



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

JUN - 2 2014

The Honorable Phil Bryant
Office of the Governor
State of Mississippi
P.O. Box 139
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Governor Bryant:

I am writing on behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to congratulate the State of Mississippi on the successful completion of its Program Improvement Plan (PIP), developed and implemented as a result of the State's Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The State has completed all required PIP action steps and has achieved all of its PIP goals. As a result, ACF is rescinding all associated CFSR penalties.

The Administration for Children and Families, in collaboration with the Mississippi Department of Human Services, conducted the CFSR to identify both strengths and areas needing improvement in the State's child welfare system. The review focused on seven outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being, and seven systemic factors that impact those outcomes. The CFSR culminated in an on-site review the week of May 17, 2010.

The Final Report, issued August 5, 2010, notified Mississippi that it was not in substantial conformity with any of the seven CFSR outcomes and was in substantial conformity with two of the CFSR systemic factors. Additionally, Mississippi did not meet the National Standard measures associated with Placement Stability and Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care.

As a result, the state implemented a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) during the two-year period from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2013. Three items (CFSR Item 1, Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment; Item 10, Other Planned Permanency Living Arrangement; and Item 19, Caseworker Visits with Child) and the National Data Standard for Placement stability were not met during the two-year PIP period. The state met these remaining goals by the end of the non-overlapping year, which ended on March 31, 2014.

The Administration for Children and Families and the State, through an ongoing partnership, jointly assessed Mississippi's progress throughout the PIP period. As a result, ACF has verified the State's completion of all action steps and the achievement of all data and program goals negotiated between the state and ACF. During the PIP implementation period, Mississippi rolled out a comprehensive practice model which included a safety and risk assessment process, a comprehensive family assessment process and family team meetings. The state also improved its CQI process, the collection of data, the development of practice guides and coaching protocol and improved the process for the recruitment and retention of foster parents. Finally, Mississippi improved ongoing collaborations with community stake holders, the tribal community and courts.

As Mississippi has brought closure to their Program Improvement Plan, we are eager to continue our working relationship with the state. We commend the State on its commitment and leadership in advancing the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. Congratulations on Mississippi's achievement in meeting its PIP goals and improving services for the State's children and families.

Sincerely,



JooYeun Chang
Associate Commissioner
Children's Bureau

cc: Richard A. Berry, Deputy Director, MDHS
Paul Kirisitz, Acting Child Welfare Regional Program Manager; Region IV; Atlanta, GA
Anthony Bingham, Child Welfare Program Specialist: CB; Region IV; Atlanta, GA
Miranda Lynch Thomas, CFSR Lead; Children's Bureau; Washington, DC
Angela Adams, CFSR Unit, Children's Bureau