



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott  
Governor

Mike Carroll  
Secretary

**DATE:** March 30, 2017

**TO:** Regional Managing Directors

**THROUGH:** David L. Fairbanks, Deputy Secretary 

**FROM:** Vicki Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Operations   
JoShonda Guerrier, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare 

**SUBJECT:** Program Improvement Plan

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this communication is to provide an update on the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and guidance for implementation. The Department submitted the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to the Children's Bureau (CB) for approval on March 28. The PIP, built in part from the Regional PIPs, is the result of many hours of work of a large number of dedicated child welfare partners at the state and local levels, representing the Department, key stakeholders, and community agencies.

**BACKGROUND:** Florida completed its Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) in September 2016. The CB issued the final report on December 28, 2016, giving the state 90 days to develop and submit the PIP. The final PIP represents a collaboration between the Office of Child Welfare, Regions, CBCs, Children's Legal Services, the Office of Court Improvement, as well as other stakeholders and partners.

The PIP emphasizes practice improvement at all levels. Florida's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system (CFSR, Rapid Safety Feedback, and fidelity reviews) is the federally approved method for measuring improvement. The PIP is available on Florida's Center for Child Welfare under Results-Oriented Accountability tab.

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/QualityAssurance/CFSRHome.shtml>

As you know, Florida has two (2) years to both implement the key activities and achieve the level of performance prescribed by the Children's Bureau. States are allowed a non-overlapping year at the end of the PIP implementation period to reach any remaining unmet performance goals. Although implementation is underway on a number of the key activities, there are key activities with multiple sub-steps needing more time for implementation to drive the practice change. Any delay in completing key activities and related sub-steps could result in Florida not reaching the performance goals. Failure to complete all key activities within the two-year implementation period and reach the performance goals by the end of year three (non-overlapping year) will result in substantial financial penalties.

The CB requires states to report periodically on progress with PIP implementation. Regional periodic (quarterly) progress reports are necessary to show progress and status of Regional PIP activities. The format for the Regional PIP is in the process of being updated to support

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progress reporting and will be distributed upon completion. The progress reports are due by the middle of the first month following the end of the quarter.

- July – September reports are due October 15
- October – December reports are due January 15
- January – March reports are due April 15
- April – June reports are due July 15

In the next couple of weeks, the PIP negotiation cycle with the CB begins and may result in changes to the PIP. The timeframe during which negotiations occur and the Children's Bureau approves Florida's PIP is unknown. However, PIP implementation at the state and region levels must proceed.

**ACTION NEEDED:** In order to effect practice improvement, it is critical for the Regions and Community-based Care lead agencies (CBCs) to focus attention on completion of the key activities according to the timeframes. It is also important to involve operations throughout the two-year implementation period as the PIP is a plan to improve practice in the field.

The Office of Child Welfare will work with the region to identify any areas requiring refinement in the Regional plans during the conference calls scheduled with each region throughout the week of April 3 – 7. It is important that operational leadership for Child Protective Investigations, Case Management, Children's Legal Services, Quality Management, and others related to the strategies participate in the calls.

Each region will be required to compile a quarterly report of progress on the key activities, strategies, and goals starting with the July – September 2017 quarter which is due October 15, 2017. The region will submit quarterly progress reports to Peggy Niermann at [Peggy.Niermann@myffamilies.com](mailto:Peggy.Niermann@myffamilies.com) and Mark Shults at [Mark.Shults@myffamilies.com](mailto:Mark.Shults@myffamilies.com).

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Should you have questions about this communication, please contact Mark Shults, Office of Child Welfare, Manager of Continuous Quality Improvement, at 850-717-4650 or via e-mail [Mark.Shults@myffamilies.com](mailto:Mark.Shults@myffamilies.com).

cc: Grainne O'Sullivan, Director, Children's Legal Services  
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