CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW
TECHNICAL BULLETIN #4
June 01, 2009

Section I of this Technical Bulletin contains updated general instructions on Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) monitoring, evaluation, and renegotiation. Section II contains technical information for States and Children's Bureau Regional Offices (CBROs) on using a matrix spreadsheet for PIP submissions. Section III contains technical information for States and CBROs on PIP monitoring and reporting.

In ACYF-CB-IM-07-08, we provided guidance and suggested a format for preparing PIPs for the second round of CFSRs. We are now updating that information for States and CBROs with an updated Excel matrix spreadsheet as well as suggested monitoring and reporting instructions. A PIP matrix and an example completed section of a PIP using the Excel format are included as attachments to this Technical Bulletin. Additional instructions on PIP development can be found here: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/tools_guide/pip_instruct.htm

Section I: PIP Monitoring, Evaluation, and Renegotiation

A. GUIDELINES FOR PIP MONITORING AND EVALUATION

States are strongly encouraged to use the PIP Matrix that is described in Section II of this bulletin as part of their initial PIP submission and to report quarterly progress. The CBRO may then use the matrix to track PIP progress and response to States after the submission of quarterly reports. The PIP Matrix is designed to allow States to enter information by a broad strategy approach and link to the outcomes and items out of conformity that need to be addressed. Using a thematic or broad strategy approach provides a focus on overarching State reforms and organizes the PIP document in a way that may facilitate communication with a wider array of stakeholders. The PIP Matrix was developed to provide a summary of the State's plan and to report progress. It is expected that more detailed information may be provided in supporting attachments and narratives.

The PIP Matrix includes all the basic information required for State and quarterly CBRO PIP status reporting. When action steps and benchmarks are not met within the quarter they are due, the matrix can accommodate a brief narrative explanation within the document. Action steps and goals included in the PIP can be evaluated for completion according to the approved PIP specifications. The CBRO and State may jointly determine on the basis of sufficient information whether the action steps have been completed and the goals achieved, along with completion dates. After approval by the CBRO, no further reporting will be required for the action steps, pertinent outcomes, or systemic factor goals during the PIP implementation process. Each quarter a conference call should be scheduled for a State and its CBRO before the CBRO provides written feedback to the State. After the conference call, the CBRO will return the matrix with comments to the State.

B. PIP RENEGOTIATION DOCUMENTATION

A State may request to renegotiate and modify its PIP with the CBRO if adjustments are necessary after PIP implementation. Renegotiation may occur regarding the timeframes for implementing program improvements, action steps to be used, or measurable goals. Requests for renegotiation and modification to a PIP may be submitted in writing or electronically to the CBRO for approval. The PIP Matrix may be used to document requested renegotiation of timeframes, steps, and goals. The CBRO will review and approve requested modifications or changes to the PIP and submit copies to the Children's Bureau Central Office upon approval. Requests for renegotiation also may be documented in the quarterly status reports and filed according to the instructions in Section III.

Section II: Use of the Revised PIP Matrix Spreadsheet

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE PIP MATRIX SPREADSHEET

The PIP Matrix spreadsheet (Appendix A) is the suggested format for PIP submission and the reporting and feedback mechanism to be used between the State and CBRO for every quarterly report. CB created the matrix in Excel to facilitate its use and correlate subsequent progress reporting to the original PIP. States should submit the entire spreadsheet, which includes the PIP Strategy Summary, TA Plan, and PIP Matrix, to the CBRO staff person responsible for accepting the State's CFSR. We request that States submit the matrix in Excel rather than Adobe PDF so that it can be updated easily with information from the Regional Office. States that opt not to use the matrix still are required to provide quarterly status reports to ACF in the format used in the attached PIP Matrix. A blank PIP Matrix spreadsheet is in Appendix A, and an example of the PIP Matrix spreadsheet is in Appendix B.

Instructions for completing the sections and columns/cells in the PIP Matrix spreadsheet follow.

B. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PIP STRATEGY SUMMARY AND TA PLAN

The PIP Strategy Summary and TA Plan consist of three sections as defined below:

Primary Strategies: In this section of the PIP Strategy Summary and TA Plan, the State summarizes the broad strategy approaches that address the key concerns from the CFSR and serve as a framework for goals/negotiated measures, benchmarks, and action steps. These approaches should reflect the overarching reforms and continuing strategies that address key concerns from the CFSR Final Report and build on prior PIP activity. The primary strategies should reflect integration with the timeframes of other plans, such as the CFSP. Each primary strategy should be assigned a unique number to allow cross-walking to action steps and benchmarks.

Key Concerns: In this section, the State summarizes the key concerns that will be addressed over the course of the PIP. These key concerns should be consistent with those identified in the Final Report of the CFSR.

TA Resources Needed: In this section, the State identifies the TA resources needed to carry out the provisions of the strategies for each year of the PIP. The source, frequency, and duration of the TA should be summarized and include both Federal and non-Federal sources.

C. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PIP MATRIX SECTION

Introductory Information

At the top of the PIP Matrix, States will enter the information requested to identify their State, the type of report being submitted (PIP or quarterly), and the date.

Part A: Strategy Measurement Plan and Quarterly Status Report

This section of the PIP Matrix is designed to allow States to detail action steps that address the goals/negotiated measures and benchmarks and to report quarterly progress on each action step.

States will copy the table for part A for each of the strategies and action steps contained in their PIPs in order to address all the outcome items, data composite indicators, and systemic factor items that contributed to nonconformity.

States will complete the shaded cells only when using the matrix for quarterly reporting or for reporting the results of renegotiation. Instructions for each cell in part A follow.

Primary Strategy: (see: **B. Instructions for PIP Strategy Summary and TA Plan** above.)

Goal: States will describe the overall accomplishment to be achieved through the primary strategy that addresses applicable areas requiring improvement based on the Final Report.

Applicable CFSR Outcomes or Systemic Factors: States will identify the outcomes or systemic factors being addressed through the primary strategy and action steps. When multiple outcomes or systemic factors are addressed by a key strategy, it is recommended that States identify the outcome or systemic factor that is most directly affected by the key strategy. States are encouraged to employ overarching strategies but should avoid linking the same outcomes or systemic factor to multiple key strategies. States should consider that any potential withholding of funds because of failure to successfully complete a PIP is applied to each outcome or systemic factor not completed.

Applicable CFSR Items: States will specify the item(s) addressed by the key strategy based on those requiring improvement in the Final Report. Multiple items may be addressed by one key strategy as long as the items align with the applicable outcome or systemic factor as specified for the cell above.

Action Steps and Benchmarks: States will provide a brief description of each action step to be taken to create improvements under each goal. Benchmarks in this section can be qualitative processes and/or incremental quantitative measures of progress toward achieving the action step. States should list as many benchmarks as necessary for adequate monitoring of progress for each action step. Action steps and benchmarks will be numbered according to the primary strategy with which they are associated.

Person Responsible: States will identify the individual(s) responsible for action steps and benchmarks to clarify staff and stakeholder engagement and responsibility.

Evidence of Completion: States will specify expectations for completion of action steps. For example, training may be required when the referenced training is incorporated into a pre-service curriculum or when the State reaches a percentage of existing staff that have been trained. Documents or reports can provide the CBRO with evidence of progress and eventual completion of the action step. Although this may reflect a process measure, it does not require unnecessary documentation (such as lists of trainees or detailed meeting minutes); instead, details can be summarized as evidence the action step has been completed. Any referenced attached documents must include a name, title, and reference number.

Quarter Due: States will provide the quarter in which each action step or benchmark will be completed. This date should be entered as the last day of that quarter.

Quarter Completed: The CBRO will determine, based on reviews of State reports, the quarter in which each action step or benchmark is completed. This date should be entered as the last day of that quarter.

Quarterly Update: States will enter and report information regarding each action step or benchmark that is due during the quarter. When an action step is past due, States will explain with a revised completion date entered in the narrative. The CBRO will review the explanation and revised date and indicate in the remarks whether the extended due date is acceptable or flag the action step for renegotiation.

Part B: National Standards Measurement Plan and Quarterly Status Report

This section of the PIP Matrix allows States to enter and report information regarding each national standard data indicator that is to be addressed in their PIPs, including the following:

- State performance as measured in the Final Report and the source data period for the data indicator
- State performance as measured for the baseline established and the source data period for the data indicator
- The negotiated improvement goal
- The renegotiated improvement goal, if applicable

When using the PIP Matrix for quarterly reporting, States will enter the status of the data indicator for each reported quarter.

Part C: Item-Specific and Quantitative Measurement Plan and Quarterly Status Report

This section of the PIP Matrix allows States to enter and report information regarding each CFSR item or action step with quantitative measurement that is to be addressed in their PIPs, including the following:

- The status of the item in the Final Report
- The performance as measured for the baseline established and the source data period for the measure
- The negotiated improvement goal
- The method of measuring improvement
- The renegotiated improvement goal, if applicable

When using the PIP Matrix for quarterly reporting, States will enter the status of the action step or item measurement indicator for each reported quarter. States will copy the table for part C as many times as necessary in order to address all the items contained in their PIPs.

Section III: Instructions for Children's Bureau Regional Offices on PIP Reporting and Monitoring

A. UPDATING MATRIX CELLS FOR QUARTERLY REPORTING

Quarter Completed: The CBRO will determine, based on a review of a State's reports, the quarter in which each action step or benchmark is completed. This column will be completed by the CBRO and will indicate whether the action step/benchmark has been **completed** satisfactorily or is **incomplete**. The CBRO will fill in this column in response to the State's quarterly report; the State should not enter any information in that column. This date will be entered as the last day of the quarter reported.

Quarterly Update: States will enter and report information regarding each action step or benchmark that is due or past due for that quarter. States will also note here any evidence of completion that will be attached for each action step or benchmark. States will provide the name and title for each attached document and will indicate the action step number or benchmark the document is associated with so that the document can be easily referenced.

Renegotiated Action Steps and Benchmarks: If applicable, States will note whether the action step and/or benchmarks are identified for renegotiation and provide a detailed description.

B. QUARTERLY REPORTING OF MEASUREMENT DATA—PARTS B AND C

In Part B of the matrix, if a State is running its own composite data and uses the data in quarterly reporting, the State may include its calculated percentage in the cells for each quarter being reported. Once the data have been verified by CB's Data Team, the CBRO will include that percentage in the cell, note it as "CB data" and will note whether the item is "achieved," "not achieved," or "pending." ("Pending" would be used in instances in which the CB Data Team does not yet have the AFCARS or NCANDS data required for verification. Once the data are verified, the cell will be updated in the next quarterly report.)

In Part C of the matrix, the CBRO will indicate "achieved," "not achieved," or "pending" ("pending" would be used when there are questions about the validity of the data and further action is required by the State) under the percentage provided by the State.

The Notes cell in parts B and C is for details concerning the status of measurement or verification of data by either the State or CB.

C. CBRO RESPONSE TO PIP QUARTERLY REPORTS

The CBRO will respond in a letter to a State's quarterly report within 1 month of the date of receipt. The letter will reference the matrix for information about action steps that have been completed that quarter. The letter will include information about measurement goals and identify the goals that have been met successfully and/or those that are pending verification. If there are questions regarding the status of an action step/benchmark after the review of the quarterly report, the CBRO will add comments or questions to the quarterly update column (under the State's comments and in a different color to facilitate review) for the State.

It is important to consider that including a number of, or prolonged, comments could lengthen the document considerably and make it difficult to use as intended. It is recommended that a conference call with the State be held prior to the CBRO's final response to the quarterly report so that questions about the report can be raised in the call. The recommended conference call with the State should take place within the month after the quarterly status report is received by CBRO before a response is due to the State.

If the State completes an action step/benchmark that is not due until subsequent quarters, the State will note the quarter in which the completion occurred in the quarterly update column. The CBRO will indicate whether the action is "completed" satisfactorily or is "incomplete" in the quarter completed column.

D. SAVING DOCUMENTS

The PIP Matrix is intended to serve as a cumulative record over the 2-year implementation period. States and Regional Offices will maintain records of updates made to the original document. A modified PIP Matrix document may be used with each new quarter as long as the files show a full record of all changes from the original document. Because the matrix will be updated each quarter by the State and by the CBRO, it will be necessary to save each version of the updated document every quarter in both an Excel file that can be edited and a PDF file.

It is recommended that the State and CBRO determine a naming convention for the documents; for example, a document updated by the State could be saved as PIPQ1STATENAME.XLS, and that document updated by the CBRO could be saved as PIPQ1STATENAME_RO.XLS. Ideally, the matrix should be updated only once per quarter by the State and then by the RO. Comments or questions inserted by the RO can be addressed by the State in the subsequent quarter.

It is recommended that States save and submit the updated PIP Matrix document and all supporting documents for each quarter on a CD or removable storage device and submit that to the CBRO. The saved file will serve as the record of documentation for each quarter. The State and the CBRO should each have a copy of this record for every quarter in both formats.

Enclosures:

Appendix A—PIP Matrix Excel Spreadsheet
Appendix B—PIP Matrix Spreadsheet Example