will continue to monitor Mississippi's progress. If Mississippi does not attain all of these remaining goals by March 31, 2014, an estimated penalty of \$1,296,750 will be assessed against Mississippi.

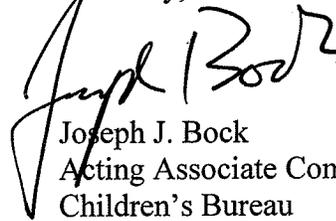
Mississippi received onsite technical assistance from the Children's Bureau as well as consultation through numerous conference calls. Our assistance continues to be available to you throughout the year of non-overlapping data. Also technical assistance has been provided to Mississippi through the Children's Bureau network for training and technical assistance providers. These providers include the Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center and the National Resource Centers for Legal and Judicial Issues, Permanency and Family Connections, Tribes, Youth Development, Adoption, Organizational Improvement, Child Welfare Data and Technology, and Diligent Recruitment. This network of technical assistance providers remains available to Mississippi.

During the CFSR PIP implementation period, the PIP strategies associated with judicial collaboration and partnership were the most challenging for you to achieve. As we have all discussed, a stronger collaboration with the Courts is essential to achieving improved outcomes for families and children in Mississippi. We are pleased that you requested technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Legal and Judicial Issues to assist Mississippi in continuing this collaborative work beyond the PIP.

We appreciate all of the hard work and dedication that your staff demonstrated in successfully completing the elements of the PIP that were met. We will continue to work with your staff providing technical assistance in an effort to meet the outstanding requirements. Your continued effort to improve the permanency, safety and well-being of Mississippi's children is most appreciated.

Enclosed is a copy of Mississippi's PIP eighth-quarter report matrix that include our comments regarding the action steps/benchmarks and the date we consider an action step/benchmark completed. If you have questions, please contact Ruth Walker, Child Welfare Regional Program Manager in Region IV at (404) 562-2900 or by email ruth.walker@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph J. Bock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Joseph J. Bock
Acting Associate Commissioner
Children's Bureau

Enclosure

cc: Ruth Walker, Regional Program Manager, CB, Region IV, Atlanta, GA
Kim Shackelford, Deputy Executive Director, MDHS, Jackson, MS
Anthony Bingham, Children and Families Program Specialist, CB, Region IV, Atlanta, GA
Angela Adams, JBS Contractor, CFSR Unit; CB, Washington, DC