

THE FEDERAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR) OF LOUISIANA:

What You Should Know About It and Why It Is Important

APRIL 18, 2024
12 - 1 PM

REGISTER: VIRTUAL CLE/CEU
<https://bit.ly/CIPApril2024>

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) reviews state child and family service programs to ensure conformity with the requirements in Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The Children's Bureau, part of DHHS, administers the review system, known as the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) in partnership with the state child welfare agency staff. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico undergo these reviews. Ultimately, the goal of the reviews is to help states improve child welfare services and improve outcomes for families and children in three categories: safety, permanency, and family and child well-being.



Round 4 of the review has already started. Louisiana's review will begin toward the end of 2024 and be completed in 2025. The CFSR is not just a review of DCFS but looks at the state's child and family services systems as a whole, including court-related matters, service provision, and many other areas.

The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) staff and Court Improvement Program (CIP) staff have already begun meeting with Children's Bureau staff and support providers. Each CFSR is a two-stage process consisting of a statewide assessment and an onsite review. The onsite review includes (1) case reviews; (2) interviews with children and families engaged in services; and (3) interviews with legal and community stakeholders, such as courts, community agencies, foster families, caseworkers, and service providers.

At the end of the onsite review, states determined not to have achieved substantial conformity in all the areas assessed must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) addressing the areas of nonconformity. No state since the CFSR process began approximately 20 years ago, has been found to be in substantial conformity with all seven outcome areas and seven systemic factors. States must successfully complete the PIP within 2 years after it is approved to avoid financial penalties for nonconformity.

Several important items grew out of Louisiana's last CFSR and resulting PIP: Development of the Louisiana Child in Need of Care Benchbook for Juvenile Judges and incorporating parent contact information into the Affidavit of Removal in Support of an Instant Order are two items aimed to enhance judicial decision making and legal representation; creation and implementation of the My Community Cares program and the Child Welfare Assessment and Decision Making model (CWADM); and a workforce development initiative.

We invite you to come learn more from a Children's Bureau expert consultant about the CFSR process and how it affects your work.



Learning Objectives:

- Become familiar with the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process.
- Understand how the CFSR and the resulting Program Improvement Plan (PIP) affect the Louisiana child welfare system and organizations involved in the system.

AGENDA & SCHEDULE

12:00-12:20 pm	Child & Family Services Review Explained
12:20-12:50 pm	2024-2025 Process in Louisiana
12:50-1:00 pm	Questions & Discussion



SPEAKERS



Christine S. Kiesel, Esq., Legal/Judicial Child Welfare Specialist, Children's Bureau Contractor

Over 25 years experience working within the child welfare system both on the front lines and within governmental structures seeking to positively reform the legal and judicial systems. On the front lines, Ms. Kiesel has represented parents and children, and served as a judicial officer handling child welfare matters. As the former lead of New York State's Court Improvement Project, and now as a contractor to the Children's Bureau, she worked at the systems level to improve the lives of children and families by assisting with the implementation of federal and state laws and by providing subject matter expertise on various topics where proper application has the potential to positively influence outcomes. Ms. Kiesel earned her BA degree from Ithaca College and her juris doctor at Albany Law School.



Mark Harris, JD, Executive Director, Pelican Center for Children and Families

Mark Harris is the Executive Director of the Pelican Center for Children and Families. He formerly served the Louisiana Supreme Court as the Project Coordinator for the Louisiana Court Improvement Program for 15 years and has been formally recognized by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services for outstanding efforts in promoting the safety, permanency, and well-being of Louisiana's at-risk children. Mark Harris previously served as the Adoption Opportunities Grant Coordinator for Orleans Parish. He holds BA degrees in English and History from Tulane University and a JD from Loyola University.



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