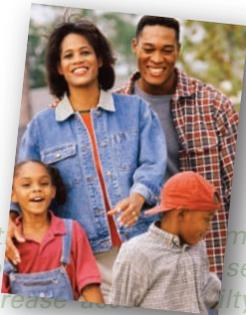


Interjurisdictional Placement of Children in the Child Welfare System

Improving the Process



Caseworker agreements. Web tutorials. Increase expenses. Direct communication. Tickler tracking system. Judicial oversight. Post-placement supervision. Concurrent planning. Caseworker networking. Electronic data transmission. Communication between judges. Electronic fingerprinting. Border agreements. Family connections. Purchase of service contracts. Home study protocol. Broker contract. Relative searches. Web tutorial. Train judges. Increase accountability. Caseworker training. Child-centered focus. Medical coverage. Educational expenses. Direct communication. Tickler tracking system. Judicial oversight. Post-placement supervision. Concurrent planning. Caseworker networking. Electronic data transmission. Communication between judges. Electronic fingerprinting. Border agreements. Family connections. Purchase of service contracts. Home study protocol. Broker contract. Relative searches.

Prepared for
Children's Bureau
Administration for Children and Families
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September 2006



Interjurisdictional Placement of Children in the Child Welfare System: Improving the Process

Final Report

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

All children deserve to live in safe and permanent homes. For those in the child welfare system, however, a variety of long-standing obstacles—systemic court problems, including lack of court resources, insufficient training for judges and attorneys, and insufficient court time for child welfare cases; a lack of adoptive families; and poor access to support and treatment services for families—may delay achievement of permanency (GAO, 2003). For some children in public custody, the best available foster care or pre-adoptive home is located across State lines. However, the usual barriers that plague the foster care population are exacerbated and made more complex for interstate placements. Strategies to resolve the barriers to interjurisdictional placement can facilitate these children's timely placement with permanent families and need to be addressed by the child welfare system together with other child- and family-serving agencies.

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND METHODS

In response to the many concerns about the delays in and complexities of interjurisdictional placements, the Children's Bureau contracted with RTI International to conduct a national survey of child welfare leaders. The survey was designed to move beyond previous efforts focused on identifying barriers to timely interjurisdictional placements from foster care. The Children's Bureau suggested an innovative focus for the survey: identifying possible solutions to the barriers. The intent of this focus was to move the field forward and to guide the Children's

Bureau's efforts in providing technical assistance to States to expedite placements that support children's placement with permanent families.

The survey was developed by RTI in conjunction with members of a national workgroup. A workgroup of national-, State- and local-level participants provided guidance during survey development in January of 2004 and helped formulate recommended solutions for improving the interjurisdictional placement process. The survey asked States to assess (1) strategies that State child welfare agencies have developed to facilitate interjurisdictional placements for children in the child welfare system, (2) supports that are needed on a national or Federal level to facilitate these placements, and (3) State's experiences with Adoption Opportunity Grants on interjurisdictional placements. A total of 151 strategies and supports were included on the survey.

RTI administered a Web-based survey to State child welfare directors in 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This report presents analysis of responses from 48 States (one State submitted their survey after the analysis was conducted).

It is recognized that multiple efforts will be required to address current concerns about interjurisdictional placement. Eighty-five of the possible 151 strategies and supports were identified as: (1) widely used by States and effective, (2) highly effective, and/or (3) of greatest interest. (Table 2-1). The Children's Bureau has already begun work with its technical assistance providers to integrate a large portion of these strategies and supports into the technical assistance available to States and tribes. It is hoped that multiple national and State partners will join in the interjurisdictional placement reform effort. This joint effort is needed to support the numerous initiatives required to help children achieve their permanency plans through interstate placements.

The national workgroup reviewed survey results during a meeting in May 2005, with the goal of formulating recommendations to support and provide focus for a national reform strategy to remove barriers to interjurisdictional placements to expedite children's permanency plans. To identify strategies most likely to be feasible and effective, workgroup members focused on three categories of strategies:

those widely used, those highly effective, and those of greatest interest to States. While focusing primarily on the strategies prioritized by State survey respondents, workgroup members considered additional strategies from the survey in making their recommendations. A similar method was used to identify high-priority supports. Workgroup members reiterated that many of the 85 strategies identified in Table 2-1 will be required for full impact on solving barriers, however they agreed identification of a few priority recommendations could give focus to the reform effort. These recommendations are listed below and discussed in the full report.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENT PROCESS

Ten recommendations were developed from the strategies and supports selected as most important by the workgroup participants. These recommendations for facilitating more timely and effective practice in interjurisdictional placements are listed below in order of priority; significant aspects of the workgroup's discussion related to these recommendations are summarized in Chapter 2.

The workgroup clearly stated that they were not suggesting additional Federal regulations. However, recommendations were made for technical assistance to the States and for steps national organizations may take to support improved interjurisdictional placements.

Recommendation 1: Develop a national uniform home study template that identifies core content areas to facilitate dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes.

Recommendation 2: Provide training on interjurisdictional issues to judges and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) members through Court Improvement Programs or other avenues such as "bench briefs."

Recommendation 3: Create a national Web site with either State pages or links to State Web sites containing information on the following State requirements: criminal background checks, coverage of medical and educational expenses as a sending and as a receiving State, a list of Purchase of Service

(POS) agencies with active contracts and POS requirements within the State, home study requirements, and post-placement standards for supervision.

Recommendation 4: Clarify Federal expectations regarding accountability for performance on interstate placement cases, especially in Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR), and assist States in developing a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner.

Recommendation 5: Receiving States should cover educational expenses of children and, if necessary, change State law or policy to allow foster and pre-adoptive children to be considered State residents for purposes of education.

Recommendation 6: Create a mechanism that specifies acceptable deadlines for responding to requests for criminal records information and processing fingerprinting and includes mechanisms for enforcing these deadlines.

Recommendation 7: Develop a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload.

Recommendation 8: Identify model practices and policies at both the State and Federal levels to ensure the provision of medical assistance to children who are placed across State lines that are not categorically eligible for Medicaid in the receiving State.

Recommendation 9: Develop mechanisms for participation by attorneys and significant other parties in out-of-state case or administrative reviews and court hearings.

Recommendation 10: Arrange Purchase of Service (POS) contracts with agencies to conduct home studies and streamline procurement requirements to allow for timely POS arrangements.

1

Introduction and Methodology

This report describes results from the first comprehensive national survey of States' strategies and resources to improve the interjurisdictional placement process for children with public child welfare agency involvement. The report focuses on States' current efforts to reduce barriers to interjurisdictional placement and presents recommendations for improving the process through training and technical assistance, collaboration, and policy changes. The information in the report will be of interest to child welfare professionals, as well as groups and organizations that are developing interjurisdictional processes and policies.

The term interjurisdictional covers movement across county, district, and State lines. Although this study broadly addressed all three types of interjurisdictional placement, this report focuses primarily on interstate placement. However, the interjurisdictional issues discussed may frequently be applied to placements across county and district jurisdictions. It is also important to note that although the survey provided definitions for potentially confusing terms such as Purchase of Service (POS), dual licensure, and broker contract, States and child welfare agencies may define and use such terms differently.

Chapter 1 provides background information about interjurisdictional placement issues, describes the major barriers to placing children across jurisdictional lines, summarizes the efforts made to address these barriers, and presents the survey methodology. Chapter 2 summarizes the survey findings and offers recommendations for improving the process. This chapter is particularly relevant for States that

want to quickly assess which policy and procedure changes to consider in the future. Chapter 3 provides a detailed analysis of the survey data and includes a context for how States have applied successful strategies.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Following the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (P.L. 105-89) in 1997, which imposed time limits to promote permanency and created incentives for States to find adoptive homes for children in need, the number of children in the custody of State child welfare agencies who moved from foster care to adoptive homes increased dramatically. The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) of the U.S. Children's Bureau reports that in fiscal year (FY) 2004, 51,000 children with public child welfare agency involvement were adopted from the foster care system (Administration for Children and Families [ACF], 2005), a 38 percent increase from the number of children adopted in 1998 (Maza, 2005). Despite marked increases in the number of foster children being adopted, the number of children waiting to be adopted is still high. The latest estimated figures (FY2004) show that 118,000 foster children are waiting to be adopted (ACF, 2005).

Many of the children waiting for permanent homes have emotional, behavioral, educational, and physical health issues. These children, as well as children who are minorities, who are older, or who have siblings, wait longer than others to be adopted (U.S. General Accounting Office [GAO], 1999). The best available permanent home for some children is in a county or State outside their own community or jurisdiction. Oftentimes, relatives that live in a different State than where the child lives are critical resources. Many children currently in interjurisdictional placements are with relatives (Maza, *The Challenge of Interstate Placement for Adoption*, 2003) and children are more likely to be adopted quickly when placement with an out-of-state relative or foster family is an option. Therefore, consideration of interjurisdictional resources, including relative resources, is an important step in the adoption process.

ASFA's requirements created an impetus for child welfare agencies to consider interjurisdictional resources in their efforts

to facilitate permanent placement for children. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, as amended by ASFA, includes mandates related to using interjurisdictional resources to locate an adoptive family and facilitate permanent placement. Further, as required by sections 471(a)(15) and 471(a)(23) of the Social Security Act, States must provide reasonable efforts to achieve permanent placement in a timely manner and may not deny or delay adoptive placement when an approved family is available in another jurisdiction. States that do not comply with these Title IV-E requirements risk losing Title IV-E funding (Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 [P.L. 105-89]).

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is an administrative and legal framework that facilitates foster care and adoptive placement of children across State lines. The Compact is a formal contractual agreement among States, enacted as statutory law, which promotes interstate cooperation to ensure that children placed out of State receive protection and services. It establishes uniform administrative procedures and sets forth jurisdictional and financial responsibilities for the States involved in the placement of a child across State lines (APHS, 2002a).

All 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have adopted the ICPC since its drafting in 1960. The 52 member States and Territories are members of the Association of Administrators of the ICPC (AAICPC), an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association (APHS). The Secretariat to the AAICPC provides legal, administrative, and technical assistance to the ICPC member States. Each State has an ICPC Administrator who is responsible for overseeing the ICPC processes for children placed in and out of the State.

When an interjurisdictional placement is being considered, the 'sending agency' (referred to as the 'sending State' throughout this report) submits written notice of the proposed placement to the receiving State's ICPC office. In most cases, the receiving State will conduct a home study – an extensive assessment of the prospective family. Following approval and placement of the child across jurisdictional lines, the receiving State assumes responsibility for supervision and support services, although the sending State maintains legal custody of the child.

Recent data reveals that the number of interstate placements is increasing (Arnold-Williams & Oppenheim, 2004). Of the 132,000 children in foster care waiting to be adopted in FY 2000 (ACF, 2005), approximately 6 percent were in interstate placements (Maza, *The Challenge of Interstate Placement for Adoption*, 2003). Maza's research shows that the children in these placements were more likely to be in preadoptive or relatives' homes than were children placed in State. Nearly 40 percent of interstate placements were with relatives, and 30 percent were preadoptive; by contrast, 16 percent of in-state placements were with relatives, and 15 percent were preadoptive.

Placing children across jurisdictional lines, however, can be very complicated; the process becomes even more complex when it involves agencies and judicial systems in two States. Interstate placements often take longer than in-state placements. Analysis of AFCARS data from 45 States in FY 2000 showed that children placed across State lines were in foster care longer (median of 43 months) than were children adopted in State (median of 36 months) (Maza, 2003).

Legal, administrative, and resource issues frequently impede or delay interjurisdictional placements. These issues may compound other obstacles that often hinder moving foster children to permanent homes even within their own jurisdiction. Systemic court problems, including insufficient training for court personnel that work with child welfare cases and overburdened court dockets, get in the way of timely decisions on cases; insufficient access to support and treatment services for parents also lengthens the time children spend in foster care (GAO, 2003). Understanding and addressing the issues and challenges involved in placing children in permanent homes across jurisdictional lines can help foster children find permanent homes.

1.2 BARRIERS TO INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENT

The barriers to interjurisdictional placement and the concerns surrounding these barriers have been the topic of scholarly publications, studies, and policy-driven efforts of public and nongovernmental child welfare and judicial organizations such as the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact

for the Placement of Children (AAICPC), National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), Evan B. Donaldson Institute, and Family Builder's Adoption Network.

A review of the literature on interjurisdictional placement, as well as discussions with adoption and foster care managers, ICPC and child welfare agency administrators, and court representatives, provided us with a framework to discuss barriers to placement.

We grouped the barriers into one of eight categories for this discussion: (1) staffing and resources, (2) training and knowledge, (3) staff attitudes and beliefs, (4) education and medical expenses, (5) criminal background checks, (6) communication, (7) permanency, and (8) tracking and reporting. Although not a comprehensive inventory of all of the identified barriers to interjurisdictional placement, this summary aims to provide a foundation for understanding the survey findings and the resulting recommendations for improving interjurisdictional processes.

1.2.1 Staffing and Resources

Inadequate numbers of staff is a recognized barrier to interjurisdictional placement (APHSA, 2002b; APHSA, 2002c; Family Builders, 2001). Additionally, insufficient financial support for essential services presents challenges in meeting the needs of children placed across jurisdictions. (APHSA, 2002c; Maza, 2003; Family Builders, 2001). Inadequate staffing due to high worker turnover and insufficient funding are chronic complaints of child welfare systems. A report on ICPC office staffing and activities showed an imbalance in staffing and ICPC cases. Agency referrals, both received and sent, increased from 1988 to 2001 by 71 percent and 52 percent, respectively. During the same time period, ICPC staff decreased by almost 15 percent (APHSA, 2002c).

Large and complex in-state caseloads often take priority over a home study or family assessment for a child referred from another State. Some receiving States have developed protocols to ensure that home studies are completed in an appropriate timeframe and do not receive last priority. Some sending States expedite the home study process through contracting with

private agencies in receiving States to complete home studies in a timely manner; however this takes the financial resources to pay for such services. A different approach to addressing home study delays has been the development and use of border agreements with neighboring States. Border agreements may allow caseworkers from one State to conduct home studies in another State or to provide supervision to a placement across State lines.

Variability in the content and process used to conduct home studies across States is another recognized barrier to interjurisdictional placement (Family Builders, 2001). For example, a sending State may require a piece of information that the receiving State does not; therefore, the information may be omitted from the home study completed by the receiving State which delays decision making around placement approval. To address the differing practice standards, some States are using a uniform home study format developed by several States for all intrastate and interstate home studies.

Incomplete information in the referral packet is a further cause of delay. In an APHSA study on home studies, States reported missing paperwork, problematic or missing court orders, and inadequate financial-medical plans as common complications (APHSA, 2002c). When referral packets are incomplete or do not contain the information required by the receiving State, the assessment of the prospective family cannot be completed and the placement cannot be approved. To address this problem, some receiving States make available a checklist of all required information to sending States to avoid such delays.

In addition to resources required to prepare for a placement, supervision of children after placement necessitates significant staff and service resources over an extended time period. Sometimes these prolonged placements can cause friction between the sending and receiving States, particularly if it does not appear that a permanent placement will result and the receiving State must continue post-placement visits indefinitely. Compounding this problem is the fact that there is no formal mechanism that facilitates State-to-State compensation for services delivered before or during an interjurisdictional placement (Freundlich, Heffernan, & Jacobs, 2004).

1.2.2 Training and Knowledge

Lack of awareness among child welfare and judicial professionals of the ICPC guidelines and requirements is a major barrier to timely coordination of activities for facilitating interjurisdictional placement. A March 1999 review by the HHS Office of Inspector General cited two primary weaknesses in the interstate system: (1) a lack of knowledge about the Compact among caseworkers, judges, and attorneys and (2) placements in violation of the Compact (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [U.S. DHHS], 1999). Training on the importance of considering relatives no matter where they reside, how to search for relatives, and interjurisdictional placement procedures are all important strategies for addressing this barrier. Further, some States provide caseworkers with access to expert consultation for resolving conflicts that hinder specific interstate placements.

1.2.3 Staff Attitudes and Beliefs

A range of child welfare and judicial staff attitudes and beliefs influence their effectiveness in facilitating interjurisdictional cases, including (1) the degree to which they are open to considering interjurisdictional resources, (2) their willingness to relinquish their responsibility over a child's case to a caseworker in another jurisdiction, and (3) distrust of another jurisdiction's system or staff (Family Builders, 2001).

Variation in whether and how interjurisdictional cases are counted when assessing a worker's caseload and for reporting purposes may also affect attitudes toward interjurisdictional cases. When comparing foster care and adoption caseloads, many jurisdictions only consider the number of children for whom they have legal responsibility. This practice results in caseworkers not receiving credit for their home study and supervision activities related to children from other jurisdictions. Likewise, Child and Family Service Reviews hold States accountable for their efforts and outcomes on behalf of their own children, but performance on behalf of other States' children has not been addressed generally in most systems of accountability.

Caseworkers may resent interjurisdictional responsibilities that are not an official part of their caseload. Staff in a sending State may give interjurisdictional cases lower priority because placements outside their jurisdiction will not be acknowledged

and therefore not rewarded (Family Builders, 2001). Some States have addressed these barriers by using strategies such as factoring interjurisdictional case duties into staff caseloads, developing a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner, and integrating interjurisdictional placements into the official data systems.

1.2.4 Education and Medical Expenses

Resolving financial responsibility for specific services to children—primarily educational, medical, and mental health services—was most frequently cited by States as a leading cause of delays in interstate placement in APHSA's study on home study delays (2002c). The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) was established in 1986 to ensure that eligible children received medical services and adoption assistance payments and subsidies when they were placed across State lines for adoption; however, many problematic issues remain.

Coverage of medical or mental health expenses is more difficult for children lacking Title IV-E eligibility. For children receiving Medicaid, certain costs, such as mental health or dental services, are more difficult to cover because of States' variability in coverage and the lack of providers accepting Medicaid payment in some areas. In addition, some receiving States do not consider a child under the legal jurisdiction of another State a resident, and therefore the child is not eligible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or for educational services. The coverage of educational expenses is most often a problem for foster children from other States who have special educational needs.

States vary considerably in their willingness to accept the responsibility of costly services to children from other States, and often these decisions require obtaining a commitment from administrators in systems outside of child welfare. Resolving these issues may take considerable negotiation across State and county systems in the States involved; they are often further complicated by lack of information, conflicting interests, and communication breakdowns.

1.2.5 Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background checks, which may include local, State, and FBI criminal records checks, are an important step in the

home study process. The time to process criminal background check requests is a leading contributor to delays in placing children in permanent homes (APHSA, 2002c; Dunhem & Oppenheim, 2002).

States' requirements for the type of background check to be conducted vary considerably, and workers following their own State's protocol may not meet the expectations of another State. State procedures can even delay starting the criminal background check process until other aspects of the home study are complete. Ready access to information on the type of criminal background checks required by each State is needed, along with the ability to complete the process in a timely manner. FBI checks are the most time consuming, according to an APHSA study on this barrier. Among strategies used by child welfare agencies to address the delays is the use of an in-house prescreening process (Dunhem & Oppenheim, 2002).

1.2.6 Communication

The ICPC process requires communication of referrals from the local to the State level in the sending State and from the State to the local level in the receiving State. The complexity of the process alone makes it time consuming; the lack of clarity among States regarding requirements and policies adds to delays in placement (Maza, 2003).

Effective communication and case planning often require direct communication among workers at the local level; however, some workers do not perceive that they are free to communicate directly with local workers in another State during the placement process.

Interpretation of the language in the Compact guidelines has also been cited as a communication barrier. The Guide to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (APHSA, 2002a) contains several references to overnight or express mail, which have been taken literally at times, resulting in avoidance of using swift methods to send materials such as e-mail or fax. Some jurisdictions also prohibit e-mail out of confidentiality concerns.

Additionally, delays have been caused in some cases by communication stalls, such as neglecting to send important documents. One strategy that some States have adopted to speed up the ICPC referral process time is simultaneous

transmission of information to State and local levels. Instead of waiting for the State ICPC office to receive, process, and forward the information to the local office, the sending agency distributes the referral packet to the State and local offices at the same time.

1.2.7 Permanency

Once a child has been successfully placed in another jurisdiction, the responsibilities of ongoing placement supervision and completion of the work necessary to achieve adoption are shared by workers and, at times, courts across jurisdictions. Every facet of this work becomes more complex. Policies about how often a worker must visit the home vary from place to place and necessitate agreement on which State's policies will be followed. Visits between foster children and birth parents are made more complicated by geographic distance. While judicial oversight resides in the child's county of origin, assessment of permanency resources, direct supervision, and provision of services take place in another jurisdiction.

Some States have developed a range of strategies to facilitate timely movement toward permanent homes in interstate placements, including developing tickler systems (automated systems that alert caseworkers of time-sensitive case activities) to track children placed in other States, developing mechanisms for significant persons in the receiving State to participate in a meaningful way in case reviews or court hearings that occur in the sending State, formulating methods for judges in different jurisdictions to work together, and facilitating stronger Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) advocacy for children in interstate placements.

1.2.8 Tracking and Reporting

States' inability to track and report on interstate cases is problematic (U.S. DHHS, 1998). States are required to report information about children placed out of State for AFCARS, but a few States do not comply (P. Buida, Children's Bureau, personal communication, April 4, 2006). Sometimes interjurisdictional cases fall off the radar screen when they are not included in a State's or agency's automated tracking systems, as described earlier. Several States are using an ICPC database that was created by APHSA to track home study and placement paperwork for all children entering or leaving a State for foster care or adoptive care. Other States have developed

additional strategies for tracking interstate cases, such as generating electronic reports for judges on interjurisdictional cases or having supervisors review interjurisdictional cases periodically.

1.3 EFFORTS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS

Prompted by calls for reform of the interjurisdictional placement process, and in response to the recognized obstacles to timely and efficient interjurisdictional placement, several measures to reduce barriers have been developed.

A Joint Committee on ICPC Improvement, established in 1995, brought together the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (AAICPC), the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) to devise solutions to shorten the delays in the interstate placement process. The Committee's resulting recommendations included Regulation 7: Priority Placement and Border State Agreements.

Regulation 7 was added to the Compact guidelines in 1997. The regulation outlines procedures for expedited placement of a child with specified relatives. It requires that the receiving State make a decision about the placement within 20 business days of receipt of the placement proposal. Specifically, the priority procedures may be used when the child is under the age of 2 or in an emergency shelter, or when the court finds that the child has spent a substantial amount of time in the relative's home.

Additionally, border State agreements, as described previously in relation to staffing and resource barriers, may allow a caseworker to enter another State to complete a home study or to provide supervision of a child placed across State lines. These agreements are particularly suitable to areas where travel time between jurisdictions is minimal (Barthel & Ashdown, 1997; APHSA, 2002c).

The Children's Bureau has addressed interjurisdictional placement barriers in several ways. Through its Adoption Opportunities (AO) program, discretionary grant funds were made available to States to support demonstration projects that facilitated the elimination of barriers to permanent homes for children. AO priority areas are developed by the Children's

Bureau to identify and promote promising practices. Grants were awarded to five States in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 to facilitate collaborative planning to increase interjurisdictional adoptions (ACF, 2003). The final reports for these grants are available through the Child Welfare Information Gateway (<http://www.childwelfare.gov>).

Also through Children's Bureau grants, APHSA developed training manuals—one each for ICPC Administrators, caseworkers, and the judiciary, as well as a manual that included ICPC court cases—and provided ICPC training for State agencies, including training for trainers (U.S. DHHS, 2002). Additionally, the Children's Bureau funded two studies that have furthered our understanding of the impediments to timely placement, Understanding Delays in the Interstate Home Study Process (APHSA, 2002c) and a report on criminal record checks (Dunhem & Oppenheim, 2002).

In an effort to address and remedy violations of the ASFA "geographic barriers" provisions, U.S. DHHS issued a Program Instruction in October 2002 on violations. The "geographic barriers" provisions prohibit States from delaying or denying a placement of a child for adoption when an appropriate family resides outside of the child's jurisdiction. The program instruction informed States of U.S. DHHS's plan to investigate alleged violations and outlined corrective actions that States would be required to take if found to be in violation (ACF, 2002).

Individual States have been working to improve and expedite the interjurisdictional placement process as well, as evidenced by the results of this survey, which show that they are using many strategies to address identified barriers. In a report to the Children's Bureau on grant activities, APHSA reported that States are finding solutions to inefficiency in the home study process, including dual licensure, contracting for and sharing home studies, and incorporating written detailed financial plans into placement requests. Child welfare agencies are also providing extensive training to their staff on ICPC procedures, establishing formal agreements with local law enforcement to expedite criminal background checks, encouraging direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving States, setting time standards for processing interstate requests, and implementing automated case management

systems (APHSAs, 2002c). In addition, States are developing tools to facilitate case processing and communication, making educational materials available to State child care institutions and judges (U.S. DHHS, 1998), and addressing barriers related to courts (GAO, 2003).

Most recently, APHSA adopted a policy resolution in March 2004 directing short- and long-term reforms to the ICPC. The AAICPC, an affiliate of APHSA, has begun a number of activities geared toward improving interstate practice, such as implementing an ICPC data system, facilitating State-to-State agreements among the largest sending and receiving States to expedite responses and services for interstate cases, exploring purchase-of-service contract issues, and developing a uniform home study template.

In addition, the Compact is undergoing major revisions. Common complaints include unclear and confusing language, outdated procedures, and unenforceable regulations, as well as claims that uneven financial and caseload burdens are placed on States and caseworkers when a State receives more children than it sends to other States (Arnold-Williams & Oppenheim, 2004; Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2005). The ICPC is being rewritten with the intent to “provide a better framework for ensuring timely placement of children across State lines, the suitability of prospective placements, and the provision of needed support systems” (Arnold-Williams & Oppenheim, 2004, p. 14). A final draft of the new ICPC was disseminated in March 2006. Future work will focus on finalizing the ICPC revisions, educating States about the changes, and working with States to pass and implement the new ICPC.

1.4 SURVEY OF STATES TO IMPROVE THE INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENT PROCESS

In response to the many concerns about the delays in and complexities of interjurisdictional placement, the Children’s Bureau contracted with RTI International to conduct a survey of all States that are members of the ICPC. The survey, “Strategies to Address Barriers and Reduce Delays in Interjurisdictional Placements,” assessed (1) the strategies that State child welfare agencies have developed, or hope to develop, to facilitate interjurisdictional placements for children

in the child welfare system; (2) the supports that are needed on a national or Federal level to facilitate these placements; and (3) the Adoption Opportunity Grants awarded to facilitate them.

This survey is unique in that it was designed to move beyond previous efforts, which consistently focused on the identification of barriers, by recognizing that interjurisdictional barriers are found at multiple levels. The Children's Bureau conceptualized the survey to identify effective and promising strategies to address a compilation of barriers to expedient interjurisdictional placement. Additionally, this survey aimed to learn from the efforts of States and smaller jurisdictions that use creative strategies to address the barriers. The survey responses provide valuable insights into the most effective and promising strategies identified, which the Children's Bureau will use to direct efforts to support and develop a national direction for system reform that will improve the interjurisdictional placement process.

1.5 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A Web-based survey was administered to the State child welfare director of each ICPC member (i.e., all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Responses from 48 States are included in this report.¹ At the time of this report, a 49th State had submitted its survey to RTI; although its data are not included in these analyses, the survey will be reviewed by the Children's Bureau for possible inclusion in future reports. This section describes survey development, administration, and analysis and discusses the strengths and limitations of the survey.

1.5.1 Survey Development

RTI developed the survey in conjunction with members of a national workgroup, which was convened to provide guidance during survey development and to help formulate recommendations for improving the interjurisdictional placement process. The group was composed of 34 representatives² from government and the private sector,

¹For this report, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands will be discussed as States.

²There were 34 workgroup members over the duration of the study; some members who participated in the first meeting were unable to attend the second meeting and were replaced.

including ACF staff, State child welfare directors, foster care and adoption managers, ICPC administrators, Federal child welfare specialists, the ICPC Secretariat, court/judicial representatives, a private agency director, and a foster/adoptive parent. (See Appendix A for the list of participants.) Workgroup participants, who represented various States, were selected for their knowledge in the area of interstate foster and adoptive placement for children in foster care. The first meeting was held in January 2004, in Washington, DC, to identify items for inclusion on the survey. The survey instrument was drafted shortly after this meeting.

Members of the national workgroup and other experts in the field of interjurisdictional adoptive placement (e.g., AdoptUsKids,³ the New York City Family Court Advisory Council, and child welfare directors in five States) were asked to review and comment on the overall data collection strategy and draft survey instrument. We used their feedback to improve the data collection effort.

RTI's Institutional Review Board approved the survey, as did the Office of Management and Budget.

1.5.2 Survey Description

The survey instrument (Appendix B) is divided into four sections:

- A. Your State's Strategies for Facilitating Interjurisdictional Placements
- B. Supports Needed to Facilitate Interjurisdictional Placements
- C. Overall Assessment of Interjurisdictional Placements
- D. Assessment of Adoption Opportunities Grants

Sections A and B list strategies and supports that could be used to facilitate interjurisdictional placements. Strategies are steps that States could take to overcome barriers to timely interjurisdictional placement. Supports are actions that could take place at the national level to support State efforts. We

³AdoptUsKids is an initiative funded by the Children's Bureau to find and support foster and adoptive families by providing new and enhanced recruitment tools and training and technical assistance to States and tribes. It is a collaborative effort that includes public and private adoption agencies, adoption photo listing services, State foster care managers, and State adoption managers.

have organized these strategies and supports into eight areas identified previously as barriers to timely placement:

1. Staffing and/or resources
2. Knowledge and training
3. Staff attitudes and/or beliefs
4. Education or medical funding
5. Criminal background checks
6. Communication
7. Permanency planning
8. Tracking and reporting

Almost 100 strategies that could be used to address the eight identified barriers were included on the survey. States reported whether they used each strategy and, if so, rated its effectiveness. States also provided insights into how they implemented effective strategies. If a State had not used a strategy, it could indicate whether it was currently investigating the strategy and whether it needed assistance to implement the strategy. States then rated the effectiveness of various supports that could be used to facilitate interjurisdictional placements.

Section C asks States to respond to a series of open-ended questions. Topics addressed in this section include

- § recommendations to other States,
- § recommended changes to ICPC regulations,
- § benefits of and barriers to purchase-of-service contracts, and
- § strategies used to facilitate intercounty and interdistrict placements.

Section D asks States to evaluate the effectiveness of ICPC training they may have received. States with Adoption Opportunity Grants designed to facilitate interjurisdictional placement or address interjurisdictional issues were asked a series of questions about their projects.

1.5.3 Survey Administration

The survey was administered in early February 2005 to the child welfare directors of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Child welfare directors were asked to convene a multidisciplinary group to respond to the questions, including the State's foster care and adoption

managers, ICPC administrators, and others with significant expertise in interjurisdictional placement. Respondents were asked to provide a coordinated response from their States; therefore, the survey responses do not necessarily reflect the opinion of each respondent. In telephone follow-up calls to States during the survey administration period, at least one-third of States reported that they were seeking input from various individuals either through collaborative methods such as convening meetings or conference calls, or by requesting that people review and provide input on the survey.

Survey data collection ended in early April 2005. A total of 49 States completed the survey (a 94.2 percent response rate)—39 used the Web to submit it, and 10 filled out a paper copy. Only 48 States, however, are included in the survey analysis, as we received one survey after the analysis was complete.

1.5.4 Data Analysis and Formation of Recommendations

We conducted analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative analyses consisted of generating frequencies and examining patterns among variables to aid in interpreting the findings. We used qualitative methods to analyze the text-based responses to open-ended survey questions, which provided a level of detail not otherwise attainable. These analyses are presented along with the relevant quantitative results, where appropriate, to provide deeper insights into the findings. Direct quotes from States have been edited for clarity and brevity.

The national workgroup for this study met during May 2005 to review the survey findings, discuss their implications, and make recommendations for a national coordinated reform strategy. Most of the workgroup members who had assisted in the development of the survey in January 2004 were able to return to be involved in the discussion of the survey findings. The Children's Bureau invited staff members from two of its national resource centers to the meeting to hear the survey findings presented and consider how strategies could be developed into technical assistance. The resulting recommendations are presented in Chapter 2.

1.5.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Survey

This survey represents the first comprehensive, systematic assessment of current and promising strategies and supports

needed to improve interjurisdictional placement of children in the child welfare system. The high response rate we achieved (completed surveys from 48 of the 52 States) illustrates States' commitment to improving the process of interjurisdictional placement. The survey provided States with an opportunity to share their successful strategies and to identify areas where they need assistance.

Another strength of the survey is the method that States were requested to use to compile information for their response. State child welfare directors were asked to provide a coordinated response, drawing on perspectives of personnel such as State foster care and adoption managers, ICPC administrators, and others with significant expertise in interjurisdictional placement. The goal of this approach was to ensure a complete and accurate response in light of two factors: (1) the strategies presented may have crossed several areas of a manager's program responsibility and (2) a single central manager may not have been aware of all the initiatives in which local offices were engaged. These discussions may have brought key staff together to learn more about interjurisdictional placement in their own State and to consider options for improving the process.

One limitation of the study is that some States were unable to coordinate their responses. This lack of coordination may have resulted in a more narrow perspective of a State's efforts and recommendations. Moreover, a respondent may have been unaware of the policy position of his or her State, resulting in responses that may not accurately reflect the State's position. Another limitation is that responses from States with county-administered systems may not be representative of the State because policies and practices were not uniform across the State.

Finally, it should be noted that the recommendations suggested in this report are based on the survey results and workgroup discussions, not on evidence-based research of best practices in the field of interjurisdictional placement.

2 Summary and Recommendations

It's expected that this report will help many child welfare professionals and policy-makers move their local and State agencies toward policy and procedure changes that will improve their interjurisdictional placement processes. This chapter provides salient findings from the survey, recommendations from the workgroup, and suggestions for further development and implementation.

It is hoped that this chapter will prompt administrators and field workers to investigate improvements currently within their reach and to help the Children's Bureau identify specific areas on which to focus their technical assistance efforts.

Section 2.1 summarizes the survey findings, which are presented in greater detail in Chapter 3. Section 2.2 presents the workgroup's recommendations and describes their process for reviewing the findings and forming recommendations. Section 2.3 specifies how the Children's Bureau and States can implement the recommendations and suggests further research to identify best practices to facilitate the placement of children in safe and permanent homes across State lines.

2.1 SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

A total of 151 strategies and supports were included on the survey. Strategies are steps States can take to overcome barriers; supports are actions that can take place at the national or Federal level to support State efforts. The large number of items coupled with the various response options created multiple perspectives from which to examine the data.

To support the Children's Bureau's efforts to improve interjurisdictional placements, three categories of strategies and two categories of supports are used to summarize the survey results as shown in Table 2-1.

A total of 85 strategies fall into at least one or two of the following categories:

(1) Widely used and effective strategies. Those strategies used and rated as somewhat or very effective by at least 60 percent of the reporting States are indicated by an "x" in the first data column on Table 2-1 (those so rated by at least 80 percent are indicated by "xx"). These strategies could be considered "best practices," although they are not evidence-based strategies. States that are not currently using these strategies are encouraged to assess the applicability of the strategies in their State. Although these strategies work well for the majority of States, it is important to recognize that not all strategies will work equally well for all States given the differences among them (i.e., county administered vs. State administered; small vs. large; rural vs. highly populated).

(2) Highly effective strategies. Those strategies that were rated as very effective by at least 50 percent of the States that used and rated the strategy, regardless of how many States use them, are indicated by an "x" in the second data column on Table 2-1 (strategies that meet the aforementioned criteria and are used and rated by at least 15 States are indicated by "xx"). These strategies may not be used by many States, but the States that are using them find them to be very effective; they may represent new or innovative practices that States are only beginning to implement. Again, these strategies may not be appropriate for all States and locales, but are recommended as strategies that States should explore for applicability. For example, States that use electronic fingerprinting reported significant reductions in turnaround time for FBI criminal background checks. However, the technology may be too expensive to be made available in rural areas.

(3) Strategies of greatest interest. Those strategies that at least one-third of States are either investigating or interested in, but need assistance to implement are indicated by an "x" in the third data column on Table 2-1 (\geq 50 percent are indicated by "xx"). These strategies may be productive areas for technical assistance and training for States to target;

therefore the Children's Bureau has brought those strategies to the attention of the technical assistance providers it funds based on preliminary analysis of the survey data. The five strategies from this group that are also rated as highly effective are of particular note since the majority of States that use the strategies find them very effective and many States are interested in implementing them. The Children's Bureau suggested that States that have found success with the strategies may be able to provide mentoring or peer technical assistance to interested States.

(4) Very Effective Potential Supports. Those supports that were rated by States as very effective by at least 50 percent of reporting States are indicated by an "x" in the fourth data column on Table 2-1. Most of the supports require national action. Even so, some strategies could be implemented at the State level, such as providing training to keep a child-centered focus regarding interjurisdictional issues. Some supports, such as establishing deadlines for FBI criminal background checks, require the collaboration of child welfare and other governmental agencies or departments.

(5) "Top" Potential Supports. States were asked to choose the single support that would facilitate the most positive change to address each of the eight barriers. The supports receiving the greatest number of votes within each barrier category are marked with an "x" in the fifth data column on Table 2-1. In two categories, (1) permanency and (2) tracking and reporting, two top supports are included due to a tie or near tie. Interestingly, four of the top supports were not rated as very effective by at least 50 percent of States; however, they are related to or overlap with other highly effective supports. For example, one support that was rated as the top support but not included in the highly effective category—develop a Web site with links to all States' home study and Purchase of Service (POS) contracting requirements—could be addressed simultaneously with a similar support—develop a Web site with links to States' requirements of coverage of medical and educational expenses.

Table 2-1 presents the strategies and supports that meet these criteria. The table is organized according to the eight topics that were used to present the strategies and supports within the survey:

1. Staffing and resources
2. Knowledge and training
3. Staff attitudes and beliefs
4. Education or medical funding
5. Criminal background checks
6. Communication
7. Permanency planning
8. Tracking and reporting

Selected results are discussed briefly in the sections that follow—readers are encouraged to review Table 2-1 for the comprehensive list of strategies and supports that meet the criteria described above. For more details on the survey findings, refer to Chapter 3 and the data tables in Appendix C (Strategies), Appendix D (Supports), and Appendix E (Top Supports).

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Staffing and Resources					
Have a protocol in place to complete home studies in a timely manner for an ICPC-approved placement of a child in another State's custody who moves to our State with their pre-adoptive or foster family or relatives	x				
Selected to use the uniform home study format developed by several States for all intra- and interstate home studies		x	xx		
Accept foster and adoptive parent training provided by other States for approval of families who move to our State with their foster or pre-adoptive child	x				
Use video conferencing to maintain connections for children when visits are too costly or distance prevents appropriate level of contact			xx		
Contract with private agencies to conduct home studies and/or supervision of children referred to our State	x				
Changed procurement requirements to allow for timely POS arrangements		x			
Arrange POS contracts with agencies to conduct home studies for interjurisdictional cases		x			
Use a broker contract with a private agency for home studies and supervision of children referred to our State		x			
Designate specific caseworkers to handle all interstate placement cases		xx			
Provide additional specific Federal funding for staff designated for interjurisdictional responsibilities				x	x

(continued)

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States.

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Use border agreements with other States to allow caseworkers to cross State lines to conduct home studies and supervision visits			xx		
Knowledge and Training					
In-state expert on interjurisdictional issues available for legal or social work consultation on interstate cases	xx	xx			
Provide the tools (e.g., use of Child Support Agency, Web sites, search agencies) to assist in the diligent search for relatives	x	xx			
Review issues on children in interjurisdictional placements to develop best practices				x	
Use a Web tutorial, CD, or video to train caseworkers on interjurisdictional (or use "just in time" training)			xx		
Training includes how to diligently search for relatives (maternal and paternal) within and outside our State	x				
Regular training includes a component to increase competency in interjurisdictional placement procedures			x		
Offer federally sponsored training to Court Improvement Program (CIP) staff on interjurisdictional issues				x	
Work with State's CIP to train judges and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) members on interjurisdictional issues and how to conduct interjurisdictional placements to improve the timeliness of placements			x		

(continued)

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States.²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	“Top” Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Develop “bench briefs” to educate judges on interjurisdictional issues and what questions to ask in interstate cases				x	x
Staff Attitudes and Beliefs					
Policy to consider in-state placements to achieve permanency for children is clearly defined and communicated to staff	xx				
Communicate commitment to interjurisdictional placement responsibilities to the caseworker	x				
Encourage staff to consider interjurisdictional placement options that support the permanency plan routinely	x	xx			
Clarify in training for caseworkers that ASFA timelines apply to interjurisdictional cases	xx				
Provide training to keep a child-centered focus regarding interjurisdictional issues				x	
Have supports, such as training, for caseworkers and caretakers to help deal with the emotional process of “letting go” of the child for whom an in-state permanent placement has not been found			x		
Provide training for caseworkers and supports for the child to prepare and help the child transition to a placement in another State			x		

(continued)

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as “somewhat” or “very effective” out of all reporting States.

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as “very effective” out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as “very effective” out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Develop protocol for handling interjurisdictional placement responsibilities	x				
Develop system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload		xx	x		
Require staff to document their response to out-of-state inquiries for children waiting to be adopted by families with complete home studies	x				
Develop system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner		xx			
Hold supervisors and caseworkers accountable to seek interstate resources when needed for children	x				
Use techniques, such as open adoption and guardianships, to support children in maintaining (when appropriate) important connections in the sending State	x				
Provide financial incentives to receiving States for timely completion of interstate home studies				x	x
Education and Medical Expenses					
Receiving State generally covers medical expenses not covered by sending States for non-Title IV-E children		xx			
Sending State provides coverage for medical expenses for non-Title IV-E children placed in another State	x	xx			
Provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children placed in another State	x	xx			

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States. (continued)

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Enact Federal legislation which requires receiving States to cover children under their Medicaid who qualify for Supplemental Security Income in the sending State				x	
Offer Medicaid coverage as part of TANF child-only grants for children in relative placements	xx	xx			
Provide Medicaid to children receiving State-funded adoption assistance from another State residing in our State	xx	xx			
Cover educational expenses of children sent from other States	x	xx			
Fund the educational expenses of children placed in foster care or pre-adoptive placements in other States		xx			
Enact Federal legislation that prohibits States from charging sending States for educational costs				x	
Include a form indicating our expectations as to how medical and educational expenses will be covered when referring a child for placement in another State	x	xx			
Change State law or policy to allow foster children or children in pre-adoptive placements to be considered residents of State for purposes of the provision of education		xx			
Develop process for resolving interstate issues with educational and medical expenses in a timely manner			x		
Specify availability and accessibility of resources to meet a referred child's needs	xx				

(continued)

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States.

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Criminal Background Checks					
Place info on State's Web site regarding coverage of medical and educational expenses of children placed in State from other States			xx		
Develop a Web site with links to all States' requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses				x	x
Enter into an agreement with State or local law enforcement agencies to conduct criminal record checks in a timely manner	x				
Create a Federal interagency agreement between DHHS and the FBI regarding timeframes for fingerprinting				x	
Establish deadlines for FBI criminal background checks and mechanisms for enforcing these				x	
Use electronic fingerprinting for background checks to expedite the process		x	xx		
Provide Federal financial support for States to develop electronic fingerprinting capability				x	x
Streamline criminal background check process to limit the number of individuals and agencies involved in the process	x	xx			
Provide support for the development of State models for streamlining the criminal background check process				x	

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States.

(continued)

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Routinely inform receiving States of our criminal background check requirements during the referral process		xx			
Make criminal background check requirements available on State's Web site		xx			
Conduct criminal background check requirements of the sending State if they are more extensive		x			
Accept criminal background check requirements of the receiving State if they are less extensive		xx			
Provide access to a name-based criminal database and conduct name checks directly		xx			
Provide easier or on-line access to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC)				x	
Conduct a prescreening name check early in the home study process to determine if full State criminal background check is needed		xx			
Extend criminal background checks to routinely include all adults in the home				x	
Communication					
Establish procedures to facilitate communication between caseworkers and ICPC Administrator	xx	xx			
Encourage direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving States	xx	xx			

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States. (continued)

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Coordinate events for caseworkers and supervisors with staff outside their jurisdiction to promote potential networking		xx			
Develop a mechanism for judicial oversight including communication from sending State's judge to receiving State's judge			xx		
Develop a process for negotiating which State pays to maintain emergency placement until the emergency is resolved		xx			
Use a secure Web-based system for transmitting ICPC referral information across jurisdictions or State lines			xx		
Use simultaneous transmission to send information from State's local agencies to both sending and receiving States' ICPC administrators and to the sending and receiving local agencies			xx		
Use a tickler tracking system to alert caseworkers of time-sensitive events such as expected date of home study completion			xx		
Develop a Web site with links to all States' home study requirements, POS contracting requirements, and postplacement standards					x

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States.

(continued)

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	“Top” Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Permanency					
Encourage courts to make “reasonable efforts” findings to achieve the permanency plan	xx	xx			
Provide judicial oversight in the county of origin for children who have been placed out of State for an extended period of time	xx	xx			
Develop mechanisms for judges from sending and receiving States to work together			x		
Develop mechanisms for meaningful participation from foster and adoptive parents and significant others in case reviews and court hearing that are held out of State			x		
Develop procedures and an appeal process of ICPC cases related to denial of home study, delays, and sending States refusing to take children back after extended time in residential or foster care					x
Accept a home study, completed and approved by the State agency or a State-licensed child-placing agency in another State, as a valid home study	xx	xx			
Develop a national uniform home study template which would facilitate dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes					x
Develop ICPC procedures and forms to support requests for dual home studies				x	

(continued)

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as “somewhat” or “very effective” out of all reporting States.²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as “very effective” out of those States that used and rated the strategy.³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as “very effective” out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	"Top" Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Encourage concurrent planning to identify out-of-state placement resources early in the case assessment	xx				
Include early identification of relative resources as a quality assurance item on a regular basis	xx				
Incorporate primary and concurrent permanency plans in the placement agreement and define tasks to accomplish both plans in the case plan	x				
Provide child's education information to foster or pre-adoptive parent to facilitate school enrollment	xx				
Provide child's medical history to foster or pre-adoptive parent	xx				
Develop protocols and guidelines for Adoption Assistance negotiations with prospective adoptive parents for children in the care of our State child welfare system	xx	xx			
Request regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children in other States	xx	xx			
Require the same level of regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children coming into our State as we require for children residing in our State	xx	xx			
Work with sending States in conducting an annual assessment with relative caregivers related to their decisions and intentions regarding adoption and other options for permanency	x				

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "somewhat" or "very effective" out of all reporting States.

(continued)

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as "very effective" out of all reporting States.

Table 2-1. Summary of Strategies and Potential Supports (continued)

Strategies and Supports	Widely Used and Effective ¹ x=>60% of States xx=>80% of States	Very Effective ² x=>50% of States xx=>50% + minimum of 15 States use	Want to Implement ³ x=>33% of States xx=>50% of States	Very Effective Potential Support ⁴ x=>50% of States	“Top” Potential Support x=Most frequently rated
Use and regularly monitor a computerized tickler tracking system to track children who are referred to or placed in our State		xx	x		
Tracking and Reporting					
Be able to track steps in the interstate placement process (e.g., home study and placement status)	x	xx			
Identify the elements needed to track interjurisdictional cases with the goal of introducing Federal legislation to support and fund a national tracking, reporting, and case management system					x
Use an electronic-based information system for simultaneous transmission across State lines		x	xx		
Use the ICPC database to generate and track information		xx			
Include data specific to interjurisdictional cases in SACWIS system			x		
Use an automated State tracking system that is not linked to SACWIS*	x	xx			
Provide judges with electronic reports on child welfare caseload		x			
Provide legal clarification of the scope of HIPAA within the child welfare realm from intake to adoption					x

¹Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as “somewhat” or “very effective” out of all reporting States.

²Percentage is based on States that rated a strategy as “very effective” out of those States that used and rated the strategy.

³Percentage is based on States that reported they were investigating or needed assistance to implement the strategy out of all reporting States.

⁴Percentage is based on States that rated a support as “very effective” out of all reporting States.

* This strategy meets the criteria for inclusion on this table and reflects the practice of many States. However, using a system that is not linked to SACWIS is not a recommendation; it is always preferable to link child welfare data to a SACWIS system.

2.1.1 Staffing and Resources

Strategies to reduce the burden of home studies and supervision figure prominently among States' responses to staffing and resource barriers. Table 2-1 shows one strategy that stands out as highly effective and of interest to at least half of the States. To address the differing practice standards among States, five States use the uniform home study format developed by several States for all intra- and interstate home studies. Although only a few States have adopted the uniform home study, it was rated as highly effective by two of the four States that use and rated it, and more than half of the remaining States were interested in using it for their State.

More than half of the States were interested in trying two other strategies:

- § Twenty-seven States are interested in using videoconferencing to maintain connections for children when visits are too costly or distance prevents an appropriate level of contact. Currently, only three States use this technology. None rated the effectiveness, probably because it is too soon to evaluate.
- § Twenty-six States are interested in border agreements to allow caseworkers to cross State lines to conduct home studies and post-placement supervision visits. Of the five States that have border agreements, three reported they were somewhat effective, one reported it was ineffective, and one was unable to comment on the effectiveness due to the newness of their border agreement.

Of 48 reporting States, 26 designate specific caseworkers to handle interstate cases and rated the effectiveness of this technique. Half of these rated this strategy as very effective. States are also using local ICPC liaisons to facilitate the administrative process and to provide consultation to caseworkers. Despite the success of these States, only three States are investigating this option or need assistance to do so, perhaps due to lack of funds.

Not surprisingly, the most frequently requested support in the staffing area was to provide Federal funding for staff dedicated to interstate cases.

2.1.2 Knowledge and Training

States use a variety of strategies to increase knowledge and awareness of interjurisdictional placement options and procedures through training and other resources. One such strategy—having an in-state expert on interjurisdictional issues available for legal or social work consultation on interstate cases—was widely used and rated as highly effective by 36 of the 45 States that have such an expert. In-state experts such as the ICPC office staff, managers and supervisors, field support, and legal counsel, as well as national or Federal resources, were counted on for consultation.

Conducting relative searches early in the process can significantly shorten the child's stay in foster care. Many States provide training that includes how to search for a child's relatives and provide the tools for these searches, such as the use of the child support agency, Web sites, and search agencies. More than half of the States agreed that providing the tools for the searches was highly effective. Several States suggested using tools and methods applied in department of social services and child support divisions for locating relatives, such as a parent locator service, child support and paternity searches, welfare records, and Medicaid resources.

Of the reporting States, 71 percent indicated interest in using a Web tutorial, CD, or video for caseworker training on interjurisdictional processes. Of the six States that use this strategy, three found it somewhat effective, two rated it as ineffective, and one did not know its effectiveness. These results suggest that these States may have insights to offer to the 34 States that are interested in this type of training—"lessons learned" that could improve the effectiveness of such trainings over previous experience.

The support that received the most ratings was to develop "bench briefs" to educate judges on interjurisdictional issues and what questions to ask in interstate cases.

2.1.3 Staff Attitudes and Beliefs

Staff attitudes and beliefs may interfere with conscientious performance of interjurisdictional responsibilities. For example, viewing responsibilities for interstate placements as a lower priority or being reluctant to pursue interstate placements for a

child due to personal beliefs can delay the placement of a child in a permanent home.

Many States have leadership who communicate commitment to interjurisdictional work through clearly defined policies, training, and encouragement of routine consideration of interstate resources for children. More than 60 percent of States agree that the following strategies are effective: (1) communicating a clearly defined policy that caseworkers should consider out-of-state placements to achieve permanency for children; (2) clarifying in training for caseworkers that ASFA timelines apply to interjurisdictional cases; and (3) encouraging staff to consider interjurisdictional placement options that support the permanency plan routinely. The first two strategies are used and found effective by 46 and 45 States, respectively. The third one was found highly effective by 19 of the 38 States that used and rated it—one said it was ineffective. Permanency options are typically discussed in case reviews, semiannual reviews, placement committees, supervision trainings, attorney meetings, and in court.

Variation in whether and how interjurisdictional cases are counted when assessing a caseworker's workload and for reporting purposes may affect attitudes towards interjurisdictional cases. Although fewer than half of States have developed a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload, half of the ones that do and rated it agreed that it was highly effective; only two said it was ineffective.

Thirty-two States reported they have a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner. In addition to the usual case review processes, States reported other ways that they implemented such a system, such as a Foster Care Review Board that focuses more heavily on interjurisdictional cases; monthly leadership meetings for adoption staff and an advanced database framework for monitoring work performance.

The single support that States thought would make the most difference in promoting positive attitudes was providing financial incentives to receiving States for timely completion of interstate home studies.

2.1.4 Education and Medical Expenses

Additional barriers that interfere with effective performance of interjurisdictional responsibilities are difficulties in obtaining funding for educational or medical expenses for children waiting for, or already in, interstate placements. Although children only need medical coverage in one State (either sending or receiving), policies that give States more potential for flexibility ensure that coverage is available for any specific child.

Interestingly, of the 12 strategies listed on the survey, seven were used and rated effective by at least 60 percent of States, nine were rated as highly effective by at least half of the States that used and rated it, and two were not used but of interest to at least one-third of the 48 reporting States.

For purposes of this discussion, selected findings are categorized according to the need addressed (i.e., medical or educational) and from the perspective of the State (i.e., sending or receiving).

§ Strategies that sending States use to pay for children's medical needs

At least 60 percent of States use and rated effective two strategies—in fact, more than half rated them as highly effective.

Medical costs for children placed within or out of their own States are most easily covered when the child is Title IV-E eligible and qualifies for Medicaid. These children can qualify for Medicaid coverage in the receiving State, but some children have additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid such as mental health and dental service coverage. Many States provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children placed in another State (used by 41 States; 24 rated it as highly effective; and two rated it as ineffective).

Arrangements must be made for children who are not eligible for Title IV-E. Almost all States provide coverage for medical expenses for non-Title IV-E children placed in another State (44 States used it; 24 rated it as highly effective, and 5 rated it as ineffective).

§ Strategies that receiving States use to pay for children's medical needs

Although not widely used, of the 23 States that generally cover medical expenses not covered by

sending States for non-Title IV-E children, 12 rated it as highly effective. Two other strategies,

- offer Medicaid coverage as part of TANF child-only grants for children in relative placements and
- provide Medicaid to children receiving State-funded adoption assistance from another State,

are not only widely used, but are also rated highly effective by more than half of these States.

§ Strategies that sending States use to pay for children's educational needs

About two-thirds of the reporting States (32) fund the educational expenses of children placed in foster care or pre-adoptive placements in other States. Sixteen found this to be a highly effective practice.

§ Strategies that receiving States use to pay for children's educational needs

Almost all of the reporting States (40) cover educational expenses of children sent from other States. Twenty-six States rated this practice as highly effective. Some States qualified this practice by saying that special education expenses will not be paid for by the receiving State.

Half of the States have changed State law or policy to allow foster children or children in pre-adoptive placements to be considered residents of State for purposes of the provision of education. Sixteen States reported their policy was highly effective; one rated it as ineffective.

States also reported several procedural strategies to communicate their expectations for meeting the medical and educational needs of children in interstate placements:

- § Include a form indicating our expectations as to how medical and educational expenses will be covered when referring a child for placement in another State (widely used and rated very effective by more than half of the States that do this).
- § Specify availability and accessibility of resources to meet a referred child's needs (used by 43 States and rated effective by most of these).
- § Place information on State's Web site regarding coverage of medical and educational expenses of children placed in State from other States (used by only

a few States but more than half of the States would like help to do this).

- § Develop a Web site with links to all States' requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses (most States rated it as a very effective potential support and the top support they would like to see implemented).

2.1.5 Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background checks, which may include local, State, and FBI criminal records checks, are an important step in the home study process and are often cited as a cause of delays. States may require local, State, and FBI criminal record checks. Many States have several ways to streamline the criminal background check process.

Fingerprints are used in FBI checks and are commonly required for some foster care and adoptive parent applicants in State-level checks. Although not used by many States, electronic fingerprinting was the strategy reported to be most effective by the States that use it. It was also the strategy of greatest interest among States that do not currently use it. Electronic fingerprinting involves entering an individual's fingerprints electronically into a database that allows for quicker processing than standard card methods.

Consistent with this finding is that almost 80 percent of States thought that providing Federal financial support for States to develop electronic fingerprint capability would be very effective.

More than half of the States streamline the process by limiting the number of individuals and agencies involved in the process.

Although not widely used, the States that conduct prescreening name checks and that are able to conduct name checks directly through database access, have found these practices to be highly effective. A prescreening process is used prior to a full criminal records check as a preliminary measure for investigating an individual's criminal record status and as a way to speed up the home study process. A name check is a method of retrieving criminal records that involves searching databases for an individual's name and/or other identifying information such as date of birth or social security number.

Different requirements between a sending and receiving State can sometimes present a barrier to timely interjurisdictional placements. Almost two-thirds of States accept the

requirements of the receiving States if they are less extensive than their own and most of these States rated it as highly effective.¹

States that routinely inform receiving States of their background check requirements during the referral process or have their requirements available on their Web site report that these are highly effective methods.

2.1.6 Communication

States place great importance on facilitating communications between caseworkers and the ICPC administrator and between caseworkers in sending and receiving States. To facilitate these communications, almost all States use the following strategies and more than half reported that they are highly effective:

- § Establish procedures to facilitate communication between caseworkers and the ICPC administrator.
- § Encourage direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving States.

A number of States cautioned that although direct communication is encouraged, it is imperative to keep the State ICPC offices informed and to ensure that formal decisions reside with the State office.

To enhance and speed up communication, more than half of the reporting States are interested in using technology to:

- § Use a secure Web-based system for transmitting ICPC referral information across jurisdictions or State lines. Only three States reported that they use such a system, however, 37 States would like assistance or are investigating the feasibility of implementing this strategy.
- § Use simultaneous transmission to send information from a State's local agency to both sending and receiving States' ICPC Administrators and to the sending and receiving local agency. Only 10 States reported they use this; however, over half of the States (52 percent) would like to.

Two other strategies were not widely used but were of interest to at least half of the States:

¹Several States referred to the ICPC regulations to support the practice of abiding by the receiving State's policy governing placements.

- § a tickler tracking system to alert caseworkers of time-sensitive events such as expected date of home study completion and
- § a mechanism for judicial oversight, including communication from the sending State's judge to the receiving State's judge to ensure timely placement decisions.

Although not commonly used, these two strategies were rated as highly effective by at least half of the States that did use them:

- § Develop a process for negotiating payment for emergency placements.
- § Coordinate events for caseworkers and supervisors to promote networking outside their jurisdictions.

2.1.7 Permanency

Some States use a range of strategies to facilitate timely movement toward permanent homes in interstate placements.

Most States accept home studies from other States, the standard under the ICPC, and more than half rated the practice as highly effective. However, some States reported that they request additional information if needed to address a particular concern or if the study was not clearly written. One way to reduce differences in home study requirements among States and to pave the way for a foster family to adopt a child placed with them, is to develop a national uniform home study template that would facilitate simultaneously licensing homes for both foster care and adoptive placements—this suggestion was tied for “top” support among reporting States.

Two commonly used judicial strategies that were also rated as highly effective were:

- § Provide judicial oversight in the county of origin for lengthy out-of-state placements.
- § Encourage courts to make “reasonable efforts” findings to achieve the permanency plan—used by all reporting States.

Tied for “top” support, nine States want to (1) develop a national uniform home study template that would facilitate dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes and (2) establish an ICPC appeals process that could be used to resolve home study denials and delays by receiving States, and refusal by sending

States to take children back after extended time in residential or foster care.

Concurrent planning—that is, simultaneously planning for a child to be reunited with his or her birth family and developing an alternative plan for other permanency options—is essential to help children move quickly into permanent homes once it is clear that they will not return to their birth families. Almost all States include early identification of relative resources as a quality assurance item and encourage early concurrent planning to identify out-of-state placement resources.

Two related strategies, providing medical and educational information to foster and pre-adoptive parents, were used and rated effective by many States. Some States use medical passports and others send this information as part of the interstate placement request packet.

Sometimes delays in placements are caused by efforts to negotiate the financial issues. All but two States have protocols and guidelines for negotiating adoption assistance agreements to facilitate the path to permanency.

Once a placement has been made, the State in which the child resides is responsible for conducting post placement visits to ensure his or her safety and well-being. Ideally, receiving States should provide the same level of contact for supervision for children sent from other States as they do for children who are in their custody and reside in their State. In fact, 43 of the responding States do so and 24 report that it is highly effective. Most States (45) request face-to-face contacts for supervision of children they have placed in other States; and 26 believe it is highly effective.

Computerized tickler tracking systems to facilitate the monitoring of children placed across States were used by fewer than half the responding States. Among those not currently implementing these systems, nearly all wanted to implement such a system.

2.1.8 Tracking and Reporting

A State automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) is a comprehensive automated case management tool that supports child welfare case practice including foster care and adoption assistance case management practice. By law, a

SACWIS is required to support the reporting of information about children in States' foster care and adoption systems, including children placed out of State. Currently, most States and the District of Columbia are at some stage of SACWIS planning, development, implementation, or operations. Although SACWIS systems should be designed to report information on children in out-of-state placements, not all States have fully functioning SACWIS systems. Only 19 States reported that they include interjurisdictional cases in their SACWIS system; another 21 need assistance to do so.

Many States thought that the "top" support needed from a national level was to identify the elements needed to track interjurisdictional cases with the goal of Federal support to fund a national cross-State tracking, reporting, and case management system.

Two data systems were reported to be highly effective by more than half of the States that used and rated them:

- § Use ICPC database to generate and track information.
- § Use an automated State tracking system that is not linked to SACWIS.

States that are currently using a tracking system not linked to SACWIS, such as the ICPC database, may be migrating to a SACWIS but that information was not reported.

About 70 percent of States reported that they can track steps in the interstate process, such as home study approval status and placement status. More than half of these States rated that strategy as highly effective.

Only one State is using an electronic-based information system for simultaneous transmission of information across State lines. However, a significant number of States (30) are interested in implementing this strategy.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) addresses the security and privacy of patient health data, which raises some important questions about information sharing practices in child welfare cases. States ranked as a close, second "top" support, that providing legal clarification on the scope of HIPAA within the child welfare realm would be most effective.

2.2 WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

2.2.1 Process

During the presentation of survey findings, the workgroup participants selected the strategies and supports contained in the survey that should be carried forward in considering the top priorities for action. While it is important to recognize that all of the strategies and supports have merit; this process aimed to identify the actions that deserve the highest priority. In performing this task, participants reviewed the two categories of strategies identified as highly effective and those that States had the greatest interest in implementing and determined whether any of them should not be pursued at this time. In addition, they reviewed strategies not in either of the previous categories to determine if they were important enough to keep in the top priority group, based on their expert opinion. Likewise, supports were reviewed and narrowed down to those that take the highest priority at this time.

In the process of choosing the most important strategies and supports, group discussion continued and the wording of a few items was modified to clarify the goal or action needed for positive change. A number of strategies were debated as to whether they were (1) appropriate to carry forward, given that the barrier that they were designed to address may not be well understood or (2) feasible to pursue, given that the selected strategies may have a lower impact in producing positive changes compared to other strategies.

For example, the strategy to “develop a mechanism for judicial oversight including communication from the sending State’s judge to the receiving States’ judge” was modified as a result of discussion among workgroup members. Many in the workgroup stated that since the receiving State’s judge did not have any legal authority over the child, developing a mechanism “for judicial oversight” implies a realm of authority that does not exist. Some workgroup participants with legal backgrounds argued that judges communicated anyway and it was important to provide parameters and guidance regarding this communication. A few workgroup members felt communication between judges in the sending and receiving States could foster better understanding of issues and resolution of issues in interstate placements. The Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area Judges Memorandum of Understanding in Regard to the

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (Judge Stephen Rideout, personal communication, June 3, 2005) is an example of such a framework to improve collaboration between States on interjurisdictional cases. In deliberating strategies to carry forward, this specific item stayed in the top category but was reworded to drop the word "oversight." Some other strategies and supports were eliminated from the top category altogether. Workgroup participants did not necessarily have total agreement on every recommendation, but the recommendations presented did receive strong support among the majority of workgroup participants.

2.2.2 Recommendations by Thematic Category

Frequently, workgroup recommendations were very broad. The prioritized strategies and supports were grouped into categories according to the overriding themes they addressed. In this process, strategies and supports were labeled, categorized, and very similar strategies were either collapsed into single items or clustered into joint efforts. The recommendations are designed to provide an impetus for administrators and field workers to investigate improvements that are currently within their reach and to help the national organizations identify specific areas on which they can focus their efforts to improve interjurisdictional placement practice.

The 14 organizing categories of priority strategies and supports for an action agenda are presented below. The items that were combined or clustered into a single item are presented together as a single item.

ICPC Rewrite

- § Require the same level of face-to-face contacts for supervision of children received as is required for resident children and have sending States request their standard for face-to-face contacts for supervision of children in receiving States.
- § Modify ICPC procedures and forms to support requests for dual home studies and to include any treatment or service needs of the child.
- § Modify ICPC regulations to simplify the steps in the process.

Funding Medical or Educational Expenses

- § Cover educational expenses of children and if necessary, change State law or policy to allow foster and pre-

adoptive children to be considered State residents for purposes of education (receiving States).

- § Cover medical expenses for children without such coverage, particularly those lacking Title IV-E eligibility (sending and receiving States working together).
- § Provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children (sending States).²
- § Offer Medicaid coverage as part of TANF child-only grants for children in relative placements (receiving States).
- § Develop a process for resolving interstate issues with educational and medical expenses in a timely manner.

Communication

- § Use a secure Web-based system for transmitting ICPC referrals across State and county lines.
- § Use simultaneous transmission to send information to ICPC administrators and sending and receiving local agencies.
- § Establish procedures to encourage and facilitate communication between caseworkers and ICPC administrators as well as between caseworkers in sending and receiving States.
- § Develop a process for negotiating which State pays for emergency placement when a placement disrupts.³

Staffing

- § Designate specific caseworkers to handle all interstate placement cases.
- § Develop a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload.
- § Arrange POS contracts with agencies to conduct home studies and streamline procurement requirements to allow for timely POS arrangements.
- § Use broker contracts for home studies and/or supervision (as either a sending or receiving State).
- § Use border agreements to allow caseworkers to cross State lines to conduct home studies and supervision.

² Services such as mental health or dental care may not be covered by Medicaid in all States.

³ Although this strategy was recommended by the group, the sending State remains financially responsible according to the current ICPC statutory law.

Caseworker Training

- § Provide training for caseworkers and supports to the child to prepare for transition and ensure services in an interstate placement; this would address worker concerns about “letting go.”
- § Use a Web tutorial, CD, or video to train caseworkers on interjurisdictional processes (or use “just in time” training).
- § Include a component in regular caseworker training to increase awareness and competency in interjurisdictional placement procedures.
- § Coordinate events to promote networking for staff to interact with staff from other jurisdictions.

Criminal Background Checks (CBC)

- § Create a Federal interagency agreement between the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services and the FBI regarding responding to requests for criminal records information and processing fingerprinting and that contains deadlines for checks and mechanisms for enforcing these.
- § Use electronic fingerprinting.⁴
- § Provide support for the development of State models for streamlining the criminal background check process, such as prescreening names to determine if a full CBC is needed and limiting the number of individuals and agencies involved.
- § Provide access to a name-based criminal database and conduct name checks directly at the State level.
- § Conduct the criminal background requirements of the sending State if they are more extensive.
- § Accept the CBC of the receiving State if requirements are less extensive than those of the sending State.

Although the last two strategies listed appear to contradict each other, the group clearly was searching for ways to address the conflict that sometimes arises when the sending State requests that the receiving State conduct a more extensive check than is standard practice with the receiving State.

⁴The group noted that this was an expensive system and may not be feasible for many States.

Best Practices

- § Review issues on children in interjurisdictional placements to develop best practices for caseworkers and administrators.
- § Develop a national uniform home study template to facilitate dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes.
- § Develop protocols or guidelines for Adoption Assistance negotiations with prospective adoptive parents.
- § Designate an expert in each State on interjurisdictional issues available for legal and social work consultation and best practices.⁵
- § Accept foster and adoptive parent training provided by other States.
- § Accept as valid a home study completed and approved by State agency or State-licensed agency in another State.⁶
- § Work with sending States in doing an annual assessment with relatives regarding their intentions to pursue permanency options in order to avoid years of supervision by receiving State.
- § Provide clear expectations that interjurisdictional placements supportive of the permanency plan should be considered early in case review.
- § Establish an expedited appeal system for denial of a home study that can be used by families or agencies as well as an appeal system for addressing long delays in moving toward permanency or refusal to take children back after an extended time out of State.
- § Inform receiving States of the sending State's CBC requirements during the referral process.

Increasing Accountability

- § Clarify Federal expectations related to Section 422 (b)(12)SSA, which requires States to provide assurances for a plan for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements.

⁵As described in Section 3.2.1, States consult with legal counsel, field support, and managers in addition to ICPC administrators on interjurisdictional issues.

⁶According to the current ICPC, sending States should accept the home study provided by the receiving State. There are cases where the sending State may request additional information or clarification but it is not clear how conflicts regarding the approval of a home study are resolved.

- § Assist States in developing a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner.
- § Use and regularly monitor a computerized tickler tracking system to track significant steps in the interjurisdictional placement and supervision process for both sending and receiving States and to alert caseworkers, supervisors, and central offices of time-sensitive events.
- § Use a database to generate and track information about interjurisdictional cases and incorporate data specific to interjurisdictional cases in SACWIS systems.
- § Identify the elements needed to track interjurisdictional cases to support and fund a national tracking, reporting, and case management system. (This could be done by a national workgroup.)
- § Routinely provide judges with electronic reports on their child welfare caseload.

Judicial Measures

- § Provide training on interjurisdictional issues to judges and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) members through Court Improvement Programs or other avenues such as “bench briefs.”
- § Develop mechanisms for participation by attorneys and significant other parties in out-of-state case and administrative reviews and court hearings.
- § Develop a mechanism for communication between judges in sending and receiving States to ensure timely placement decisions.⁷

Information Dissemination

- § Create a national Web site with either State pages or links to State Web sites containing the following information on State requirements: criminal background checks, coverage of medical and educational expenses as a sending and as a receiving State, a list of POS agencies with active contracts and POS requirements of the State, home study requirements, and post-placement standards.

Clarifying Federal Policy

- § Provide legal clarification of the scope of HIPAA within the child welfare realm from intake to adoption.

⁷The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) has developed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to facilitate communication between judges.

- § Develop a brief on Medicaid receipt when a child qualifies for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in the sending State.
- § Clarify through an Information Memorandum what Title IV-B can pay for in purchase of services.

Federal Funding and Financial Incentives

- § Provide Federal funding incentives for timely practice in interstate placements, particularly for timely completion of interstate home studies.
- § Provide additional, specific Federal funding for staff designated for interjurisdictional responsibilities.

Support for Family Connections

- § Provide resources such as video conferencing to facilitate visitation between parents and children in other jurisdictions.

Relative Searches

- § Provide the tools (access to Federal Parent Locator Service, child support agency, other Web sites or search agencies) to assist in searching for relatives.
- § Provide training on how to search for relatives (maternal and paternal) within and outside own State.

2.2.3 Priority Recommendations

The final task for the workgroup was to decide on their recommendations for the specific strategies or goals which would have the greatest impact in resolving barriers to interjurisdictional placements. Workgroup members reiterated that many of the 78 strategies and 21 supports identified in Table 2-1 will be required for solving barriers; however, they agreed that the identification of a few priority recommendations could give focus to the reform effort.

The workgroup first decided that all of the recommendations related to ICPC changes should be given to the committee working on the rewrite of the ICPC. Then through a collaborative effort, the workgroup members developed ten recommendations from those strategies selected as most important by the participants.

The workgroup clearly said that they were not suggesting additional Federal regulations. However, recommendations were made for technical assistance to the States and for steps

which national organizations may take to support improved interjurisdictional placements.

These recommendations for facilitating more timely and effective practice in interjurisdictional placements are listed below in order of priority. Significant aspects of the workgroup's discussion related to these recommendations are summarized. It is hoped that multiple national and State partners will join in the interjurisdictional placement reform effort as a wide variety of initiatives will be required to develop systems to expedite the placement of children to achieve their permanency plans.

Recommendation 1: Develop a national uniform home study template that identifies core content areas to facilitate dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes.

Participants believed that core elements essential to home studies should be identified and standardized among all States. They did not believe that it would be beneficial to require a single home study format in Federal regulation but recommended that a workgroup identify core content that could be integrated into home studies in county and State jurisdictions. This template of core elements should include essential content for dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes to prevent the need for a second home study when the placement goal changes from foster care to adoption. Of course, accomplishing this objective would require two processes: identification of the core elements and standardizing this template across the country.

Recommendation 2: Provide training on interjurisdictional issues to judges and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) members through Court Improvement Programs or other avenues such as "bench briefs."

In expanding training to judges and key court personnel, participants recommended that trainings be multi-disciplinary and that legal professionals co-present with social work professionals. Training that integrates ICPC and other interjurisdictional issues into a broader permanency context is essential. For example, judges need to be encouraged to ask early in a case and then consistently inquire whether relatives have been identified and where they are located. Two other issues were identified as important to include in training: (1)

encouraging judges to make “reasonable efforts” findings about the agency’s activities to achieve the permanency plan (or active efforts for tribal cases) in order to move cases toward permanency and (2) stressing the importance of providing judicial oversight in the county of origin for children who have been out of State for an extended time to review their permanency options. The latter issue should be addressed through regular and frequent case reviews of children placed in other States.

A range of mechanisms are needed for giving essential information on interjurisdictional issues to judges and other court personnel so that they have it at hand when needed. For example, bench briefs or cards can be extrapolated from the lengthy manual on interjurisdictional issues previously developed for the judiciary. Bench briefs can consist of a short checklist for judges to make sure that they have inquired into the key issues that will ensure the child moves to permanency in a timely manner.

Recommendation 3: Create a national Web site with either State pages or links to State Web sites containing the following information on State requirements: criminal background checks, coverage of medical and educational expenses as a sending and as a receiving State, a list of Purchase of Service (POS) agencies with active contracts and POS requirements within the State, home study requirements, and post-placement standards for supervision.

Previous research conducted by APHSA on delays in the interstate home study process identified missing information in home studies, delays in clarifying or negotiating financial-medical issues, and a range of problems related to criminal background checks as the leading causes for delays in completing home studies. Workgroup participants believed that having the range of essential information immediately accessible to administrators and workers to clarify needed elements in the sending State’s referral process and in the home study process in the receiving State would eliminate many of the delays resulting from lack of information.

The creation of a national Web site with links to State requirements essential to interjurisdictional placements was the top-rated support for addressing communication barriers

among survey respondents. They gave it the highest effectiveness rating of the 11 potential supports listed to address communication barriers and chose it as the single support in this group that would facilitate the most positive change.

The survey results indicate that many States do not currently have the essential information on their Web sites. For example, 25 of the responding States reported that they had criminal background check requirements on their State Web sites, and 10 States reported that information about coverage of medical and educational expenses was on their State Web sites. Since many States do not currently have this information on their own Web sites, it may be more realistic to create Web pages in an existing national Web site such as AHPA or the Children's Bureau-funded Child Welfare Information Gateway with each State's requirements on as many of the five essential recommended categories as possible as well as additional links to State Web sites that have this information.

Recommendation 4: Clarify Federal expectations regarding accountability for performance on interstate placement cases, especially in Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR), and assist States in developing a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner.

Accountability at the Federal level and within States and counties is essential to improving performance in interjurisdictional responsibilities. Data that demonstrates the timeliness of home study completion and other steps in the permanency process for both sending and receiving States is needed. Identifying States that are effectively tracking and monitoring performance in interjurisdictional responsibilities would provide models for other States to use.

Some issues brought up by workgroup members included the lack of a consistent standard as to what is a realistic timeframe to do good practice in completing a home study. Other participants expressed concerns related to fairness in examining interjurisdictional issues in CFSRs. For example, supervision standards vary from State to State; if the sending State requires monthly visits while the receiving State requires quarterly visits, the sending State's requirement may not be met even if it is requested in the referral process. One

suggestion offered was to conduct a statewide assessment of performance on interjurisdictional placements versus performance on in-state placements in the CFSR. The quality of services needs to be assessed as well as timeliness.

A primary issue that needs to be addressed to achieve accountability is the development of computerized databases that capture elements of interjurisdictional performance as both a sending and a receiving State. Currently, the tasks receiving States perform for interstate cases are not captured in most databases. Interjurisdictional practice needs to be incorporated into SACWIS systems in ways that are consistent with AFCARS requirements while allowing interjurisdictional cases to be identified as such. Improving the capacity to capture information about interjurisdictional placements in AFCARS would also increase the Children's Bureau's understanding about this phenomenon and enable the tracking of trends over time in interjurisdictional cases.

Recommendation 5: Receiving States should cover educational expenses of children and, if necessary, change State law or policy to allow foster and pre-adoptive children to be considered State residents for purposes of education.

The workgroup agreed that free access to education in receiving States for all children in foster and pre-adoptive placements would be the most effective solution, even if changes in State or Federal law or policy is required. Working toward a Federal law that would support the access of foster children to education in receiving States was discussed as a possible solution to educational barriers. Such legislation may need to limit this free access to foster children living in families and exempt those in residential treatment facilities, for whom receiving States would usually be confronting very high, specialized education costs. Many receiving States already treat children in foster family care as residents for purposes of education, and broadening this entitlement to all States is a critical priority.

Recommendation 6: Create a mechanism that specifies acceptable deadlines for responding to requests for criminal records information and processing fingerprinting and includes mechanisms for enforcing these deadlines.

Lengthy time periods for the completion of criminal background checks (CBCs) is one of the top three sources of delays in completing interstate home studies in a timely manner, according to APHSA's study of the home study process in interstate placements (APHSA, 2002b). The most time-consuming step to completing the CBC is the FBI check, which at the time of a second study in 2002, was required by 35 States in either foster or adoptive home studies or both (Dunhem and Oppenheim, 2002). Turnaround time to process FBI checks averaged 44 days and sometimes took as long as 84 days (Dunhem & Oppenheim, 2002).

The workgroup endorsed two supports as high priority for addressing these delays:

- § Create a Federal interagency agreement between HHS and the FBI.
- § Establish enforceable timeframes for FBI checks.

These were combined into a single recommendation.

Recommendation 7: Develop a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload.

The survey indicates that only 18 States reported having a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload, and it was the strategy of greatest interest for future development in addressing issues related to staff attitudes and beliefs. Both this recommendation and Recommendation 4, related to accountability, require advances at both macro and micro levels. Cases need to show up in an automated system, in both the sending and receiving States, to be fully incorporated into caseworkers' workloads. Only then will caseworkers be held equally accountable for interstate and intrastate case services. Children in interstate placements in receiving States may not even have official case ID numbers to allow their cases to be incorporated into official caseworker workloads.

Participants identified a range of issues that affect the way in which interjurisdictional cases are factored into caseloads. In some jurisdictions, interjurisdictional cases may be viewed as easier because some of the steps are being carried out by another worker. In other jurisdictions, they are viewed as more complex because they involve differing State policies, challenges accessing services, and long distance communication. The ambiguity surrounding our understanding of good interjurisdictional practice amplifies the problem of incorporating it adequately into caseworker assignments and increases the likelihood that these duties receive less attention.

Some strategies for working on this goal include the identification of State models for incorporating interjurisdictional responsibilities into caseworker workload; clarification of ways in which automated databases address worker functions in both sending and receiving States; and an understanding of effective practice processes in interjurisdictional cases for workers in both sending and receiving States.

Recommendation 8: I identify model practices and policies at both the State and Federal levels to ensure the provision of medical assistance to children who are placed across State lines that are not categorically eligible for Medicaid in the receiving State.

Workgroup participants viewed solutions for covering medical expenses of children in interjurisdictional placements as needing to take place in both sending and receiving States. The reciprocity currently in force which seems to work best in addressing this barrier is the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) provision for receiving States to provide Medicaid to children in pre-adoptive (agreement in place) or adoptive homes. Currently, Federal law requires States to provide Medicaid or its equivalent to children who are not eligible for the Title IV-E adoption assistance program but have special needs for “medical or rehabilitative care” for whom the State provides a State-funded adoption assistance agreement (Section 471(a)(21) of the Social Security Act). This option has assisted many States in providing medical assistance to all children with special needs receiving adoption assistance regardless of where their adoptive parents live. States that instituted a policy of reciprocity provide Medicaid to all children

who meet the criteria, even if another State is providing the State-funded adoption assistance.

A similar policy for reciprocity for medical assistance for foster children who are placed with relatives or in foster homes or residential treatment facilities in the receiving States might be explored. Almost all States (44) responded that, as a sending State, they provide medical coverage for children placed out of State and lacking Title IV-E eligibility. However, finding a health care provider willing to accept the sending State's Medicaid or insurance coverage can be difficult.

There are a number of other options that might be explored such as ways to negotiate and implement fee-for-medical-services contracts between private providers and sending States, and options for putting the children on their relatives' insurance with sending States paying for the additional insurance premium costs.

According to the survey, States that do not currently cover medical expenses for children placed in their State from another are not interested in investigating this possibility. This suggests that finding solutions to these barriers would require national leadership.

Recommendation 9: Develop mechanisms for participation by attorneys and significant other parties in out-of-state case or administrative reviews and court hearings.

In order to provide for the full consideration of needs and opportunities of children who are placed in other jurisdictions during case reviews, court hearings, or other important meetings held in sending States, it is essential to support the participation of significant parties involved with the children in their States of residence. Participation by foster parents, social workers, attorneys, the children themselves, or other significant parties in such meetings by phone or other long distance mechanisms needs to be encouraged and facilitated.

Some ideas participants advanced to address this goal include identifying best practices in this area, convening focus groups or focused listserv discussions about this issue, and using the CIP workgroup associated with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Legal and Judicial Issues to explore strategies for accomplishing this goal.

Recommendation 10: Arrange Purchase of Service (POS) contracts with agencies to conduct home studies and streamline procurement requirements to allow for timely POS arrangements.

The survey results reported that 30 States do at least some contracting with private agencies to conduct home studies and/or provide supervision in States to which they are sending children, and 32 States contract with private agencies to conduct home studies as a receiving State. Only 11 States reported arranging POS contracts for the supervision of children from other States in their State.

This strategy would need to be implemented by States that are interested and can afford to pay for such services. Some workgroup participants asserted that their own States do not have money to contract for interjurisdictional work, even if it is an effective strategy. Technical assistance is planned by Children's Bureau national resource centers to identify promising practices around contracting and developing models for contracts.

Streamlining procurement requirements within States may be necessary to avoid additional delays caused by extensive contracting requirements. One participant described difficulty in getting adoption home studies completed when the receiving State contracts out most of their home studies. The sending State may have to contract directly with a private agency in the receiving State, which may take an extended time period to arrange and require the family to pay directly and be reimbursed. This is not possible for many families.

2.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 provide a summary of findings and recommendations for improving the process of interjurisdictional placement of children in the child welfare system. These recommendations are based on the survey responses from 48 States and discussions among the national workgroup convened for this study.

2.3.1 State Implementation

States are encouraged to use information from this report (1) to gain insight into what other States are doing to

effectively improve interjurisdictional placements, (2) to explore strategies that they could implement that other States are successfully using, and (3) to consider innovative methods for improving the process. States are encouraged to consider the entire range of strategies used by States, including the ones that are not mentioned in this chapter.

2.3.2 Training and Technical Assistance

The primary goal of this survey was to learn what innovative strategies States use to facilitate interjurisdictional placements and what national or Federal supports they believe would be most beneficial. The Children’s Bureau funded this survey specifically to use this information to guide their efforts to provide technical assistance to States through their National Resource Centers (NRC). Representatives from two of the Children’s Bureau’s NRCs (the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues and AdoptUsKids) have been involved throughout this study (including survey development, presentation of analysis, and formulation of recommendations resulting from analysis and workgroup discussions). These representatives were invited by the Children’s Bureau to consider ways in which they could coordinate their efforts to identify and plan technical assistance that they could provide to States.

For example, Recommendation #10 in Section 2.2 is to arrange POS contracts with agencies to conduct home studies and streamline procurement requirements to allow for timely POS arrangements. The National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues suggested during the workgroup that they collaborate with AdoptUsKids, which is currently reviewing contracts and providing assistance to States in this area, to provide model contracts and other information on facilitating POS service arrangements available to States.

The Children’s Bureau has plans for their NRCs to develop and coordinate peer-to-peer training, using model States to teach other States about how they use specific strategies to improve interjurisdictional placements.

2.3.3 Federal-Level Support

States rated several supports that would require Federal level changes, specifically around funding and incentives for States, as “highly effective” for the potential influence that they would

have on interjurisdictional placements. For example, States recommended (1) that financial incentives be provided to receiving States for timely completion of home studies and (2) that Federal legislation be enacted that requires receiving States to cover children under their Medicaid who qualify for SSI in the sending State. These Federal-level suggestions should be considered in light of other recommendations and efforts to implement them should be prioritized accordingly.

2.3.4 Federal-Level Coordination

Many needed changes are beyond the control or legal authority of the Children's Bureau and State child welfare agencies and require the commitment of other systems such as justice, education, and health as well as increased financial investments at both State and Federal levels. For example, Recommendation #6 in Section 2.2 suggests developing a mechanism for imposing time frames for complying with criminal background check requests. Implementation of this recommendation would necessitate involvement from multiple sources, including the Department of Health and Human Services and the FBI.

The Children's Bureau is currently working in collaboration with the Office of Child Support Enforcement to assist States in taking full advantage of the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) to connect non-custodial parents, both interstate and intrastate, with children in foster care. To encourage use of FPLS, State child welfare directors have been invited to regional meetings with directors of State Child Support Enforcement agencies to develop plans for making appropriate referrals for locating information on parents.

In addition, findings from this survey provided structure for regional roundtable meetings held across the country in 2005 at which States and training and technical assistance providers explored expansion of the effective strategies and implementation of the supports. State child welfare staff were able to use information from the survey, combined with other best practices identified by Adoption Opportunity grants on interjurisdictional placement, to develop action plans for their States with specific steps to pursue for improving outcomes for children and families involved in interjurisdictional placements. The Children's Bureau will continue to follow these efforts and will facilitate peer-to-peer technical assistance through which

States that have used and have evidence of effective strategies assist other States in implementing them.

2.3.5 Data Needs

Some of these strategies and supports can be developed into training and technical assistance based on these report findings. However, to understand fully the steps States are taking to be successful and to make specific recommendations nationwide, the Children’s Bureau has expressed an interest in inviting States that could be considered “model” States to share more about their successes. Additionally, Children’s Bureau-funded national resource centers would like to use this information to better guide their technical assistance.

This report presents findings from the survey of States and recommendations from the national workgroup. To understand how well these strategies work to facilitate interjurisdictional placements, evidence-based research is needed to guide best practices in this field.

3

Survey Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of the survey data on which the summary and recommendations in Chapter 2 are based. Sections 3.1 through 3.8 describe the results from the first two sections of the survey that (1) collected information about strategies States use and (2) asked States to rate the effectiveness of a variety of supports to facilitate interjurisdictional placements. Each section corresponds to one of the eight barriers that were used to organize the strategies and supports within the survey:

1. Staffing and/or resources
2. Knowledge and training
3. Staff attitudes and/or beliefs
4. Education or medical funding
5. Criminal background checks
6. Communication
7. Permanency planning
8. Tracking and reporting

Based on information obtained from the States, the strategies presented in the survey were classified into categories to provide insight into which strategies the States would like help with implementing. Within each of the first eight sections, the following analyses are presented:

- An assessment of strategies, including the number of strategies used by States, commonly used strategies, highly effective strategies, and strategies that States said they would be interested in implementing; and

- An assessment of the perceived effectiveness of supports that could be provided at the national level to facilitate interjurisdictional placements.

Graphic and tabular displays of data are presented in these sections; details of the data can be found in the tables provided in Appendix C (Strategies), Appendix D (Supports), and Appendix E (Top Supports). Notes are included on figures and tables to aid the reader in understanding these data. The figures on the assessment of strategies (Figures 3-1, 3-3, 3-5, 3-7, 3-9, 3-11, 3-13, and 3-15) contain complex data; the reader may benefit by using the guide that precedes the first figure as a reference.

The last two sections of this chapter present findings from the last two sections of the survey. Section 3.9 discusses States' responses to open-ended questions related to their overall assessment of interjurisdictional placements. Section 3.10 presents results of States' assessment of Adoption Opportunity Grants that were awarded to facilitate interjurisdictional placements.

3.1 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS INADEQUATE STAFFING AND/OR OTHER RESOURCES

This section describes

- strategies States use to address inadequate staffing or resources for interjurisdictional cases, identifying the most effective strategies and those that States would like to implement if given assistance;
- how States successfully implemented effective strategies, to the extent that States provided details in the open-ended portion of the survey; and
- the most effective supports that could be provided to States at the national level.

Finally, a summary section underscores the role of reducing the burden of home studies and supervision in addressing inadequate staff resources.

3.1.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Address Inadequate Staffing

The survey listed 19 staff or other resource-related strategies that States could use to facilitate interjurisdictional placements. None of the States reported that they use more than 10 of

these strategies and half of the States reported they use fewer than six strategies. (Data not shown.) The number of strategies States use could be a proxy for the level of effort a State expends on addressing a particular barrier. However, the quality and combination of strategies used is likely a better indicator of how effectively a State is addressing a barrier.

Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies

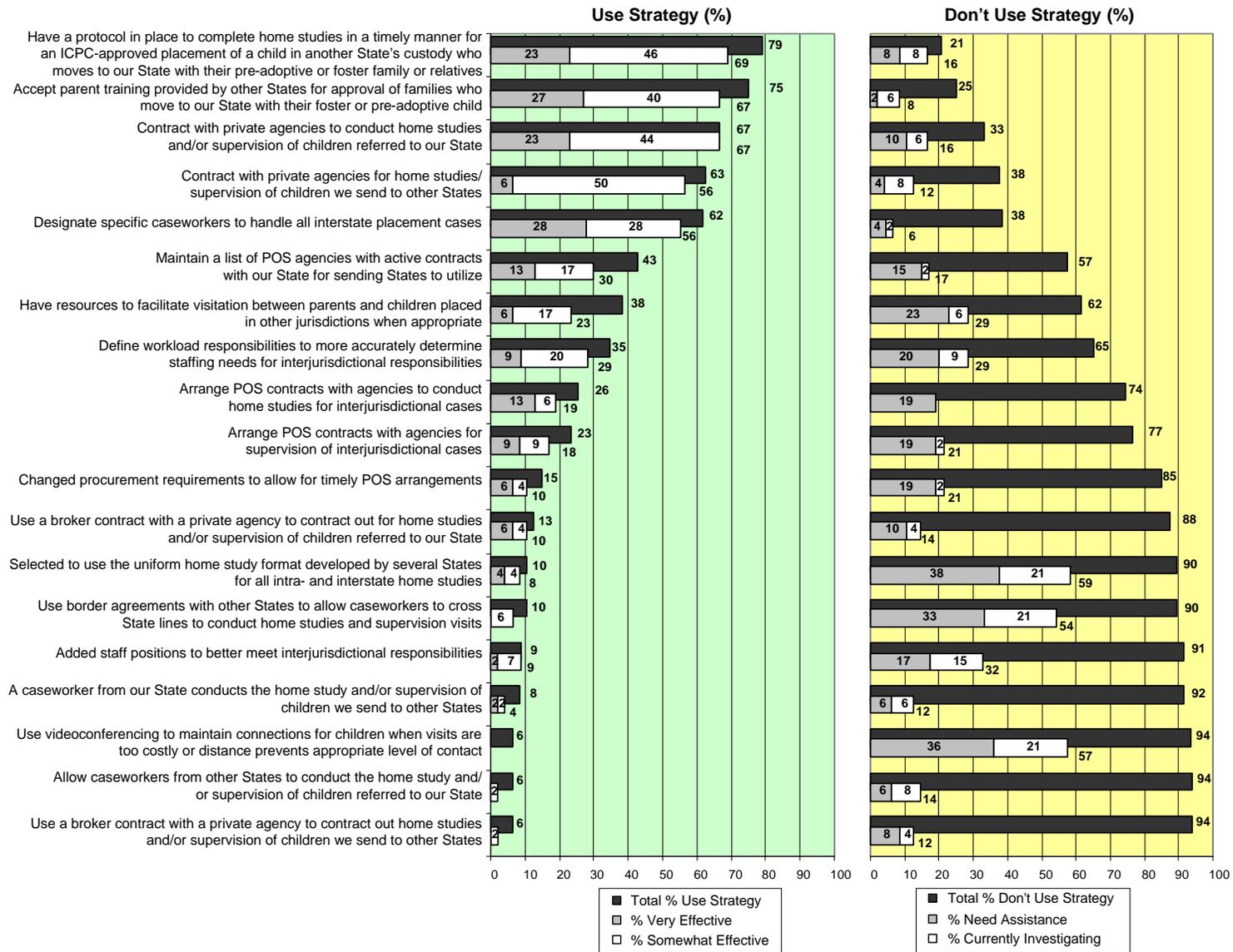
These figures are composed of three components: a list of specific strategies, a box on the left representing the percentage of States that use the strategy, and a box on the right representing the percentage of States that do not use the strategy.

In the left box, the upper bar of each pair shows the percentage of States that use the strategy. The lower bar shows the percentage that reported the strategy is effective. The first section of the lower bar (gray area) shows the percentage reporting the strategy as “very effective” and the second section (white area) shows the percentage reporting the strategy as “somewhat effective.”

In the right box, the upper bar of each pair shows the percentage of States that do not use the strategy. The lower bar shows States’ level of interest in implementing the strategy. The first section of the lower bar (gray area) indicates the percentage of States that need assistance; the second section (white area) shows the percentage of States that are investigating the strategy. Each percentage presented in this figure is based on the number of States that reported data for each specific strategy.

The left box in Figure 3-1 shows the strategies used by States to address inadequate staffing. The top five strategies (indicated by bold letters) are discussed after Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1. Assessment of Strategies to Address Inadequate Staffing and/or Other Resources



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of "ineffective" or "don't know." For Don't Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see "Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies" on page 3-3.

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; POS = Purchase of Service.

More than three-fourths of States have a protocol in place to complete home studies for children moving into their State with their foster family.

Of the responding States, 79 percent reported that they **have protocols to complete home studies for children moving into their State with their foster family**; 69 percent reported that these protocols were effective. States attain success by placing a high priority on these types of ICPC cases, imposing timelines on the completion of the home study, assigning specific workers to handle these cases,¹ and holding regular meetings to monitor status. One State reported that they *“have a dedicated unit to handle all home studies needed for families moving into our jurisdiction.”*

Another State reported that they have streamlined the home study process for relative placements:

About a year and a half ago, we started utilizing our foster care licensing unit to conduct home studies on all relatives. Prior to this, we were having our district offices conduct home studies, then referring to licensing. This has reduced delays in home studies.

Three out of four reporting States accept foster and adoptive parent training by other States.

Accepting foster and adoptive parent training by other States for families that move into their State with a foster or pre-adoptive child was the second most common strategy (75 percent) used to capitalize on limited resources. Of the 36 States that accept training by other States, 32 reported it was very effective (13 States) or somewhat effective (19 States). One State explained that the reason for and benefits of accepting this training were *“to maintain compliance and to expedite the home study process.”*

Several States noted that they will accept the training if it is current and covers the same topic areas as their own training. As one State put it, *“Competencies and licensing standards need to be equivalent.”*

Another State noted the steps they take to reduce duplication in training: *“If a family has been licensed in another State, we will review their previous training to determine what areas may be duplicated and allow substitution.”*

Contracts between public child welfare agencies and private, nonprofit, organizations for the provision of a variety of services is becoming a common practice. About two-thirds of the States **contract with private agencies for home studies**

“Competencies and licensing standards need to be equivalent.”

¹One State noted that since licensing workers have been assigned to these cases, the timeliness of home studies has improved.

or supervision of children referred to their State or for cases sent to other States.² Sixty-seven percent contract with agencies for cases referred to their State; all 32 of these States rated this procedure effective. Sixty-three percent contract with agencies for cases they send to other States; 27 of the 30 States rated this effective.

We were interested in whether the same States contract with private agencies for cases referred to their State *and* for cases sent to other States. Of the responding States, 22 contract for services as a sending *and* receiving State, 10 States contract only for cases referred to their State, and eight States contract only for cases they send to other States. (Data not shown.)

States described the circumstances under which they contract with private agencies. Here are several examples:

- *Since our State contracts for all adoption services for children from the public agency, we include serving children from other States in our contract.*
- *[Our State contracts] for public agency adoption cases where the children are legally freed and there is no previous involvement with a local office.*
- *[Our State contracts] to provide services when using the State staff is not feasible or there is a conflict of interest with the State staff [e.g., the subject of the home study is a State employee or a relative of a supervisor].*

States said that contracting with private agencies helps them fulfill their interjurisdictional responsibilities on time and frees staff to handle other responsibilities. One State explained that since they do not factor interjurisdictional cases into the caseworker workload, contracting with private agencies provides "... *better and timely services to this population,*" while "*not adding more work to State caseworkers.*"

Another State described how practices vary in one county compared to the rest of the State.

[In a large county in our State,] we have established a contract with a private agency to handle all of the incoming home studies and supervision of cases from

²These are broken into two categories in Figure 3-1, i.e., "Contract with private agencies to conduct home studies and/or supervision of children referred to our State," and "Contract with private agencies for home studies and supervision of children we send to other States."

other States, which dramatically improved the timeliness and quality of interstate responsibilities. In the rest of the State, we have developed contracts with private providers to handle the home studies. [This has resulted in] some improvement but [it is] still a work in progress. Supervision of cases remains with [State workers] with satisfactory services, but with staff shortages in some areas there is still room for improvement in those areas.

Commonly, States use contracts for cases that they send to other States. One State said that the benefit of contracting with private agencies, specifically for adoption cases was to “*create consistency and more expeditious services with our bordering State...*”

One State acknowledged that the use of private agencies depends on funding:

When resources have been available, [our State] has contracted by purchase of service with private agencies in the child's receiving State. We have found this extremely effective as a way to avoid capacity issues of the public agency.

Another State explained the mechanism by which they were able to contract with private agencies for home studies as both a receiving and sending State:

Some regions in our State have used adoption dollar allotments to contract with private agencies to conduct home studies. Using the available dollars to assist with this resource has [resulted in completing home studies more quickly].

Two States highlighted their effective partnership with a private agency for cases that were initiated by prospective adoptive families who identified a child on an adoption registry. The first State noted:

For our special needs youngsters who are on the [registry], we accept private studies submitted by prospective adoptive parents. We then pay for the study after assessing appropriateness for a particular child. We also pay for the supervision. This provides (1) no need to assign a study, as [the] home has met other State's standards, and (2) [the] agency who approved and knows the family agrees to supervise, therefore, (3) no time is lost in ICPC process. [Registry staff] have also become experts in what is needed in an ICPC package,

i.e., medical and financial issues so that upon submission of ICPC request, all is in order. [Registry] staff work closely with the Interstate Unit to check out anything ahead of time that might be a barrier in that case. This too speeds up the process and eliminates unresolved issues.

As another State explained,

We do contract with private agencies in other States for supervision of adoptive placements prior to finalization of an adoption. When prospective adoptive parents living in another State approach [our State] about adopting a child they have learned about through a central registry ... it's expected that the family will acquire an adoption home study through a public or private agency before they can be considered. If the family is chosen, and [our State] subsequently places a child with them, we will contract with a private agency in the receiving State for supervision of the placement through finalization of the adoption. We typically rely on public agencies in receiving States to conduct home studies in cases where our department has custody of the child and we have identified an adoptive resource in another State. The public agency in the other State may in turn contract with a private agency, or the identified adoptive family may opt to contract directly with a private agency in order to avoid delays.

Of the responding States, 62 percent **designate specific caseworkers to handle all interjurisdictional cases**; 26 of these 29 States reported that this was very effective (13) or somewhat effective (13). Some States have ICPC offices throughout the State, whereas others may have one only in their high-volume area. One State described their regional system as follows:

The Division also designates a small number of supervisors in each of the five regions to assign home studies to staff and has designated staff to complete the studies. This has provided more consistency in the content of the studies and the procedures to complete them and has facilitated the tracking of the studies by the ICPC Administrator.

Another State noted a more centralized system:

[A large county in our State] has experienced such volume of growth, we have an ICPC unit there. The rest

of the State conducts home studies for interjurisdictional placements as their caseloads permit.

States are also using local ICPC liaisons to facilitate the administrative process and to provide consultation to caseworkers. One State reported, *“Probably the most effective thing we have done is to designate ICPC liaisons in most areas who are familiar with ICPC policies and regulations and [who] review and track requests coming to and from the field.”*

States noted that this strategy can be effective, but emphasized that its use depends on workload and resources. The decision to use this strategy or not may rest with the local agency as illustrated by the following State:

The decision to designate specific personnel to handle interstate cases is made locally in each branch office. Most branches do not designate staff specifically for this purpose. It has proven to be an effective strategy when utilized, but it may not be a realistic option for every office in light of their overall workload and the number of staff available.

States had the opportunity to add other strategies not included on the survey. One State reported that they recently implemented family team meetings. Such meetings can help identify relatives early so that home studies in different jurisdictions can be ordered quickly if needed. However, it is too soon to know how effective this strategy will be. Another State is using a workgroup to improve their home study format and has requested assistance from Children’s Bureau-funded National Resource Centers, including AdoptUsKids.³

³AdoptUsKids is an initiative funded by the Children’s Bureau to find and support foster and adoptive families by providing new and enhanced recruitment tools and training and technical assistance to States and tribes. It is a collaborative effort that includes public and private adoption agencies, adoption photo listing services, State foster care managers, and State adoption managers.

3.1.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Address Inadequate Staffing

Most of the few States that use POS and broker contracts find it very effective; however, there is little interest in contracting this work out to private agencies among the States that do not already have these contracts.

The previous section discussed the most widely used strategies and their overall effectiveness based on the total number of reporting States. Another way to examine these data is to focus on the number of States that rated a strategy as “very effective” out of those that actually used and rated the strategy, regardless of how commonly used the strategy is. This approach will highlight strategies that have been successfully implemented by only a few States in addition to the more common strategies. Table 3-1 shows the strategies for which at least 50 percent of the States that used and rated the strategy assigned it a “very effective” rating. (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness.)

Table 3-1. Very Effective Strategies to Address Inadequate Staffing and/or Other Resources

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated “Very Effective”	Percent Rated “Very Effective”
Designate specific caseworkers to handle all interstate placement cases	26	13	50.0
Arrange POS contracts with agencies to conduct home studies for interjurisdictional cases	10	6	60.0
Change procurement requirements to allow for timely POS arrangements	6	3	50.0
Use a broker contract with a private agency to contract with private agencies for home studies and/or supervision of children referred to our State	5	3	60.0
Use the uniform home study format developed by several States for all intra- and interstate home studies	4	2	50.0

Strategies that are rated as “very effective” by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness).

POS = Purchase of Service

Of 48 reporting States, 26 designate specific caseworkers to handle interstate cases and rated the effectiveness of this approach. Half of these rated this strategy as very effective. Despite the success of these States, only 6 percent of all States are investigating this option or need assistance to do so.

Purchase of Service (POS) contracts are used by States to buy specific services, such as home studies or post-placement supervision, sometimes for a specific case only. Some States specify that a POS contract is different from a standing contract

in which a private agency provides services to a number of cases over a long period of time. Ten States that arrange POS contracts with private agencies to conduct home studies for their interjurisdictional cases rated this strategy; six found it to be very effective.

Six States changed their procurement requirements to allow for POS arrangements and rated the effectiveness of doing so; three of these States rated this strategy as “very effective.”

A broker contract is an agreement between a State and a private agency, usually located in the sending State, which arranges for private agencies in one or more receiving States to complete home studies or placement supervision. Surprisingly, six States use broker contracts for cases that are referred to their State, while only three States reported they use broker contracts as a sending State. Of the five States that use and rated broker contracts for cases referred to their State (one of the six States did not rate the effectiveness), three States found them to be very effective. None of the three States that use broker contracts as a sending State rated this strategy as “very effective.” The majority of States that do not use these contracts have no plans to do so (right box in Figure 3-1).

Two of the four States that use and rated the effectiveness of the uniform home study format developed by several States reported that it was very effective. One State that rated the strategy as somewhat effective commented on the importance of using the uniform home study format and emphasized that *“standardizing would eliminate delays in approving placements for both sending and receiving States.”*

3.1.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Address Inadequate Staffing

For strategies not currently used, each State was asked to indicate whether they needed assistance to implement the strategy, were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or had no plans to use the strategy. This section focuses on the strategies that at least one-third of reporting States indicated they were interested in trying. Identification of those strategies will allow the Children’s Bureau to focus its technical assistance efforts more effectively.

As shown by the right box on Figure 3-1, the following three strategies were of interest to the most States:

Although only five States have adopted the uniform home study, it was rated as highly effective by two of the four States that use and rated it, and more than half of the remaining States indicated an interest in using it for their State.

- Use the uniform home study format for all intra- and interstate home studies (58 percent).
- Use video conferencing to maintain connections for children (57 percent).
- Use border agreements (54 percent).

As discussed in the previous section, the **uniform home study** is a promising strategy although only a few States use it.

As one State explained, *“A major deterrent to placing a child out of State is ... the cost associated with long-distance visitation with parents and siblings.”* One possible solution is to use **videoconferencing**—27 States are interested in using videoconferencing to maintain connections for children when visits are too costly or distance prevents an appropriate level of contact. Currently, only three States use this technology. None rated the effectiveness, probably because it is too early to evaluate.

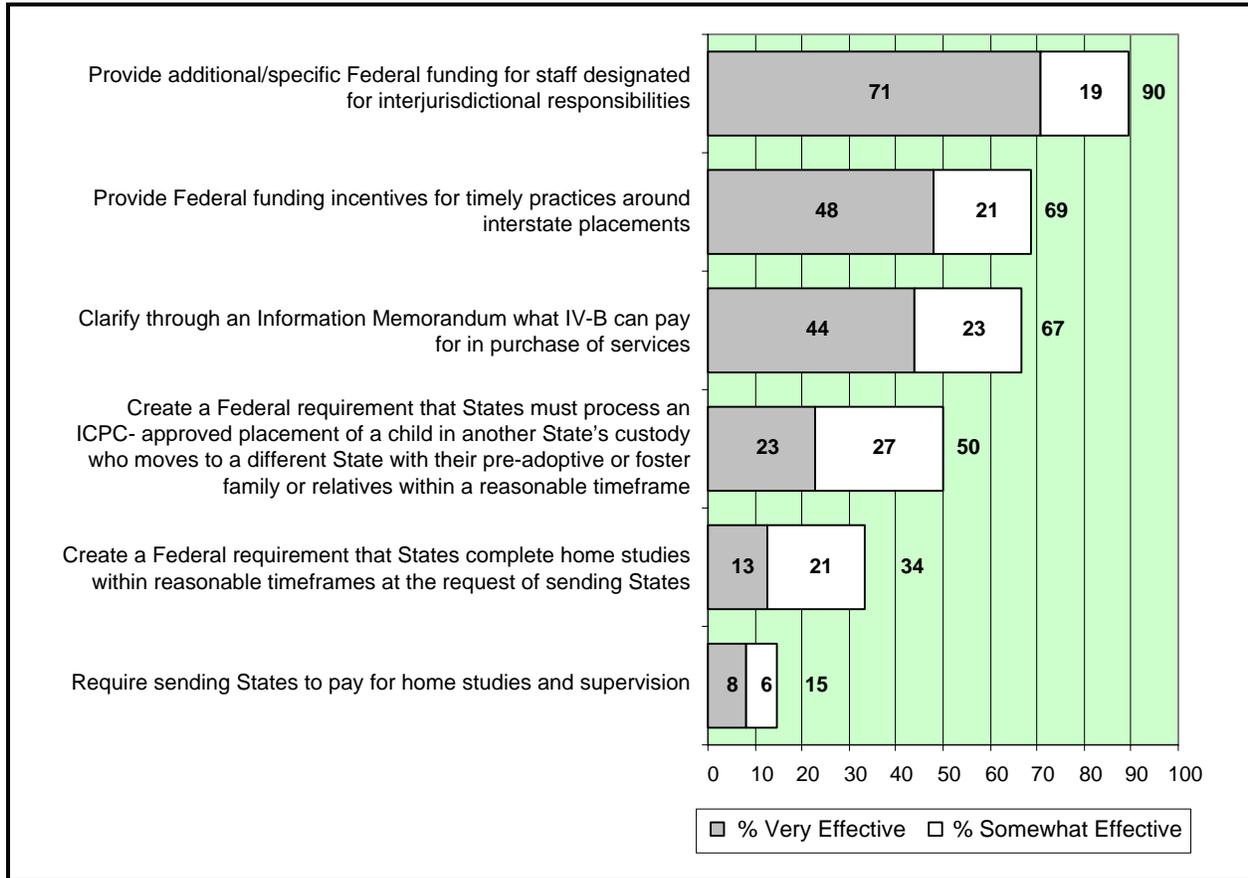
More than half of States are interested in **border agreements** to allow caseworkers to cross State lines to conduct home studies and post-placement supervision visits. One State’s agreement allows social workers to enter a defined area in the neighboring State to complete home studies only “if certain conditions are met.” Of the five States that have border agreements, three reported they were somewhat effective, one reported it was ineffective, and one was unable to comment on the effectiveness due to the newness of their border agreement.

3.1.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Address Inadequate Staffing

States were provided with a list of potential actions that could be implemented at the national level to support their efforts. These actions are designed to speed up interjurisdictional placement of children through improved communication at the local and State level. States were asked to rate these potential supports on a scale of one to five with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. States had the opportunity to describe other supports that they thought would be effective.

Figure 3-2 shows the percentage of States that rated each support as a four (somewhat effective) or five (very effective).

Figure 3-2. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Address Inadequate Staffing and/or Other Resources



Of the States that responded, 90 percent indicated that providing additional Federal funding for staff designated for interjurisdictional responsibilities would be effective. This is consistent with the finding that half of the 26 States that have designated staff rated the strategy as very effective. (See Table 3-1.)

After States rated each of the supports, they were asked to identify the one support from the survey that would help them the most in placing children across jurisdictions. Consistent with the above, 65 percent of reporting States selected providing additional Federal funding for staff designated for interjurisdictional responsibilities as their top choice. (See Appendix E for details.)

States were invited to add supports in addition to the ones listed on the survey. Two States suggested positive

reinforcement for timely placements and Federal funding to facilitate placements without penalty for noncompliance.

3.1.5 Summary

Strategies to reduce the burden of home studies and supervision figure prominently among States' responses to staffing and resource barriers. Three of the five most commonly used strategies, and two of the five strategies most often rated as highly effective involve home studies. States "outsource" home studies and supervision through contracts with private agencies and, less commonly, POS contracts and broker contracts. In general, States report higher satisfaction with these approaches when they are the receiving State rather than the sending State, perhaps because they are able to use agencies that they know and can manage at close range.

Not widely used, but among the strategies of highest interest, were strategies to streamline the process by using a common home study protocol (favorably rated by the few States that have tried it) and border agreements to facilitate conducting home studies in neighboring States.

Many States also showed interest in using designated caseworkers for interstate cases. Among the five most commonly used strategies, this was the only one that also appeared in the list of very effective strategies. More than half of States report using this strategy, and of those rating it, exactly half rated it as very effective. Not surprisingly, the most frequently requested support in the staffing area was Federal funding for such workers.

3.2 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING

This section describes

- strategies States use to train their caseworkers, managers and supervisors, judges and Guardian ad Litem or Court Appointed Special Advocate (GAL/CASA) members;
- the content of the trainings offered, how and when they occur, and who leads the training; and
- insights into contextual issues that influence training and describes the most effective national or Federal supports to facilitate training.

Finally, a summary highlights the key strategies around caseworker and judicial training on interjurisdictional placements.

3.2.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Improve Knowledge and Training

Most States facilitate interjurisdictional placements through a variety of training efforts directed to caseworkers and the judiciary.

The survey listed eight training-related strategies that States could use to facilitate interjurisdictional placements by increasing knowledge and providing training to improve understanding of interjurisdictional placement issues. There is some variation in how many strategies individual States use to address barriers. Of the respondents, most States (34) use at least five strategies. (Data not shown.) Nine of these use seven or eight strategies and 25 use five or six. Fourteen States use four or fewer strategies. These results show that most States are using multiple training efforts to improve knowledge of interjurisdictional placement issues and procedures.

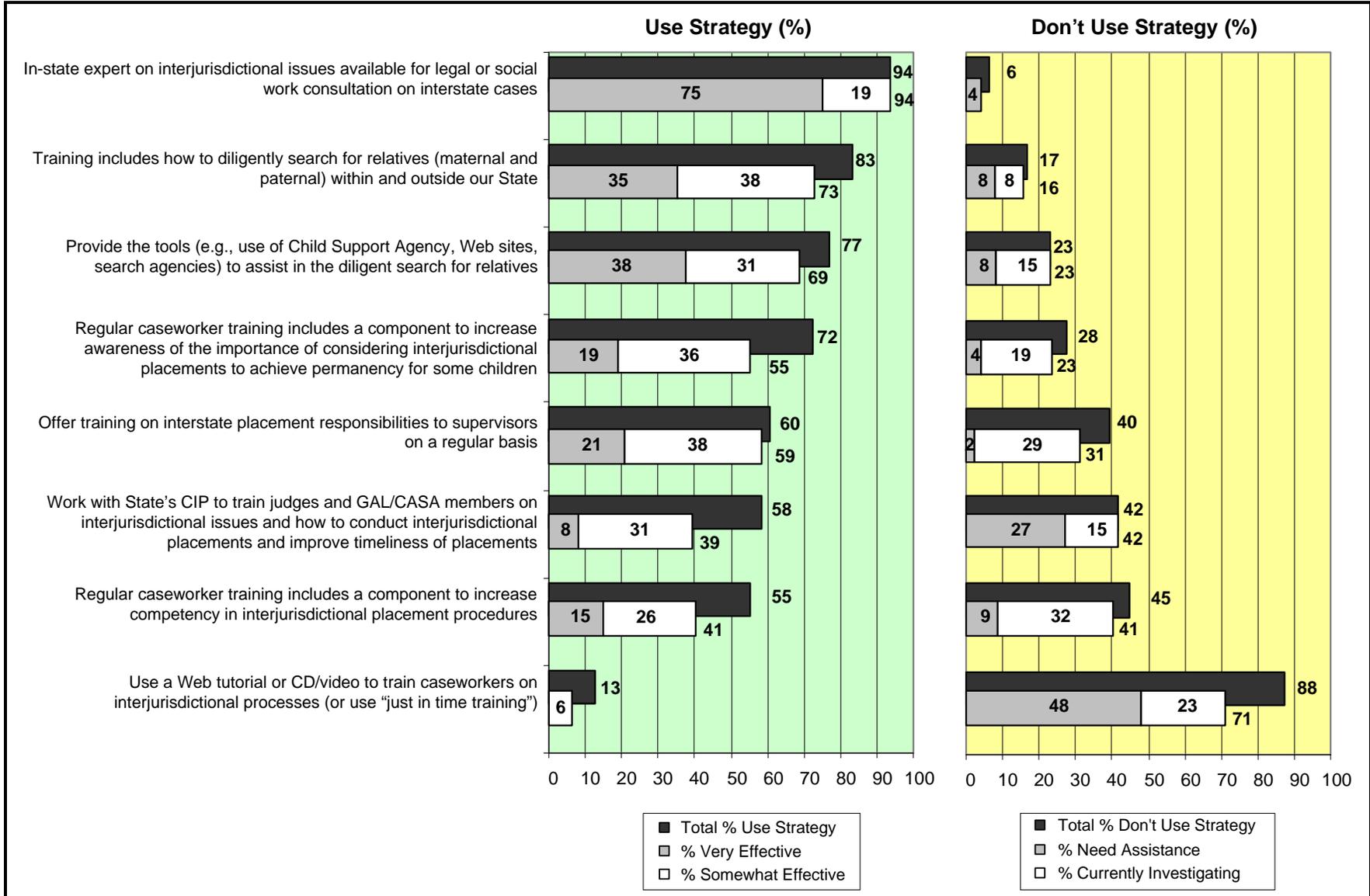
The most widely used strategy to facilitate interstate placements is to have an in-state expert available for legal or social work consultation.

Of 48 responding States, 94 percent have an **in-state interjurisdictional expert available for legal or social work consultation** on interstate cases (left box on Figure 3-3). All 45 of these States reported that this was a very effective (36 States) or somewhat effective (9 States) practice. In-state experts such as the ICPC office staff, managers and supervisors, field support, and legal counsel, as well as national or Federal resources such as experts on the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and AdoptUsKids were counted on for consultations. Several States described how these in-state experts facilitate the process.

One said:

Our Interstate Services Unit works closely with all locals and other States. They are readily accessible, helpful, and supportive. They also provide support to our [legal counsel and judges] in these matters. ... Since our State places many children out of State all over the nation, relationships with other interstate offices are frequently used to gather specific regulations or to [obtain referrals] to other units in that State to implement strategies to resolve case-by-case scenarios.

Figure 3-3. Assessment of Strategies to Improve Knowledge and Training



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of "ineffective" or "don't know." For Don't Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see "Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies" on page 3-3.

CIP = Court Improvement Program; GAL = Guardian ad Litem; CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocate

Another reported:

Coordinating information and actions concerning children involved in interjurisdictional placements through the Assistant ICPC Administrator ensures consistency in safety provisions and necessary services.

A third State noted:

There are three full-time employees housed in the agency's central Interstate Compact office that are readily available to agency personnel and the general public to provide expert consultation on interstate placements. There is also an attorney with [our State's] Department of Justice who is assigned to provide legal counsel to our agency and who has expertise in the area of interstate placements and the Interstate Compact. She is occasionally consulted when a significant dispute arises between [our State] and another State with regard to an interstate placement.

A practical legal component in the States' training includes searching for children's relatives both in State and beyond a State's borders. Relative searches are important because of the ASFA requirements to do just that; additionally, an early search for relatives who are willing to care for the child can significantly shorten the child's stay in foster care. Of reporting States, 83 percent provide **training that includes how to search for a child's relatives**, and 77 percent **provide the tools for these searches** such as the use of the child support agency, Web sites, and search agencies. One State reported that it *"partnered with several agencies and access[ed] numerous search resources"* to conduct diligent searches.

Several States suggested using tools and methods applied in department of social services and child support divisions for locating relatives, such as (1) a parent locator service, (2) child support and paternity searches, (3) welfare records, and (4) Medicaid resources. The following methods were also mentioned by some States:

- a form for documenting diligent relative search
- an absent parent affidavit
- specially trained staff, including paralegals to do searches
- credit bureau searches
- Web-based data searches

More than half of the States reported that their caseworker training includes components to **increase awareness of considering interjurisdictional placements** (72 percent) and/or **increase competency in placement procedures** (55 percent). One State described its basic training as *“including awareness [while] competency [is] addressed individually or in groups of counties [according] to specific needs.”*

Of the total, 60 percent of States offer **training on interjurisdictional placement responsibilities to supervisors**, and all but one found it to be effective.

More than half of the States (58 percent) **work with their Court Improvement Programs to train judges, Guardians ad Litem (GAL), and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)**. A total of 19 States reported that their trainings were very effective (4 States) or somewhat effective (15 States). One State with no family court system pointed out that it was difficult to engage judges in training, and other States indirectly indicated that attendance to this kind of training is arbitrary. As one State reported, *“Judges are invited to attend training. [They] attend once in a while.”*

Overall, training on the interjurisdictional placement process or issues is central to effective placement of children in foster and adoptive homes. One State put it this way: *“[We] believe that emphasizing the consideration of interjurisdictional placements to achieve permanency is very effective and will continue to incorporate this practice in ongoing training.”*

Some States require training in interjurisdictional placements as certification or orientation for new employees. One State reported that they share information about interjurisdictional placements informally, although they said that this was ineffective. Several other States noted that they are trying to improve training and some reported that they offer training “as needed” either in addition to, or in lieu of, formal instruction.

A total of 10 States identified the ICPC office as responsible for leading training, five States reported that non-ICPC staff such as a training academy conduct the trainings, and two States reported they have “dedicated staff” who conduct trainings.

One State added that it was very effective for ICPC staff to conduct training at the local sites upon their request. Another State emphasized the fact that child placements were

administered through county agencies, each with its own policy and practices, which complicates training.

Finally, one State reported, *“Lack of knowledge is not the barrier as much as lack of staff or monies to expedite licensing and actual preparation of home studies.”*

3.2.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Improve Knowledge and Training

The previous section discussed the most widely used strategies and their overall effectiveness (based on the total number of reporting States). Another way to examine these data is to focus on the number of States that rated a strategy as “very effective” out of those States that actually used and rated that strategy. (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness.)

Table 3-2 shows two strategies for which at least 50 percent of the States that used and rated the strategy assigned it a “very effective” rating.

Table 3-2. Very Effective Strategies to Improve Knowledge and Training

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated “Very Effective”	Percent Rated “Very Effective”
In-state expert on interjurisdictional issues available for legal or social work consultation on interstate cases	45	36	80.0
Provide the tools (e.g., use of Child Support Agency, Web sites, search agencies) to assist in the diligent search for relatives	33	18	54.5

Strategies that are rated as “very effective” by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness).

Widely used by States and rated highly effective was having an in-state expert on interjurisdictional issues available for legal or social work consultation. More than half of the States that used and rated the strategy “provide the tools to assist in the search for relatives” found it very effective. Section 3.2.1 discusses both of these strategies in greater detail.

3.2.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Improve Knowledge and Training

For strategies that a State did not use, each State was asked to indicate if they needed help to implement the strategy, were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or had no plans to use the strategy. This section focuses on the three

strategies that at least one-third of reporting States indicated they were interested in trying.

Of the reporting States, 71 percent indicated interest in using a **Web tutorial, CD, or video for caseworker training** on interjurisdictional processes (right box in Figure 3-3). Of the six States that use this strategy, three found it somewhat effective, two rated it ineffective, and one did not know its effectiveness. These results suggest that these States may have insights to offer the 34 States that are interested in this type of training—“lessons learned” that could improve the effectiveness of such trainings over previous experience. One State explained the benefits:

“[We] offer video training to counties with technical capacity to participate. This saves funding due to decreased staff travel, office hours, etc.”

[We] offer video training to counties with technical capacity to participate. This saves funding due to decreased staff travel, office hours, etc.

All 20 States that do not currently work with State’s **Court Improvement Programs (CIP) to train judges and GAL or CASAs** on the interjurisdictional placement process have an interest in doing so. Of the 28 States that work with CIP to conduct training, four found it very effective, and nine States either found it ineffective or don’t know the effectiveness. Discussions with States that are successful with this partnership may provide insights into how to assist other States.

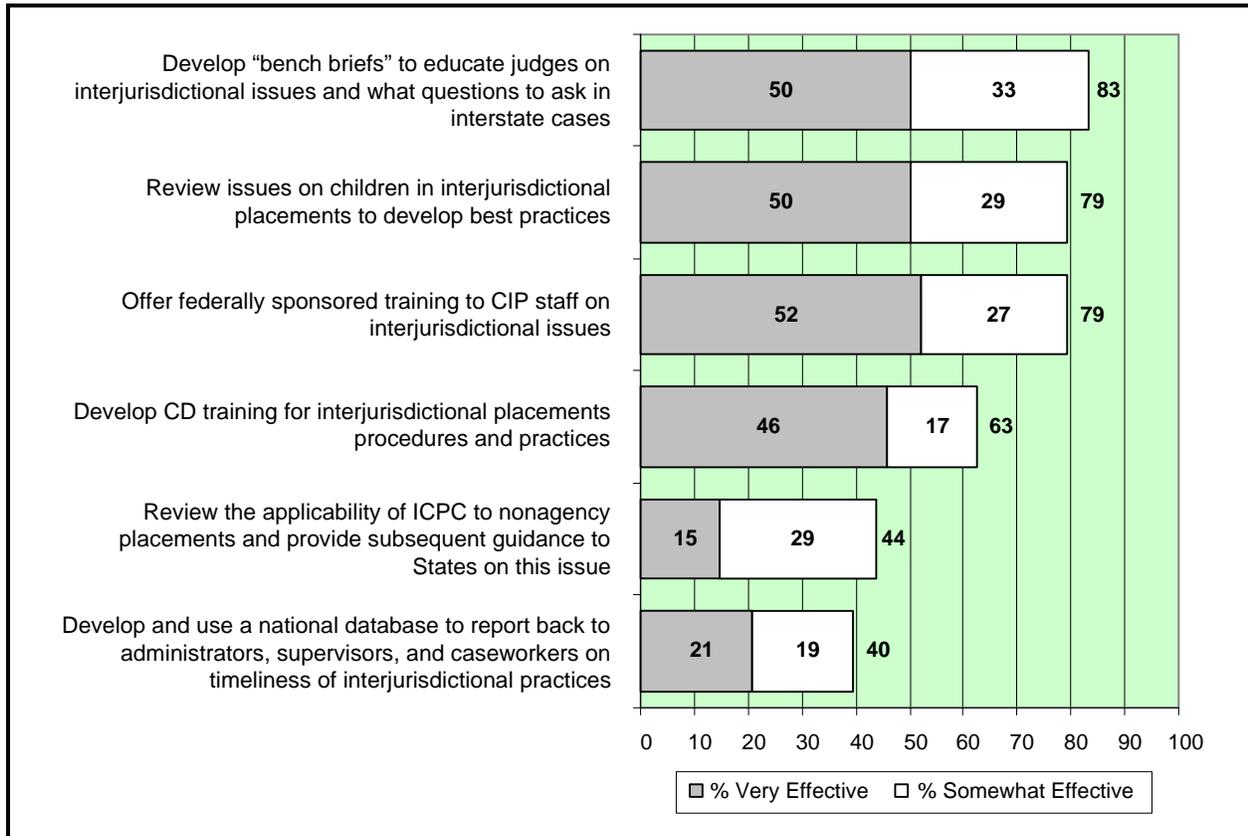
Of reporting States, 41 percent are interested in **including in caseworker training a component to increase competency in interjurisdictional placement procedures**. More than half of States currently incorporate this aspect into their training, and most of those who do find it an effective way to increase caseworker competencies in this area.

3.2.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Improve Knowledge and Training

States were provided with a list of potential actions that could be implemented at the national or Federal level to support their efforts. These actions are designed to facilitate the timely and safe placement of children through improved knowledge of practices and procedures. States were asked to rate these potential supports on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. States had the opportunity to describe other supports that they thought would be effective.

To illustrate the supports for which States have the most enthusiasm, Figure 3-4 shows the percentage of States that rated each support as a four (somewhat effective) or five (very effective).

Figure 3-4. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Improve Knowledge and Training



Three supports received the highest ratings of effectiveness (four or five):

- Develop “bench briefs” to educate judges on interjurisdictional issues and questions to ask in interstate cases (83 percent).
- Review issues on children in interjurisdictional placements to develop best practices (79 percent).
- Offer federally sponsored training to Court Improvement Program staff on interjurisdictional issues (79 percent).

States were invited to add supports in addition to the ones listed on the survey. One State noted that it would be very effective to provide specific competency-based training for supervisors.

When asked to identify the one support out of six that would facilitate the most positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children, “develop ‘bench briefs’” received the most votes (12 States). (See Appendix E.)

3.2.5 Summary

States use a variety of strategies to increase knowledge and awareness of interjurisdictional placement options and procedures through training and other resources. The most common strategy used is in-state experts that are available for consultation on legal and social work issues pertaining to interjurisdictional placements. Other common strategies focus on the content of caseworker training, such as methods for searching for a child’s relatives and awareness of and competency related to interjurisdictional placement options and procedures.

States conduct training using ICPC staff, training academies, and “dedicated” trainers, and a few States use Web-based or video training. Many States are interested in implementing Web-based or video training, and most States suggest that this type of training could be developed at the national level.

Another area that received a lot of attention is training for judges. For example, all of the States that do not currently work with their CIPs to train judges, GAL, and CASAs on interjurisdictional issues are interested in doing so. Almost 80 percent of States agree that it would be highly effective to offer federally sponsored training through CIP to courts, attorneys and court volunteers on these issues. The support that received the most ratings was developing “bench briefs” to educate judges on interjurisdictional issues.

3.3 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS STAFF ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Staff attitudes and beliefs may interfere with conscientious performance of interjurisdictional responsibilities. For example, viewing responsibilities for interstate placements as a lower priority or being reluctant to pursue interstate placements for a child due to personal beliefs can delay the placement of a child in a permanent home. One obstacle that frequently needs to be overcome is staff’s belief that other jurisdictions do not conduct

home studies as comprehensive as the agencies in their jurisdiction. This section describes

- strategies that States use to establish and maintain staff attitudes and beliefs that support interjurisdictional responsibilities,
- results from States' evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies used,
- supports needed at the national or Federal level to implement additional strategies, and
- open-ended responses that provide additional information on how States implement specific strategies.

A summary section reviews the significant findings related to overcoming barriers to interjurisdictional work created by staff attitudes and beliefs.

3.3.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Foster Positive Staff Attitudes

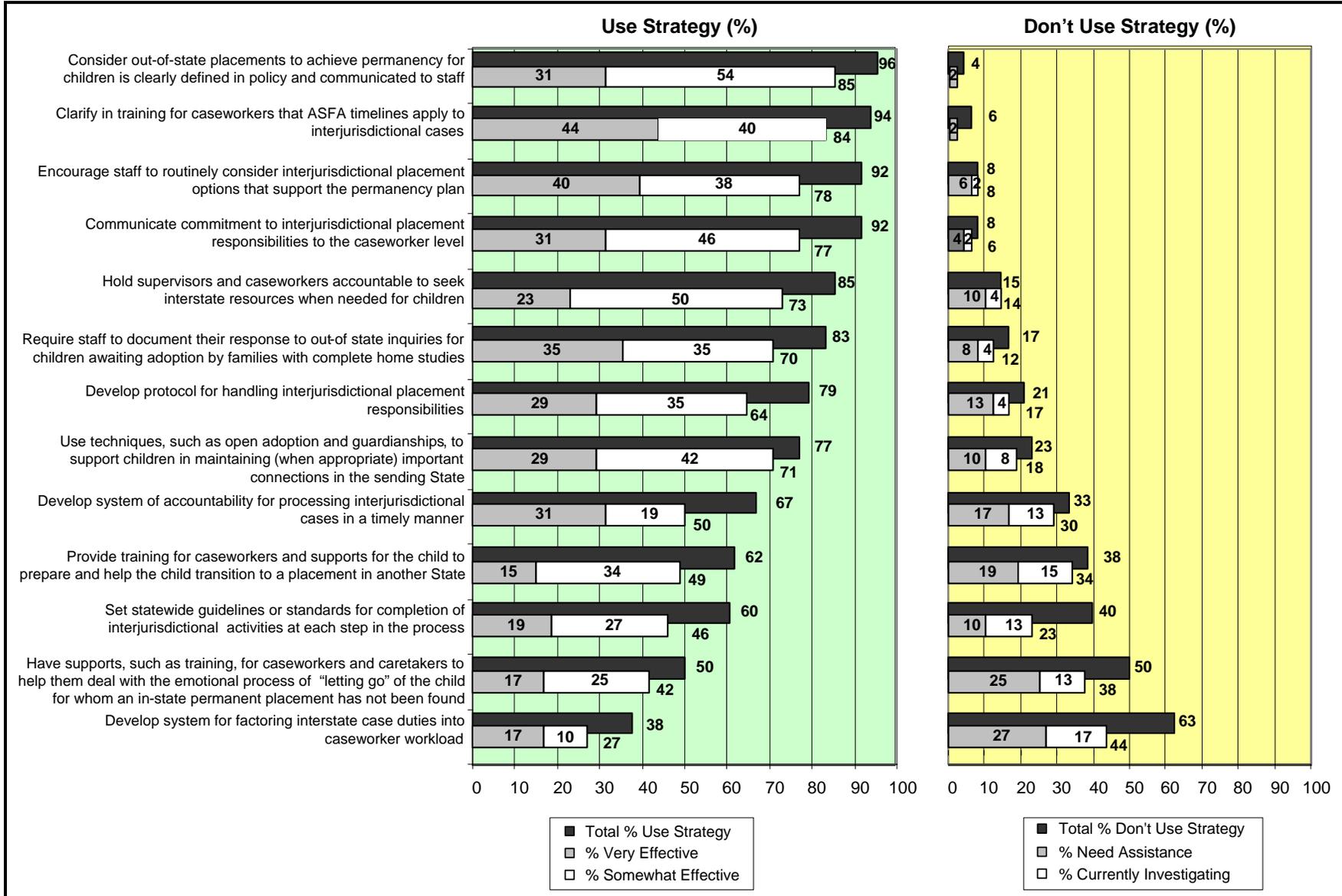
Most States used at least 8 of the 13 strategies designed to address staff attitudes toward interjurisdictional placements.

The survey listed 13 strategies that States could use to promote staff attitudes and beliefs that facilitate interjurisdictional responsibilities. Overall, most States use many of these strategies to support staff attitudes that are constructive to interjurisdictional work. A total of 20 States use 11 to 13 of the strategies listed, and another 20 use 8 to 10 strategies. (Data not shown.) Although eight States use seven or fewer strategies, it may be that they focus their efforts on the handful of strategies they think will have the most impact on improving staff attitudes.

Figure 3-5 shows the responding States' assessment of each strategy—the effectiveness of each strategy used, and the interest in developing those strategies not used. At least 90 percent of reporting States use four of the strategies listed on the survey:

- Clearly define in policy and communicate to staff to consider out-of-state placements to achieve permanency (96 percent).
- Clarify in training that ASFA timelines apply to interjurisdictional cases (94 percent).
- Encourage staff to routinely consider interjurisdictional placement options (92 percent).
- Communicate commitment to interjurisdictional responsibilities to caseworkers (92 percent).

Figure 3-5. Assessment of Strategies to Address Staff Attitudes and their Beliefs



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of "ineffective" or "don't know." For Don't Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see "Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies" on page 3-3.

ASFA = Adoption and Safe Families Act.

States emphasized that **clearly defined policies** and **training** were effective ways to communicate to staff their commitment to and encouragement of interjurisdictional placement options. Of 46 States that have such policies, 41 reported that they were effective. Their statements concurrently address several of the top four strategies used. One State said:

Our policies and contracts strongly reflect a commitment to interjurisdictional responsibilities at all levels. We view achievement of permanency for all children equally regardless of the place of origin. We have training for all staff—agency and contracted. Protocols are well developed and apply to all cases.

Another described their system as follows:

“Our leaders ... in conjunction with the Administration Office of the Courts and legal counsel ... have communicated in all permanency planning steps the importance of going beyond our State boundaries.”

Our leaders ... in conjunction with the [courts and legal counsel] have communicated in all permanency planning steps the importance of going beyond our State boundaries. They have encouraged trainings and supported liaisons with Interstate [Units]. In one Region, the Administrator encouraged the Permanency Unit to specialize in handling interstate placements to give the local offices support in preparing and following up on ICPC placements.

Another State described the channels of communication and expected accountability for following procedures:

Our agency’s leadership does communicate the agency’s commitment to fulfilling our responsibilities under the ICPC. This is communicated by the inclusion of this topic as part of the regular training curriculum for caseworkers, by the fact that the leadership has dedicated adequate resources to the centralized unit responsible for administering the Interstate Compact, and by the fact that the agency has continued to ensure that we are always represented at the annual meetings of the Association of Administrators of the ICPC. ... Protocols for handling interstate placements, both as a receiving State and a sending State, are clearly outlined step by step in policy. Accountability for fulfilling these responsibilities is monitored, encouraged, and enforced by the staff in our agency’s central Interstate Compact office.

A fourth State noted:

... Policy and policy training also emphasize the importance of transitional plans for children and following ASFA timelines. The Division also utilizes placement committees to review the studies of all of the

families interested in being a permanent resource for a child ...

Of 45 States, 40 found it effective to **clarify in training that ASFA timelines apply to interjurisdictional cases**. This strategy was put into operation by States in several ways. One State reported:

[We have] a Statewide training program for all caseworkers and supervisors. This has been very effective in working with county agencies in training workers on how to best make placement decisions and find viable placement for children both in State and out of State. [Our State's] administrative rules governing protective and substitute care services provide direction to all agencies (public and private) on how to implement services that will be in keeping with ASFA and requirements related to finding and supporting placement options.

Another State described their approach to minding ASFA timelines as follows:

“The internal data system [generates alerts] based upon ASFA timelines.”

The internal data system [generates alerts] based upon ASFA timelines. Regional reviews are also part of the local offices' practice based upon ASFA timelines. Given the turnover of social workers and supervisors, this training and reinforcement is [an ongoing] process.

A third State noted that *“Our statutes and regulations and [Quality Assurance] and [Quality Improvement] have all been altered since 1998.”*

One State reported using its Web site to communicate ICPC regulations pertaining to ASFA, permanency, and financial and medical guidelines to staff.

Most States reported that they encourage staff to routinely **consider out-of-state placement options** and that they **communicate the commitment to these placements to the caseworker level**. Permanency options were discussed in case reviews, semiannual reviews, placement committees, supervision trainings, attorney meetings, and in court. Of 44 States, 37 reported that their efforts to encourage caseworkers to consider out-of-state placements are effective. One State described the use of permanency teams:

As a sending State, [our] Child Protection Administrators and local CPS supervisors oversee Permanency Teams that address barrier resolution in all cases involving out-

of-home placements. All options that address safety and well-being issues, including out-of-state resources, are addressed and reviewed. Accountability for permanency plans for children in out-of-state locations is maintained through these permanency teams.

Another State described how interstate cases are integrated into review boards and court reports:

[Our] Foster Care Review Board pays specific attention in the review to out-of-state placements; a copy of the summary of recommendations of each case is sent to the court specifically marked so it is easily identifiable by the court and the recommendations are also included in reports from the [agency] to the court.

“Staff are encouraged to seek and place with relatives when reunification is no longer an option, regardless of location, and workers and supervisors are accountable for seeking such placements.”

When children are removed from birth families, many States have policies that encourage or require staff to explore kin caregivers as resources for these children, regardless of where relatives live. As one State said, *“Staff are encouraged to seek and place with relatives when reunification is no longer an option, regardless of location, and workers and supervisors are accountable for seeking such placements.”*

Another State even noted that *“As a part of our Program Improvement Plan, we have placed an increased emphasis on seeking relative placements and have developed tools to assist the worker and ensure this is done.”*

Two States recognized some payment constraints in the use of such placements. One responded that the cost associated with long-distance visitation with parents and siblings was a major deterrent to placing a child out of State. Another State reported:

The majority of our out-of-state placements are with relatives. Many of these become foster parents, and at the time of the TPR, adoptive parents ... We also use Kinship Subsidy Guardianship if adoption is not appropriate. Unfortunately, presently the monies paid for Kinship Guardianship cannot be paid out of State. With our Reform Plan, we are seeking to be able to pay out of State the same amount as we do in State to eliminate this as a barrier.

From the above statements it is clear that these States have leadership who communicate commitment to interjurisdictional work through clearly defined policies, training, and

encouragement of routine consideration of interstate resources for children.

Another strategy used by 85 percent of reporting States (41 States) is **holding supervisors and caseworkers accountable to seek interstate resources when needed for children**; 35 States reported the strategy to be very effective or somewhat effective. One State described their practice in this way:

Not only does this agency's leadership convey that message but our courts and their representatives, i.e., Law Guardians, are very vocal and strong in ensuring that any identified resource is followed up on and not ignored. If the issue is fiscal, creative thinking is applied to find a resolution so this resource may be used...or explored.

States were given the opportunity to add other strategies not included on the survey. In their comments, States indicated that assignment of specific staff to perform interjurisdictional placements is one way to address this barrier. One State reported that an effective strategy is to dedicate staff units in larger service areas to process interstate requests. Another State commented on the diligence and helpfulness of their State ICPC office, which provides checklists and technical assistance when requested.

3.3.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Foster Positive Staff Attitudes

The previous section discussed the most widely used strategies and their overall effectiveness (based on the total number of reporting States). Another way to examine these data is to focus on the number of States that rated a strategy as “very effective” out of those States that actually used and rated that strategy, regardless of how commonly used the strategy is. This approach will highlight those strategies that have been successfully implemented by only a few States as well as the more common strategies. Table 3-3 shows the strategies for which at least 50 percent of the States that used and rated the strategy assigned it a “very effective” rating. (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness.)

Table 3-3. Very Effective Strategies to Address Staff Attitudes and their Beliefs

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated "Very Effective"	Percent Rated "Very Effective"
Encourage staff to routinely consider interjurisdictional placement options that support the permanency plan	38	19	50.0
Develop system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner	27	15	55.6
Develop system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload	15	8	53.3

Strategies that are rated as "very effective" by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated "Don't know" with regard to effectiveness).

Variation in whether and how interjurisdictional cases are counted when assessing a caseworker's workload and for reporting purposes may affect attitudes towards interjurisdictional cases. Of the 27 States that have **a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases**, more than half (56 percent) of these States rated it as "very effective." There were a number of ways in which States implemented a system of accountability in addition to the usual case review processes. One State has a Foster Care Review Board that focuses more heavily on interjurisdictional cases. Another State described the following system for adoption cases:

[The Adoption Unit] has leadership meetings on a monthly basis. The ICPC contractor submits a report on each ICPC adoption case that is open or pending each month to supervisors, and that is given to staff. It has been a great management tool to know what exactly needs to be done and what the status of the case is...

In addition, another State described an advanced database framework for monitoring work performance:

We have a SACWIS system [Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System], which contains an Oracle database with a Centura front end, that tracks and manages the flow of interstate cases with worklisting events and ticklers that establish and enforce time frames contained in the standards of the Compact. We are also able to extract case-by-case data in a pending worklist and monitor aggregate times and completion rates for interstate cases.

The least used strategy, develop a **system for factoring interstate cases into caseworker workload**, was rated “very effective” by 8 of the 15 States (53 percent) that do this.

Finally, one of the most widely used strategies (used by 44 States) is also considered highly effective by half of the States that use it, **encourage staff to consider interjurisdictional placement options**.

3.3.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Foster Positive Staff Attitudes

Most States that developed a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload rated it as highly effective, and there is great interest in implementing the strategy among those who have not.

Most of the strategies designed to address attitudes toward interjurisdictional placements were used by at least half of the reporting States. For strategies not currently used, each State was asked to indicate whether they needed assistance to implement the strategy, were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or had no plans to use the strategy. This section focuses on the strategies that at least one-third of reporting States indicated they were interested in trying (currently investigating or need assistance). As shown by the right box on Figure 3-5, States expressed the most interest in three strategies:

- Develop a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload (44 percent).
- Have supports to help caseworkers deal with the emotional process of “letting go” of the child (38 percent).⁴
- Provide training for caseworkers and supports for the child to transition to an interstate placement (34 percent).

Although some States responded that they used these strategies, their comments provided little explanation of how these strategies were implemented.

3.3.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Foster Positive Attitudes

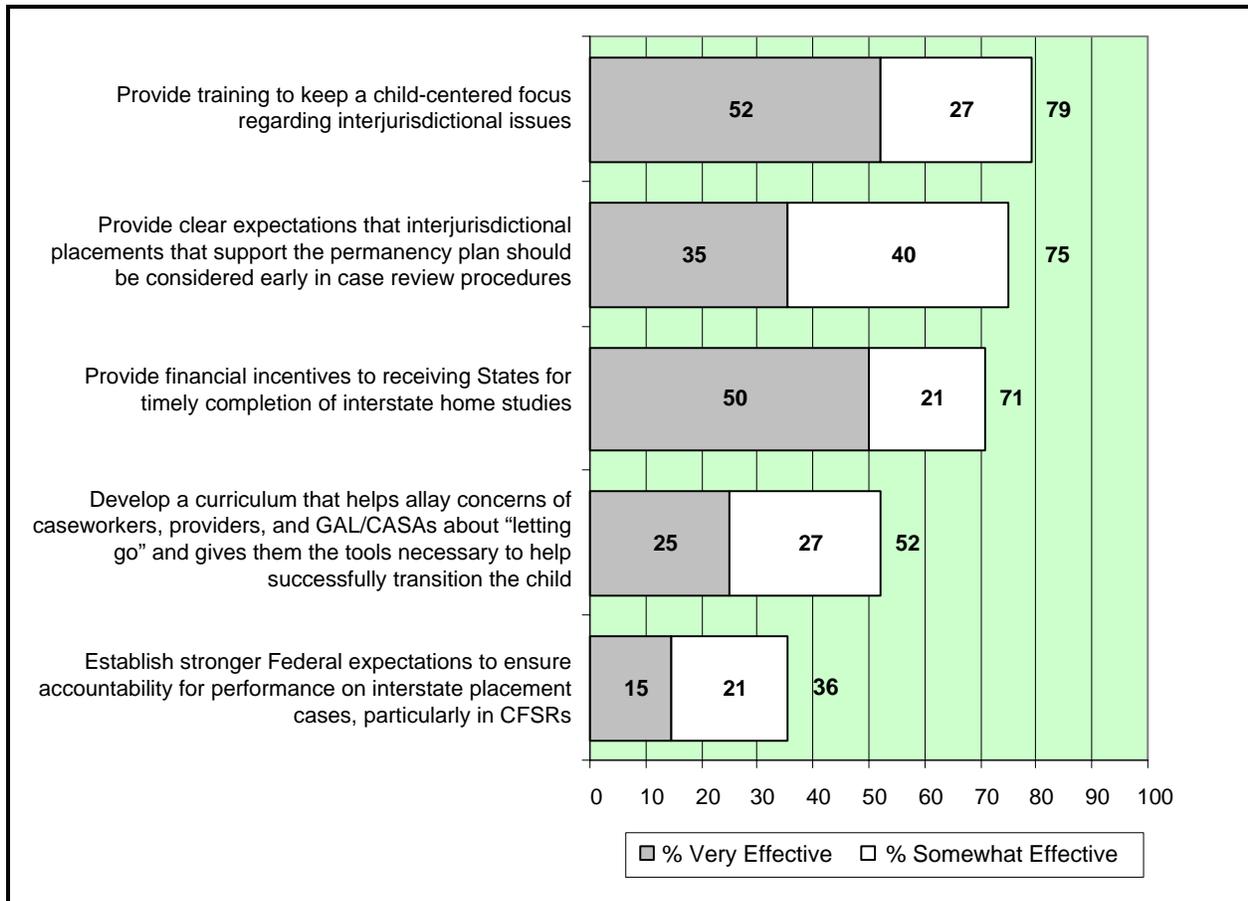
States were provided with a list of potential actions that could be implemented at the national or Federal level to support their efforts. These actions are designed to modify staff attitudes or

⁴The phrase “letting go” is commonly used within child welfare casework to describe the process of a caseworker or caretaker separating from a child to allow the child to develop new relationships.

beliefs that interfere with effective practices for interjurisdictional placements. States were asked to rate these supports on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. States also could describe other supports that they thought would be effective.

Figure 3-6 shows the percentage of States that rated each support as a four (somewhat effective) or five (very effective).

Figure 3-6. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Address Staff Attitudes and their Beliefs



More than two-thirds of the States gave three potential supports the highest rating (four or five):

- Provide training to keep a child-centered focus regarding interjurisdictional issues (79 percent).
- Provide clear expectations that interjurisdictional placements should be considered early in case review procedures (75 percent).

- Provide financial incentives to receiving States for timely completion of interstate home studies (71 percent).

States were invited to list supports in addition to the ones listed on the survey. Three supports were added, although only the first one seems to address staff attitudes:

- Provide training for staff on preparing children for permanency plans involving out-of-state placements.
- Develop identifying documentation that will accompany a child from the sending State to the receiving State.
- Provide specific ICPC training on how to do the packets from beginning to end.

States were asked to identify the one support out of five that would facilitate the most positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. (See Appendix E.) Forty-four States responded, and 43 percent (19 States) chose providing financial incentives to receiving States for timely completion of interstate home studies.

Other supports were chosen much less frequently, with nine States (21 percent) choosing providing training to keep a child-centered focus regarding interjurisdictional issues.

3.3.5 Summary

The following strategies for promoting staff attitudes that support pursuit of interjurisdictional resources for children were most widely used:

- Clearly define consideration of out-of-state placements to achieve permanency in policy and communicate to staff (96 percent).
- Clarify in training that ASFA timelines apply to interjurisdictional cases (94 percent).
- Communicate commitment to interjurisdictional responsibilities from leaders to caseworkers (92 percent).
- Encourage staff to routinely consider interjurisdictional placement options (92 percent).

Of the four strategies listed above, the last one was rated as “very effective” by half of the States that used and rated this strategy.

Two-thirds of the reporting States have a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner, and more than half of these rated it as very effective.

To promote positive staff attitudes around interjurisdictional placements, States most frequently need help to:

- develop a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload (44 percent).
- build supports to help caseworkers deal with the emotional process of “letting go” of the child (38 percent), and
- provide training for caseworkers and supports for the child to transition to an interstate placement (34 percent).

The single support that States thought would make the most difference in promoting positive attitudes was providing financial incentives to receiving States for timely completion of interstate home studies.

3.4 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS FUNDING ISSUES FOR EDUCATIONAL OR MEDICAL EXPENSES

Another category of barriers that interferes with effective performance of interjurisdictional responsibilities is difficulties in obtaining funding for educational or medical expenses for children waiting for, or already in, interstate placements.⁵

This section describes

- strategies that States use to address such difficulties and evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies,
- supports needed at the national or Federal level to implement additional strategies, and
- open-ended responses that provide additional information on how States implemented specific strategies.

⁵Although these two types of expenses are the most common monetary issues posing barriers to interstate placements, other types of funding needs may pose barriers to interjurisdictional placements. For example, one State reported that the cost of visitation with parents and siblings was another funding issue that created a barrier to such placements.

A summary section highlights the significant findings related to overcoming barriers to interjurisdictional work created by funding issues for a child's educational or medical expenses.

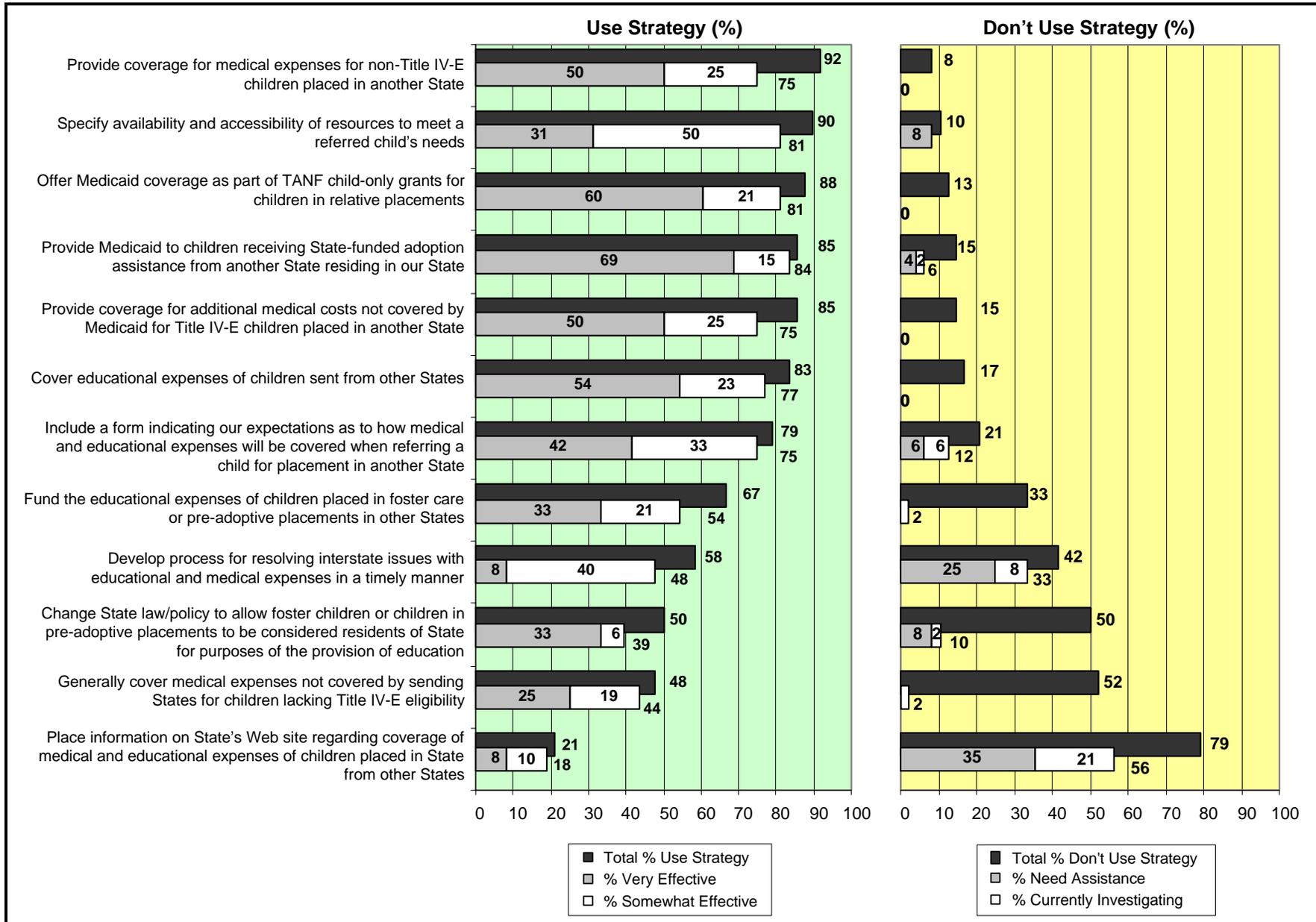
3.4.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Address Education or Medical Funding Issues

The survey listed 12 strategies that States could use to resolve problems in obtaining funding for educational or medical expenses for children placed out of State. Most of the responding States use at least half of the strategies listed; 17 use between 10 and 12. Six States use fewer than seven strategies. States that use fewer strategies may be effectively targeting the ones that they believe will benefit children the most. The States that use most of the strategies may have more resources to try multiple methods to overcome funding issues for medical and educational expenses.

The left box on Figure 3-7 shows that 80 percent or more of States use the top six strategies:

- As sending State, provide coverage for medical expenses for non-Title IV-E children placed in another State (92 percent).
- As receiving State, specify availability and accessibility of resources to meet a referred child's needs (90 percent).
- As receiving State, offer Medicaid coverage as part of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) child-only grants for children in relative placements (88 percent).
- As receiving State, provide Medicaid to children receiving State-funded adoption assistance from another State residing in our State (85 percent).
- As sending State, provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children placed in another State (85 percent).
- As receiving State, cover educational expenses of children sent from other States (83 percent).

Figure 3-7. Assessment of Strategies to Address Funding Issues for Educational or Medical Expenses



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of "ineffective" or "don't know." For Don't Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see "Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies" on page 3-3.

TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Overall, the 12 strategies addressing barriers related to funding of educational and medical needs can be categorized as follows:

- Strategies that **sending States** use to pay for children's **educational needs**
- Strategies that **receiving States** use to pay for children's **educational needs**
- Strategies that **sending States** use to pay for children's **medical needs**
- Strategies that **receiving States** use to pay for children's **medical needs**
- **Policy or procedural strategies** to improve funding of educational and medical needs of children in interstate placements

Results related to these strategies will be discussed under these five categories.

“Funding of educational expenses in other States is the only way to assure the child receives requested services.”

Sending States meeting cost of educational needs

Two-thirds of responding States **fund the educational expenses of children whom they send to other States** when necessary. Of the 32 States that fund educational expenses of children placed out of State, 16 assessed this strategy as very effective and 10 rated it as somewhat effective. One State's response reiterates the salience of this strategy: *“Funding of educational expenses in other States is the only way to assure the child receives requested services.”*

Another State described their acceptance of this fiscal responsibility as follows: *“Based on ICPC requirements, our State placing agencies are made aware [that] we are responsible for all costs related to education not otherwise covered.”*

Receiving States meeting cost of educational needs

Of the 48 reporting States, 40 (83 percent) **cover educational expenses of children sent from other States**—a strategy that most respondents assessed as very effective (26 States) or somewhat effective (11 States). In open-ended responses, a number of States reported that they treat children placed into their State as residents and do not require payment from the sending State for education. This practice was described by one State in these words:

[Our] school districts accept responsibility for educating children based on a child's current place of residence, regardless of whether they are residing in foster care or in a pre-adoptive placement and regardless of whether they came here from another State or not.

Some States qualified this practice by saying that special education expenses will not be paid for by the receiving State. For example, one State noted that if the child had special needs and was placed in a small school district, the sending State would be required to cover costs associated with those needs. Another State reported that it covers educational needs for children from other States, but that some of these States expect reimbursement when children are sent to their State. This State concluded that this imbalance is “...a barrier to permanency.”

Sending States meeting costs for medical needs

Medical costs for children placed within or out of their own States are most easily covered when the child is Title IV-E eligible and qualifies for Medicaid. These children can qualify for Medicaid coverage in the receiving State, but some children have additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid such as dental braces. A total of 41 States (85 percent) reported that they **provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children placed in another State**. One State described the process for accessing such funding in these words:

If medical coverage is not adequate ... we process for special approval. First we request State Medicaid and if this doesn't work we pay under what we call exceptional guidelines.

Other arrangements must be made for children who are not eligible for Medicaid. A total of 44 sending States (92 percent) **cover medical expenses for their non-Title IV-E children placed in another State**, a strategy assessed as very effective by 24 States and somewhat effective by 12 States.

One sending State explained how they cover medical expenses for non-Title IV-E children: “[We] provide third party State-supported medical coverage [when] not covered by private insurance or Medicaid for children placed out of State in foster care or pre-adoptive or adoptive homes based on need.”

Another State reported that they issue a medical card to non-Title IV-E children placed in another State *"if the child is not otherwise eligible for Medicaid coverage in the receiving State and cannot be covered by private insurance carried by the caregiver."* However, they reported that *"This type of coverage is of limited value due to the challenge of finding providers in other States willing to accept our medical card."*

Receiving States meeting cost of medical needs

States are required to provide Medicaid to Title IV-E eligible children although the amount of coverage varies among States. Through a variety of strategies, most States will meet the medical costs of children sent from other States, even if they are not eligible for Title IV-E. Many receiving States **offer Medicaid coverage as part of TANF child-only grants for children in relative placements**—a strategy used in 42 States (88 percent) and rated as effective by most (rated very effective by 29 States and somewhat effective by 10 States). The following response illustrates this strategy: *"One-hundred percent of children placed with relatives are opened as TANF and are eligible for our State's Medicaid."*

Another strategy was to **provide Medicaid to children receiving State-funded adoption assistance from another State**—the case in 41 States (85 percent). This strategy received the highest percentage of very effective ratings of any strategy addressing this barrier. Of the 40 States assessing the effectiveness of this strategy, 33 rated it as very effective.

Some States use the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) to govern the delivery of and payment for medical services. Currently, there are 42 States that have adopted the Compact. In some States' responses, ICAMA membership provided the mechanism for their policy that covers medical costs of children receiving adoption assistance from other States. One State said:

If this is an adoptive placement and a subsidy agreement is in place pre-finalization, as a member of ICAMA we give reciprocity to ICAMA members. If the child comes from a non-ICAMA member State we will not do so.

Other States were not as restrictive regarding medical coverage for children placed from other States. Nearly half of the States (23 States, 48 percent) reported that they **generally cover**

medical expenses not covered by sending States for children lacking Title IV-E eligibility. For these States, 12 rated this strategy as very effective and nine rated it as somewhat effective. The following State's response illustrates this strategy: *"It is very effective to offer Medicaid based on child's foster status regardless of IV-E."*

Policy or procedural strategies for addressing funding issues

In addition to covering educational or medical costs directly, some States use policy or procedures to communicate expectations for educational and medical services and payment for children in interstate placements. One such strategy is **including a form (e.g., financial or medical plan) indicating the sending State's expectations as to how medical and educational expenses will be covered** when referring a child to another State. A total of 38 States (79 percent) indicated that they use this strategy, with 20 States evaluating this as very effective and 16 States as somewhat effective. A couple of States reported that they use checklists to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for services. Another State explained that *"We write a cover letter [to specify] what the financial and medical plan will be."*

A similar strategy for receiving States is to **specify availability and accessibility of resources to meet the child's needs.** This is used by 43 States (90 percent). Often forms or checklists are incorporated into the home study documentation to show how the child's needs will be addressed.

For 24 States (50 percent), the strategy was to **change State law or policy to allow foster children or children in pre-adoptive placements to be considered residents for educational purposes.** This strategy was rated as effective by 19 of the 24 States using it. (One State rated it ineffective; four reported "Don't know.")

States were given the opportunity to add other strategies not included on the survey. Most States adding comments just reiterated their commitment to working through issues, although one State did describe an additional strategy—using educational specialists as consultants on interjurisdictional cases that involve children with special education needs.

3.4.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Address Education or Medical Funding Issues

Table 3-4 shows that 9 strategies out of the 12 listed on the survey were rated as “very effective” by at least half of the States that used and rated the strategy. (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness.) Most of these strategies are widely used. The two strategies that are used by fewer than half of the States are ones that require States to accept more financial responsibility for education and medical needs of children in placed in their State:

- Change State law or policy to allow children sent from other States to be considered residents of the State for the purpose of education (used and rated by 20 States; rated very effective by 16).
- Generally cover medical expenses not covered by sending States for children lacking Title IV-E eligibility (used and rated by 22 States; rated very effective by 12).

Although most States that use these two strategies found them highly effective, most of the States that do not use them have no intentions of doing so.

Table 3-4. Very Effective Strategies to Address Funding Issues for Educational or Medical Expenses

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated "Very Effective"	Percent Rated "Very Effective"
Provide coverage for medical expenses for non-Title IV-E children placed in another State	41	24	58.5
Provide Medicaid to children receiving State-funded adoption assistance from another State residing in our State	40	33	82.5
Offer Medicaid coverage as part of TANF child-only grants for children in relative placements	39	29	74.4
Cover educational expenses of children sent from other States	39	26	66.7
Provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children placed in another State	38	24	63.2
Include a form indicating our expectations regarding how medical and educational expenses will be covered when referring a child for placement in another State	36	20	55.6
Fund the educational expenses of children placed in foster care or pre-adoptive placements in other States	30	16	53.3
Generally cover medical expenses not covered by sending States for non-Title IV-E children	22	12	54.5
Change State law or policy to allow foster children or children in pre-adoptive placements to be considered residents of the State for purposes of the provision of education	20	16	80.0

Strategies that are rated as "very effective" by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated "Don't know" with regard to effectiveness).

TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

3.4.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Address Education or Medical Funding Issues

More than half (56 percent) of States need assistance in developing a Web site with information on funding issues or are investigating the possibility.

For strategies not currently used, each State was asked to indicate whether they needed assistance to implement the strategy, they were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or they had no plans to use the strategy. These results are shown in the right box on Figure 3-7. This section describes the two strategies that at least one-third of reporting States said they were interested in trying.

The strategy used least often and the one that received the highest percentage of interest (56 percent) was to **place information on a State's Web site regarding coverage of medical and educational expenses of children** placed from other States. Only 10 States had such information on their Web site.

One-third of reporting States said they were interested in **developing a process for resolving interstate issues with educational and medical expenses** in a timely manner; 58 percent of States already have a process. One State described their process for resolving these funding issues: *"[We resolve issues] about education through our Clinical Practice Administration and about medical assistance through our Medical Assistance Office."*

Another State reported that the ICPC office sometimes becomes involved in resolving a conflict between States regarding medical or educational coverage.

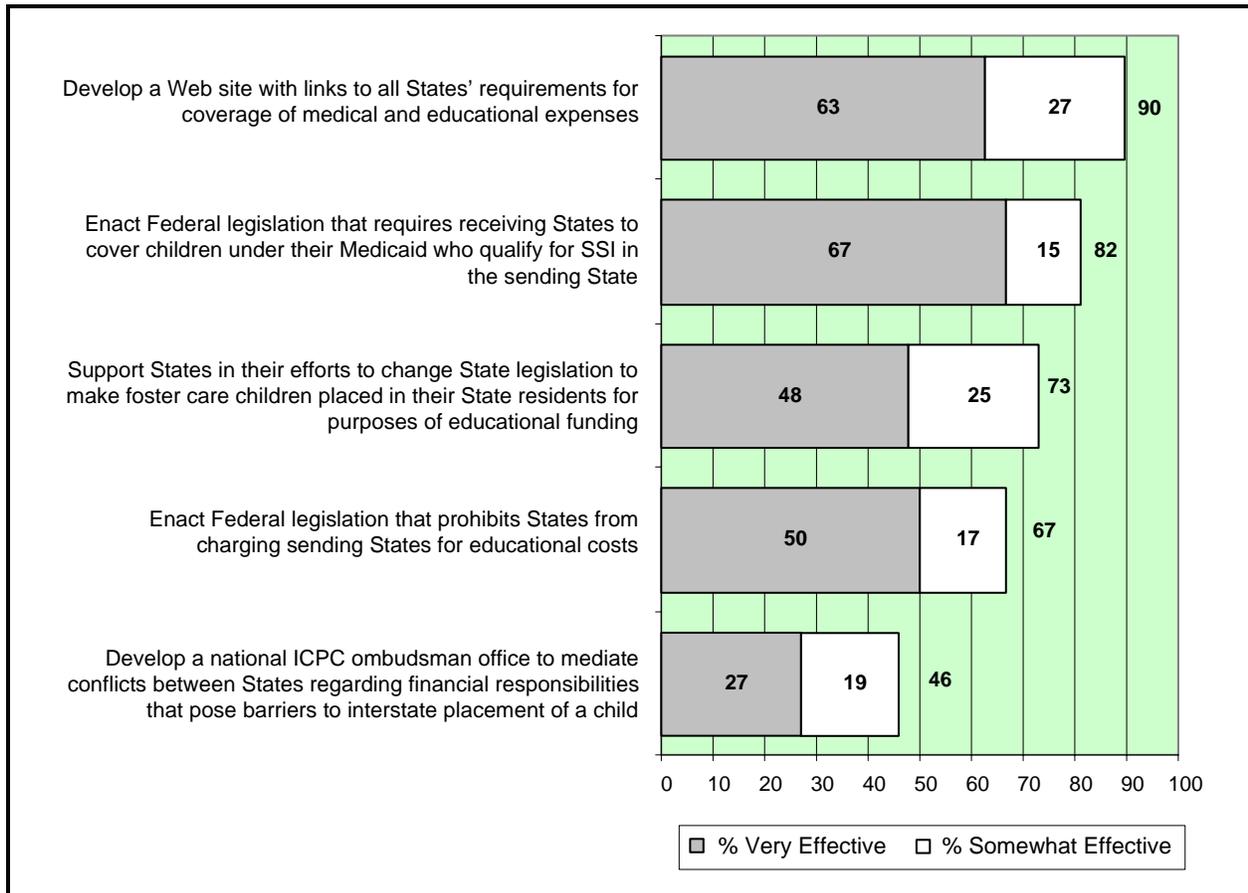
3.4.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Facilitate Obtaining Funding for Educational or Medical Expenses

States were provided with a list of potential actions that could be implemented at the national or Federal level to support their efforts to cover educational or medical expenses in interstate placements. States were asked to rate these supports on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. Also, States could add other supports that they thought would be effective.

To illustrate which supports States are most interested in receiving, Figure 3-8 shows the percentage of States that rated each support as a four (somewhat effective) or five (very effective). Four of the five potential supports received effective ratings from at least two-thirds of reporting States.

More than 80 percent of States gave ratings of four or five to two supports:

- Develop a Web site with links to all States' requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses (90 percent).
- Enact Federal legislation that requires receiving States to cover children under their Medicaid who qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in the sending State (82 percent).

Figure 3-8. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Address Funding Issues for Educational or Medical Expenses

States were invited to add supports in addition to the ones listed on the survey. Three supports were added:

- Provide medical coverage for all.
- Establish a reciprocity agreement for all foster children who are not Title IV-E eligible.
- Develop consistent interjurisdictional placement requirements and provide funding for States that must raise their standards to meet these requirements.

States were asked to identify the one support out of five that would facilitate the most positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children—44 States selected a single top support: Develop a Web site with links to all States' requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses (15 States or 34 percent). (See Appendix E.)

An issue to note is that while only 10 States reported having information on their Web site related to medical and educational expense, 30 States perceived the need for a national Web site to link State requirements as a very effective support.

3.4.5 Summary

The strategies used in 80 percent or more of responding States for addressing financial barriers to interstate placements for funding educational and medical expenses of children were:

- As a sending State, provide coverage for medical expenses for non-Title IV-E children placed in another State (92 percent).
- As a receiving State, specify the availability and accessibility of resources to meet a referred child's needs (90 percent).
- As a receiving State, offer Medicaid coverage as part of TANF child-only grants for children in relative placements (88 percent).
- As a receiving State, provide Medicaid to children receiving State-funded adoption assistance from another State residing in our State (85 percent).
- As a sending State, provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children placed in another State (85 percent).
- As a receiving State, cover the educational expenses of children sent from other States (83 percent).

Of the strategies listed above, all but the second one, **specify the availability and accessibility of resources to meet a referred child's needs**, were found to be highly effective by at least 50 percent of the States that used and rated them.

To address this barrier, States most frequently needed assistance to

- place information on the State's Web site regarding coverage of medical and educational expenses of children from other States and
- develop a model process for resolving interstate issues that involve educational and medical expenses.

The two supports that States thought would make the most difference in addressing this barrier were (1) enact Federal legislation requiring receiving States to cover children who qualify for SSI under their Medicaid (received the highest

effectiveness rating) and (2) develop a Web site with links to all States' requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses (selected as single support that would make the most difference).

Financing medical and education expenses for children placed across State lines is a complex issue, beyond the scope of child welfare. Communication and coordination among child and family services including the Department of Education and DHHS's Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is necessary to meet the needs of these children.

3.5 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO REDUCE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK DELAYS

This section describes

- strategies States use to reduce delays in criminal background checks, an oft-cited barrier to timely interjurisdictional placements;
- the most effective strategies used by States;
- the national or Federal supports that States would like to see implemented; and
- details regarding how States successfully implemented some of these strategies (these insights could provide the impetus that other States need to replicate successful strategies).

Finally, a summary section highlights the salient findings related to overcoming delays in the home study process due to criminal background checks.

3.5.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Reduce Background Check Delays

Most States use a wide variety of strategies to improve the timeliness of criminal background checks, often cited as the cause of home study approval delays. The survey listed 10 strategies that States could use to address these delays. Most States (42) reported using three to eight strategies. (Data not shown.) However, there were three States that reported using only two strategies while another three use nine strategies. (None use all ten.) This wide variety of usage points to the different ways that States approach a barrier. Some target a few strategies that may be less resource intensive or likely to result in the most improvement and others may choose to enlist as many strategies as possible.

As mandated by ASFA, criminal background (or records) checks are required for approval of prospective foster and adoptive parents for a child who is eligible to receive foster care maintenance or adoption assistance payments. States may require local, State, and/or FBI criminal record checks. The statute expressly gives the State the authority to opt out of section 471 (a)(20) of the Act through State legislation or a letter from the governor to the secretary. The three most widely used strategies to improve the criminal background check process are:

- Enter into an agreement with law enforcement agencies to conduct timely criminal background checks (92 percent).
- Streamline the criminal background check process by limiting the number of individuals and agencies involved in the process (77 percent).
- Accept the criminal background requirements of the receiving State if they are less extensive than their own (65 percent).

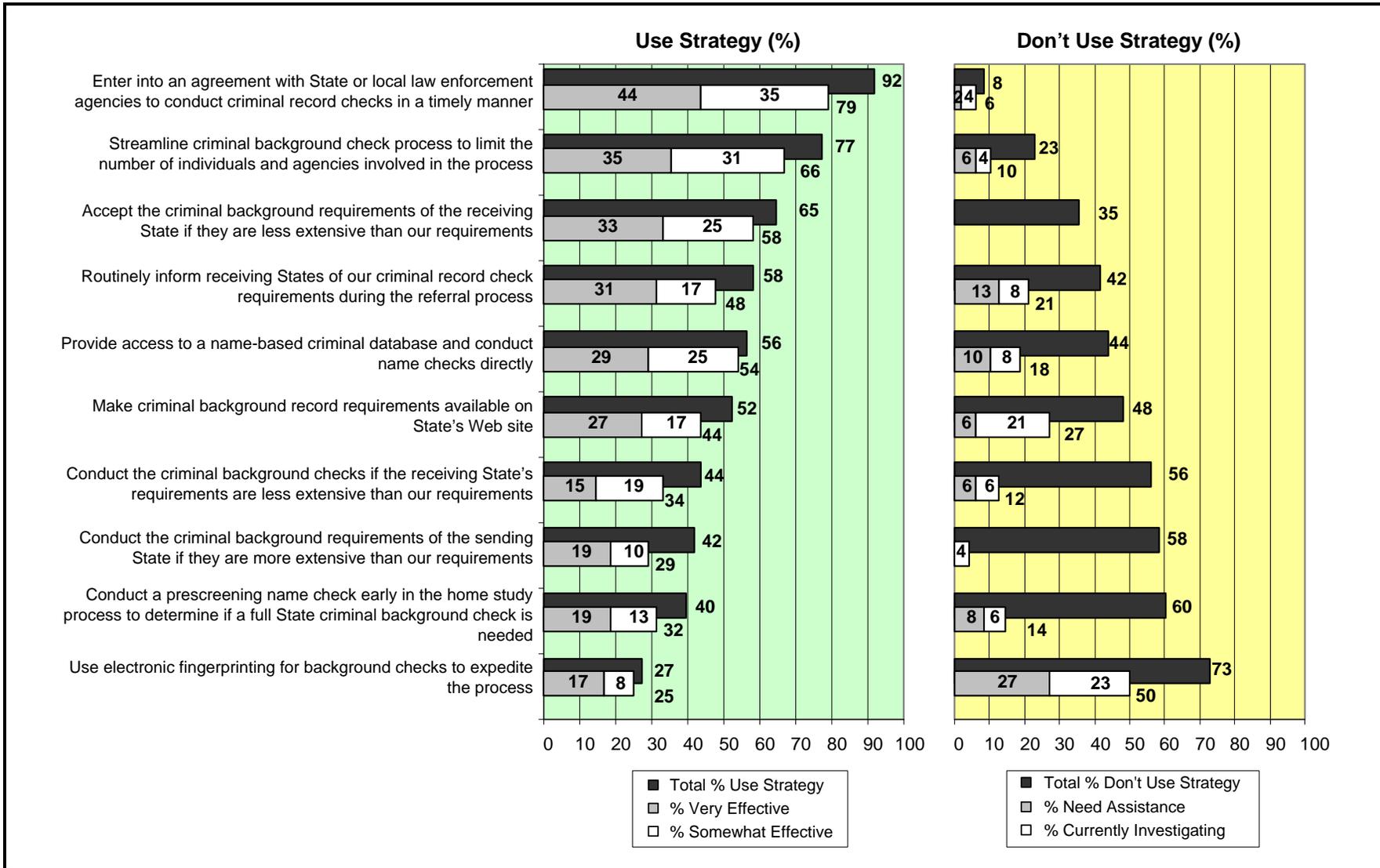
The remainder of this section is organized around four main topic areas:

- conducting criminal background checks
- criminal background check requirements
- Federal background checks
- additional strategies

Conducting Criminal Background Checks

Of responding States, 92 percent have entered into an **agreement with law enforcement agencies** to conduct timely criminal background checks. (See the left box in Figure 3-9.) Most of these States found this an effective strategy—38 out of 44 found it effective, 5 reported it was ineffective, and one did not know the effectiveness. Although a few States referred to formal agreements with law enforcement agencies, such as contracts and memorandums of agreement (MOAs), several States discussed their relationship with law enforcement agencies in a more general, informal manner and used words such as collaboration, cooperation, and support. Not only was this a frequently discussed strategy, States referred to these collaborative relationships when they described their success with several other strategies.

Figure 3-9. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Criminal Background Check Delays



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of "ineffective" or "don't know." For Don't Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see "Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies" on page 3-3.

About two-thirds of the reporting States were able to effectively **streamline the criminal background check process**. A study conducted by APHSA on criminal background checks revealed that the complex process involved in completing criminal records checks is the most common barrier to the timely completion of these checks (Dunhem and Oppenheim, 2002). Several States shared that they were able to streamline the process by having staff or specific units dedicated or authorized to conduct criminal background checks or serve as the agency liaison for checks. Comments from two States shed light on how they are successful. One State said:

Our Department has taken specific steps to streamline our criminal background check process, including the creation of a single centralized criminal history check processing unit, greater standardization of criminal check policies and procedures across all of the different sections [of] the department (child welfare, mental health, developmental disabilities, etc.), and by maintaining an ongoing agreement with our State police agency to have direct access to the criminal history information they maintain. We know that we're able to complete background checks more quickly than many States, but there's room for improvement.

Another State explained:

We have one point of entry into the background check procedure. All caretakers contact the Criminal History Unit within our State and [records] are printed at no expense. We experience few if any delays.

One State funds a position at the State patrol to assist with Federal checks and has *“worked cooperatively to develop the emergency check protocol and process.”*

Another State reported that they have “background screeners”—persons authorized to conduct full background checks. Their Protective Investigators have the capability to conduct immediate checks using laptops.

One apparent theme was development of a protocol for getting the criminal background checks completed in an efficient, timely manner. One State reported:

[Our] workers work in conjunction with the Division of Criminal Investigations to run criminal record checks on all subjects as authorized by the Department. Specific steps for workers are outlined in our Employees' Manual.

Another State pointed out how starting the process early helped to avoid delays:

If the home is being studied for kinship care, foster or pre-adoptive care, the prints are taken up front not after the process of training is completed. We used to wait to do the criminal history toward the end of the study but now it is done up front to lessen delays and more quickly rule the proposed resource in or out.

Other strategies used by States to help streamline the process include the following:

- Provide direct access to a name-based criminal database and **conduct name checks directly** (56 percent).
- **Conduct a prescreening name check** early in the home study process to determine if a full background check is needed (40 percent).
- **Use electronic fingerprinting** for background checks (27 percent).

A name check is a method of retrieving criminal records that involves searching databases for an individual's name and/or other identifying information such as date of birth or social security number, usually at the State or local level (Dunhem and Oppenheim, 2002). Of the 27 States that **conduct name checks directly**, 26 found it to be very effective (14 States) or somewhat effective (12 States); one did not know its effectiveness. One State that ranked this strategy as very effective explained that within the past year it provided all supervisory and administrative staff with access to criminal background checks on their computers. Often child welfare agencies' direct access to criminal databases was facilitated by a relationship with State and/or local law enforcement. One State explained that several databases were available to them to help them conduct a more thorough search:

Our foster care licensing unit has access to the [State] Crime Information Center as well as other checks including DMV, Office of Child Support, and the Child Abuse and Neglect Registry. Most State checks can be completed within 1 week from the receipt of the foster care application.

Another State also has access to a database that provides information on criminal charges and motor vehicle data. However, the database can be difficult to understand and does

not always contain the disposition of charges, so follow-up is often necessary for clarification.

Of the 19 States that **conduct a prescreening name check**, 15 reported that it was an effective method to reduce delays. A prescreening process is used prior to a full criminal records check as a preliminary measure for investigating an individual's criminal record status and as a way to speed up the home study process. Prompt decisions can be made based on the results of a prescreen name check that provides information used to determine whether to complete a full criminal records check on the prospective foster care or adoptive parent or if they should be eliminated from the pool, thus reducing the amount of time that would have been needed to conduct a full check (Dunhem and Oppenheim, 2002).

Electronic fingerprinting, another method for retrieving criminal records, involves entering an individual's fingerprints electronically into a database. Fingerprint checks are used in FBI checks and are commonly required for at least some foster care and adoptive parent applicants in State-level checks (Dunhem and Oppenheim, 2002). Although not used by many States, this method is ranked effective by 12 of the 13 States that are using it; one State reported not knowing the effectiveness. Comments supporting this strategy are particularly compelling:

Although we have had our ups and downs with changes in the contract for Federal and State fingerprint background checks, we feel that our current electronic system is far superior to the card system. Turnaround time can be as quick as 4 days. Turnaround averages 4 weeks but can be expedited through use of support staff. Appointments to have this done have also improved as this too was a barrier. If a read is not accurate, this presents a repeat need and a time lag, if the print can even be read.

Clearly cooperation with other agencies is a big key to streamlining the process. One State noted that:

Dramatic improvements were made [with the introduction of electronic fingerprinting and using a central office that has direct access to the criminal database]. This could not have been achieved without the support and cooperation of law enforcement.

Another State noted that rural areas may have less access to this technology—both electronic fingerprinting and criminal databases—than urban areas.

Criminal Background Check Requirements

Requirements for criminal background checks vary among States. Different requirements between a sending and receiving State can sometimes present a barrier to timely interjurisdictional placements. States use several strategies to address this concern. For example, 65 percent of sending States **accept the requirements of the receiving States** if they are less extensive than their own requirements (28 out of the 31 States that do so find this strategy effective).⁶ Of responding States, 44 percent **conduct the checks as a sending State if the receiving State’s requirements are less extensive**—16 out of 21 States reported this was effective, however two reported it was ineffective, and three did not know if it was effective.

Although slightly fewer States **conduct the checks of the sending State if they are more extensive** (42 percent), it is notable that all of the States that use this strategy and rated it reported that it was effective (14 out of 20 States). Also of interest is the distribution of States that use these three somewhat similar strategies—8 States use all three, 12 States use two, 24 States use one of the three, and 4 States do not use any of these three strategies. (Data not shown.)

Regardless of whether the sending State accepts the receiving State’s requirements or conducts background checks on their own, 28 States (58 percent) **routinely inform receiving States of their requirements** during the referral process. States accomplish this using a cover letter to the receiving State, through releases signed by families allowing information to be obtained when contracting with private agencies, on the forms sent to the receiving State, and in “interstate transmittals.” A total of 25 States (52 percent) have their **criminal background record checks available on the State’s Web site**. A total of 15 States (31 percent) use both strategies, and 23 States (48 percent) use one or the other. (Data not shown.)

⁶Several States referred to the ICPC regulations to support the practice of abiding by the receiving State’s policy governing placements.

Almost half of States (42 percent) **conduct the criminal background checks to the extent requested by the sending State** if they are more extensive than their own, even though it is not required. Most States that do not do this have no plans to do so in the future; only two are investigating the possibility.

Federal Background Checks

Although strategies listed on the survey focused on delays in State checks, several States commented on the wait associated with Federal criminal background checks. FBI checks have been reported to be much more time-consuming than State or local checks (APHSA, 2002b), although States that use electronic fingerprinting do not seem to have this complaint. One State reported that the turnaround time for State checks was 1 week compared to 6 weeks for Federal background checks.

In contrast to delays due to Federal checks, one State reported that they use LiveScan machines *“throughout the State to conduct timely FBI checks.”* LiveScan, an inkless fingerprinting process, makes electronic transmittal of fingerprints possible in a matter of seconds, which significantly reduces the time required to send hard copy fingerprint cards via postal mail. As previously noted in States’ comments in the section on electronic fingerprinting, using this technology can shorten turnaround to *“as quick as 4 days.”*

Additional Strategies

States had the opportunity to add other strategies not included in the survey. One State reported that they have been very successful at simplifying their method for conducting criminal background checks. They have *“reduced payment for record checks conducted for child placing agencies, which is low enough to be absorbed by agency operational costs without assigning costs to the family.”*

3.5.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Reduce Background Check Delays

The previous section discussed the strategies used and their overall effectiveness. Another way to examine these data is to focus on the number of States that rated a strategy as “very effective” out of those States that actually used and rated that strategy, regardless of how commonly used the strategy is. This approach will highlight those strategies that have been

successfully implemented by only a few States, as well as the more common strategies. Table 3-5 shows the strategies that at least 50 percent of the States used and rated as “very effective.” (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness.)

Table 3-5. Very Effective Strategies to Reduce Criminal Background Check Delays

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated “Very Effective”	Percent Rated “Very Effective”
Streamline criminal background check process to limit the number of individuals and agencies involved in the process	33	17	51.5
Accept the criminal background requirements of the receiving State if they are less extensive than our requirements	29	16	55.2
Provide access to a name-based criminal database and conduct name checks directly	26	14	53.8
Routinely inform receiving States of our criminal record check requirements during the referral process	25	15	60.0
Make criminal background record requirements available on State’s Web site	22	13	59.1
Conduct a prescreening name check early in the home study process to determine if a full State criminal background check is needed	17	9	52.9
Conduct the criminal background requirements of the sending State if they are more extensive than our requirements	14	9	64.3
Use electronic fingerprinting for background checks to expedite the process	12	8	66.7

Strategies that are rated as “very effective” by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness).

Although only 12 States use electronic fingerprinting, 8 of these States found it highly effective in reducing background check delays.⁷ Three other highly effective strategies designed to streamline the process would facilitate not only interjurisdictional cases but all cases requiring background checks (the percentage of States that used and rated the strategy as very effective are noted in parentheses):

- Conduct name checks directly (54 percent).
- Prescreen name checks early in the home study process to determine if a full background check is needed (53 percent).

⁷One additional State that used this strategy and did not know the effectiveness was excluded from this analysis.

- Streamline the process to limit the number of individuals and agencies involved in the process (52 percent).

The remaining four highly effective strategies pertain to the communication of State requirements for background checks and acceptance of another State's requirements:

- Conduct criminal background check requirements of the sending State if they are more extensive than our own State (64 percent).
- Accept criminal background check requirements of the receiving State if they are less extensive than our own State (55 percent).
- Routinely inform receiving States of criminal background check requirements during the referral process (60 percent).
- Make criminal background record requirements available on a State's Web site (59 percent).

3.5.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Reduce Background Check Delays

Electronic fingerprinting was rated as highly effective by 8 of the 12 States that used and rated this strategy; half of the reporting States expressed interest or need assistance to implement.

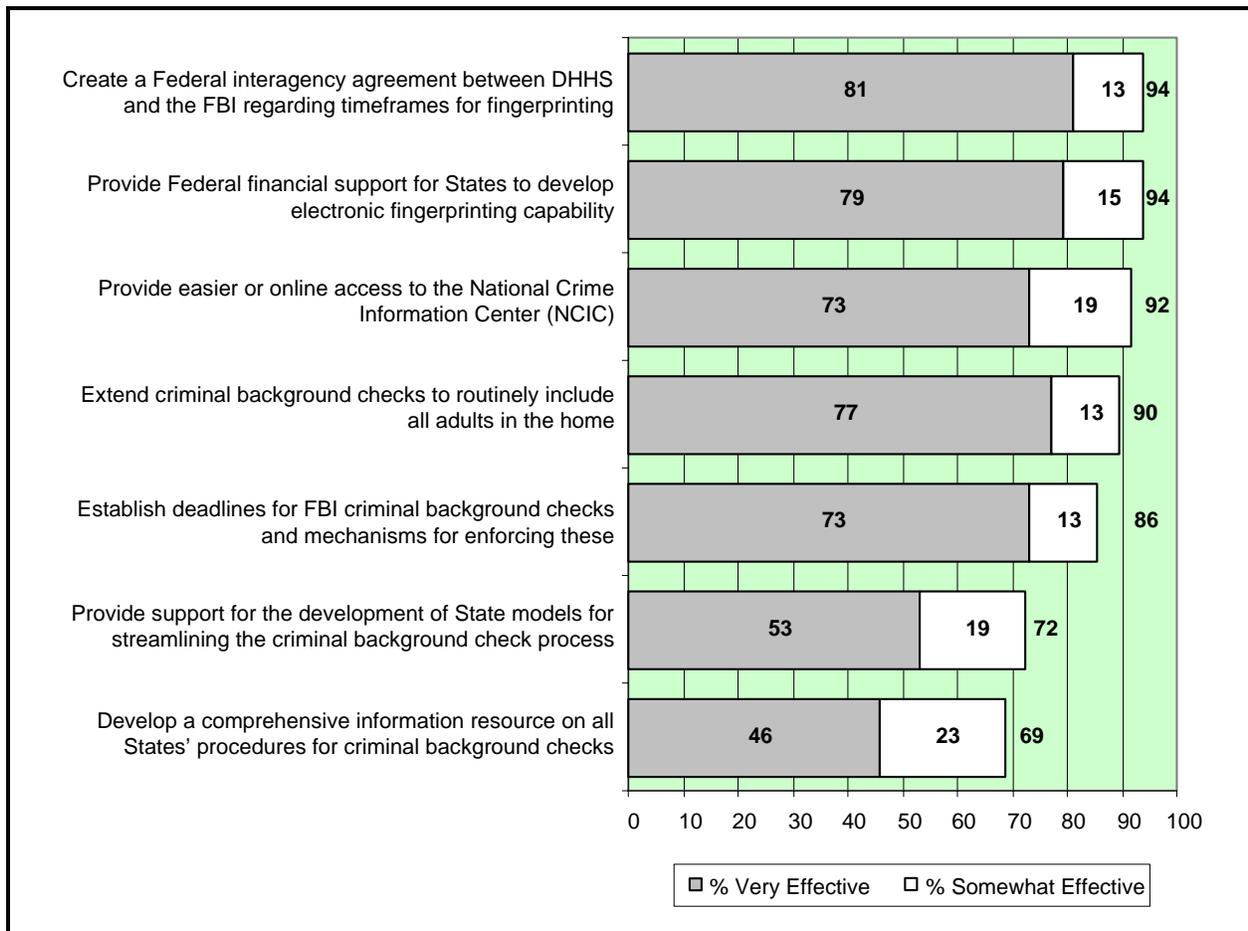
For strategies not currently used, each State was asked to indicate whether they needed assistance to implement the strategy, they were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or they had no plans to use the strategy. As shown by the right box on Figure 3-9, the only strategy for which at least one-third of States indicated that they needed assistance (or were investigating) was use of electronic fingerprinting. Thirteen States reported that they are interested and need assistance, and another 11 reported that they are currently investigating the strategy. As described in the previous section, few States use electronic fingerprinting but most rate it as highly effective in reducing criminal background check delays.

3.5.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Reduce Background Check Delays

Figure 3-10 shows the percent of States that rated each support as a four or five on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. The three supports judged to be most effective were designed to directly streamline the process:

- Create a Federal agreement between DHHS and the FBI around time frames for fingerprinting (94 percent).
- Provide Federal financial support for States to develop electronic fingerprint capability (94 percent).
- Provide easier access to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) (92 percent).

Figure 3-10. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Reduce Criminal Background Check Delays



The last two supports are consistent with the strategies that were regarded by many States as effective or ones that States were interested in trying.

Although most States already require criminal background checks on all adults in the home, more than three-quarters of States indicated that it would be “very effective” to extend criminal background checks to routinely include all adults in the home. One State went a step further and recommended that a “*national standard of what should be included in a criminal check*” should be developed. At a minimum, most States require Federal and State checks as well as child abuse and neglect registry checks. Developing a national standard may avoid some of the problems that can arise when a sending State requests more extensive checks than a receiving State usually provides.

States were asked to identify the single support that would create the most positive change to address criminal background check delays. Interestingly, States were somewhat divided among the top three mentioned previously—perhaps depending on the strategies they use. Almost one-third (14) of States rated financial support for electronic fingerprinting capability as the top support. Twenty-six percent of States thought the agreement between DHHS and the FBI would have the highest impact and another 19 percent selected easier access to the NCIC. (See Appendix E.)

Two States offered additional supports that they thought would be very effective in reducing criminal background check delays:

- Provide easy access to all States’ criminal records.
- Require States to report details of positive criminal record matches.

Although States did not provide further clarification in their comments, we could infer that the first support could be addressed by providing on-line access to these records by authorized individuals. This support may not be feasible due to State privacy laws and policy. The second support may be a request for the receiving State to provide the sending State with a report of the details of a criminal record for a pre-adoptive family or relative when a positive criminal record is found, to support the receiving State’s decision regarding the placement.

3.5.5 Summary

Most States use a wide variety of strategies to reduce criminal background check delays. The most commonly used strategy—entering into an agreement with law enforcement agencies to conduct timely criminal background checks—was also referred to frequently when States described their success in using other strategies. Also common is for States to streamline the criminal background check process, using a variety of methods including dedicating specific staff and developing a protocol. A majority of States accept the requirements of receiving States if they are less extensive than the sending State's requirements.

Although not used by many States, electronic fingerprinting was the strategy reported to be most effective by the States that use it. It was also the strategy of greatest interest among States that do not currently use it. States found many of the strategies effective; the next most effective strategies are (1) conducting the criminal background requirements of the sending State if they are more extensive and (2) two strategies related to the communication of States' requirements—routinely informing receiving States of the criminal background check requirements during the referral process and making the State's requirements available on their Web site.

Three supports were considered to be highly effective: create a Federal agreement between DHHS and the FBI around time frames for fingerprinting, provide Federal financial support for States to develop electronic fingerprint capability, and provide easier access to NCIC. Providing Federal financial support for States to develop electronic fingerprint capability was identified as the most potentially effective support.

3.6 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

This section describes

- strategies States use to improve communication, identifying the strategies that are most effective and those States would like to use if given assistance;
- insights into how States were able to successfully implement the effective strategies to facilitate improvement in their communications; and

- the most effective supports to facilitate communication that could be provided to States at the national or Federal level.

A summary is provided to highlight strategies or supports that States could use to improve communication across State lines.

3.6.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Improve Communication

The survey listed eight communication-related strategies that States could use to facilitate interjurisdictional placements. Most States (29) use three or four of the listed strategies to improve communication; 11 States use at least five. Although eight States use only one or two of the strategies, they may focus on the one or two that provide the most positive outcomes to improve communication. Alternatively, they may need help to address delays that occur during specific steps of the interjurisdictional placement process.

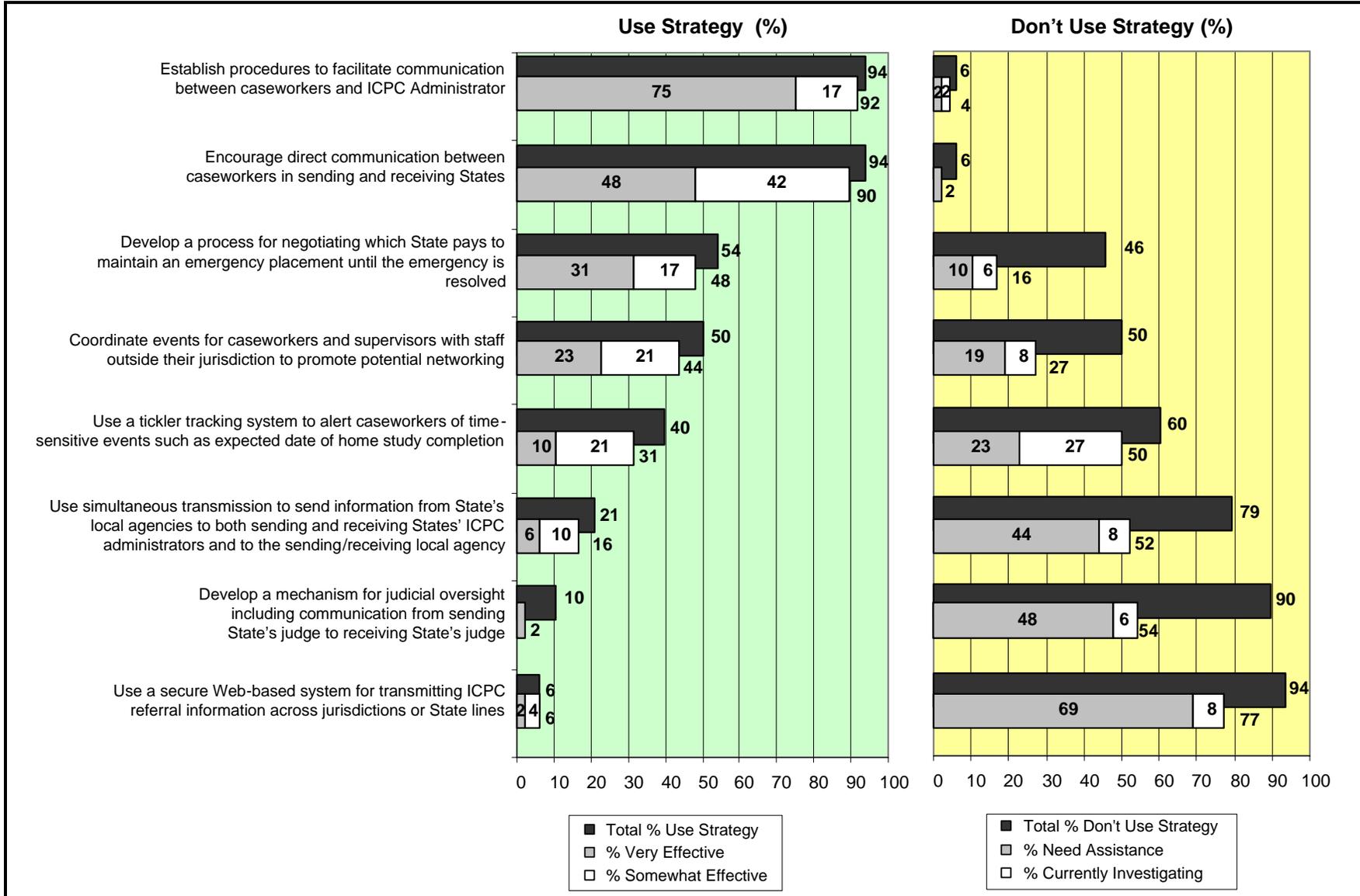
The left box on Figure 3-11 shows that nearly all the States

- Establish procedures to facilitate communication between caseworkers and the ICPC administrator (94 percent).
- Encourage direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving States (94 percent).

Of the 45 States that have established **procedures to facilitate communication** between caseworkers and the ICPC administrator, 36 found this strategy to be very effective and 8 rated it as somewhat effective; 1 State reported that they didn't know the effectiveness. Some States use local ICPC specialist to facilitate communication "*to facilitate understanding on the local level.*" Another State described how they use these local ICPC specialists:

There are specific routing processes and communication processes. We have a district or zone ICPC specialist in each area. We find they are more readily able to provide technical assistance and train case workers. They also review packets to ensure that they are complete before they are sent to the central office.

Figure 3-11. Assessment of Strategies to Address Communication Delays and Difficulties



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of "ineffective" or "don't know." For Don't Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see "Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies" on page 3-3.

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

“Direct communication is always preferred, with the proper copying of the various chains of command and ICPC offices.”

Of reporting States, 90 percent reported that their encouragement of **direct communication** between caseworkers in sending and receiving States was either very effective (23 States) or somewhat effective (20 States). One State explained its policy as follows: *“We recently amended our policy to allow direct communication between local staff except in matters concerning approval of placement, placement, sending of progress reports, disruption, and case closure.”*

In order of frequency, the methods of communication used are telephone, e-mail, fax, regular mail, face-to-face meetings, and postal courier. The following quote from a State illustrates how several States explained the function and importance of good direct communication:

Once placement is approved or made, we encourage direct contact in order to speed up communication and to allow those directly responsible for the day-to-day needs of the youngster to have access to each other. A request is made that issues centering around financial or medical plans, transfer of jurisdiction, change of placement, etc. are to be copied and communicated to [the] Interstate Unit. Communication should also be documented and shared so that there is no gap.

A number of States cautioned that although direct communication is encouraged, it is imperative to keep the State ICPC offices informed and to ensure that formal decisions reside with the State office. One State expressed it this way:

We do encourage direct communication between our workers and the workers in other States to the extent that it facilitates better overall case planning and access to resources, but we also strongly emphasize the need for certain information to flow through the centralized Interstate Compact Office as required by ICPC.

Another State noted that sometimes appropriate procedures are not followed: *“We do inform them [caseworkers] that they cannot use approved home studies or close cases based on local communications because this needs ICPC approval, but it still happens sometimes.”*

Of the reporting States, 54 percent developed a **process for negotiating which State pays to maintain an emergency placement**, and most of these found the process to be effective. Four States indicated that their policy was for the

sending State to pay, and three noted that responsibility for payment was negotiable. One State reported that although they do not request payment from other States for emergency placements, they will pay for such services provided in another State.

Half of the reporting States **coordinate events for caseworkers and supervisors** that promote networking with staff from outside their jurisdiction. Of these 24 States, 21 reported that this strategy was effective. Examples of events included annual statewide conferences and manager meetings as well as trainings and workshops of various kinds. Specific activities include adoption parties and activities designed for children that bring the caseworkers and supervisors from both the private and public sectors together. Monthly meetings with staff from private adoption agencies were also identified as opportunities for networking. These activities are for the benefit of networking within a State; no State reported coordinating events to promote networking across State lines.

States had the opportunity to add other strategies not included on the survey. One State reported that they stress regular communication, and another State noted that technology such as e-mail, faxes, cell phones, and voice mail systems have all *“dramatically aided ... improved communication.”*

3.6.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Improve Communication

The previous section discussed the most widely used strategies and their overall effectiveness. Another way to examine these data is to focus on the strategies that were rated as “very effective” by at least half of the States that actually used and rated the strategy. (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness.)

Communication between caseworkers and ICPC administrators *and* between caseworkers in sending and receiving States are encouraged and highly effective.

The two most widely used strategies discussed in the previous section are also included in Table 3-6 as highly effective strategies: facilitate communication (1) between caseworkers and ICPC administrators and (2) between caseworkers in sending and receiving States.

Table 3-6. Very Effective Strategies to Address Communication Delays and Difficulties

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated "Very Effective"	Percent Rated "Very Effective"
Establish procedures to facilitate communication between caseworkers and ICPC Administrator	44	36	81.8
Encourage direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving States	43	23	53.5
Develop a process for negotiating which State pays to maintain an emergency placement until the emergency is resolved when a placement disrupts and an emergency placement is needed	24	15	62.5
Coordinate events for caseworkers and supervisors to interact with staff from outside their jurisdiction to promote potential networking	21	11	52.4

Strategies that are rated as "very effective" by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated "Don't know" with regard to effectiveness).

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

Although not as commonly used, two additional strategies were reported to be very effective by the majority of States that used and rated them:

- Develop a process for negotiating payment for emergency placements.
- Coordinate events for caseworkers and supervisors to promote networking outside their jurisdictions.

3.6.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Improve Communication

For strategies not currently used, each State was asked to indicate whether they needed assistance to implement the strategy, they were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or they had no plans to use the strategy. The right box in Figure 3-11 shows four strategies that were identified by at least half of reporting States as ones they wanted to use.

Only three States reported that they use a secure **Web-based system for transmitting** ICPC referral information across jurisdictions or State lines. However, 37 States would like assistance or are investigating the feasibility of implementing this strategy.

More than half of States (54 percent) reported that they are investigating or need assistance to develop a mechanism for **judicial oversight**, including communication from the sending State's judge to the receiving State's judge to ensure timely

placement decisions. Five States currently have a mechanism in place, but only one reported that the mechanism was effective. Although this survey item specified “judicial oversight,” it should be noted that judges in the receiving State do not have jurisdiction over a child placed in their State from another State. A more appropriate wording would be “judicial communication”—some States may have interpreted it as communication in their response.

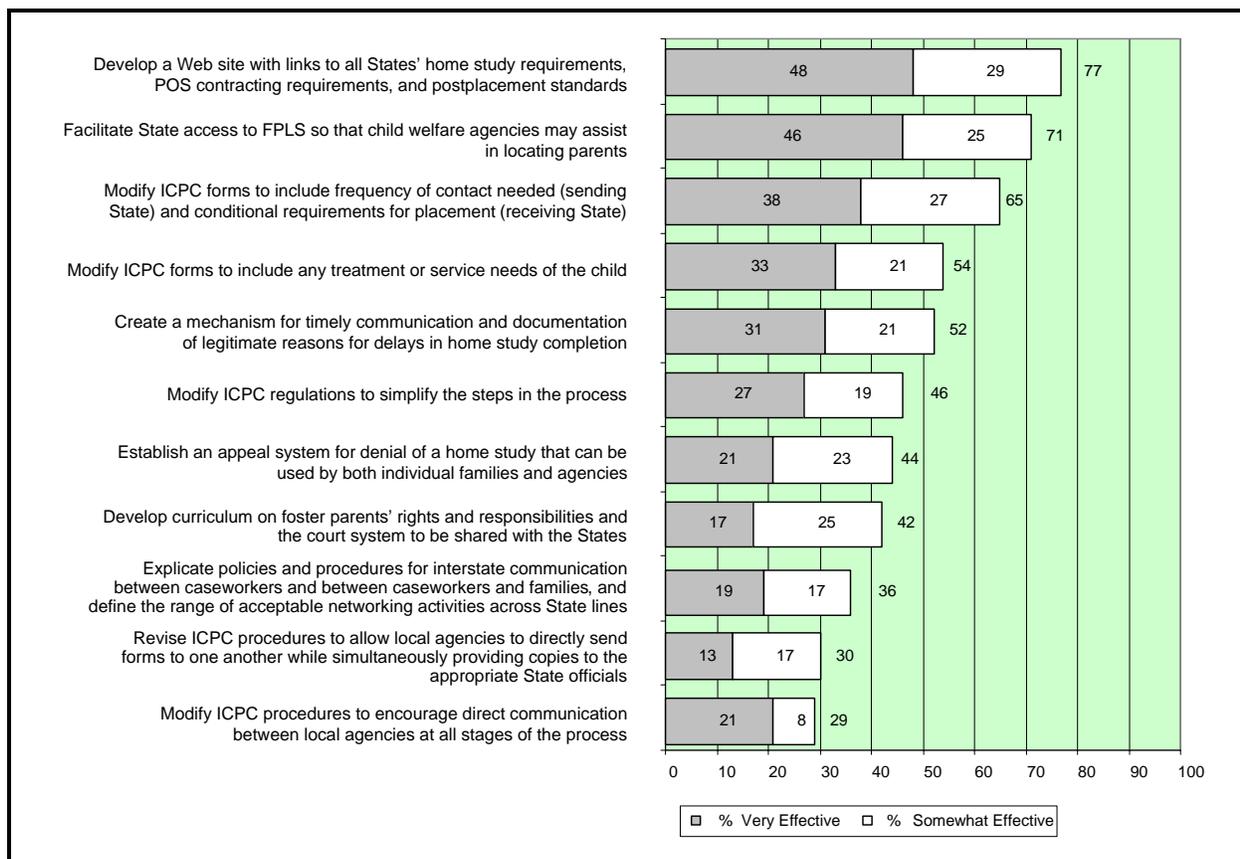
Only 10 States use **simultaneous transmission** to send information from a State’s local agency to both sending and receiving States’ ICPC Administrators and to the sending and receiving local agency; however, over half of the States (52 percent) would like to. It should be noted that a similar strategy is discussed in Section 3.8.2; however that strategy specifies “electronic” transmission of data, whereas this strategy may include other modes of transmission, including e-mail, fax, regular mail, or postal courier.

Fewer than half of the States (19 States) reported that they use a **tickler tracking system** to alert caseworkers of time-sensitive events such as expected date of home study completion, although 50 percent would like assistance or are investigating this strategy. One State noted that they integrated their ICPC data into the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), which includes *“a series of alerts for caseworkers.”*

3.6.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Facilitate Communication

States were provided with a list of potential actions that could be implemented at the national or Federal level to support State efforts. These actions are designed to facilitate the timely placement of children through improved communication at the local and State level. States were asked to rate these supports on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. To illustrate the supports for which States have the most enthusiasm, Figure 3-12 shows the percentage of States that rated each support as a four (somewhat effective) or five (very effective).

Figure 3-12. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Improve Communications



About two-thirds to three-fourths of States assigned the highest ratings of effectiveness (four or five) to three strategies:

- Develop a Web site with links to all States' home study requirements, POS contracting requirements, and post-placement standards (77 percent).
- Facilitate State access to the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) so that child welfare agencies may assist in locating parents (71 percent).
- Modify ICPC forms to include frequency of contact needed (sending State) and conditional requirements for placement (receiving State) (65 percent).

Access to the FPLS could be used to locate a non-custodial parent in another State, and through that parent, identify other relatives for possible placement resources.

States were invited to add supports in addition to the ones listed on the survey. Two supports were added:

- Develop an online checklist.
- Encourage and support consistent liaison between the State ICPC administrator and their own staff and providers within their jurisdiction.

However, the second support listed above could be accomplished at the State level more realistically than at the national or Federal level. When asked to identify the single support out of 11 that would facilitate the most positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children, the top 3 rated supports were:

- Develop a Web site with links to all States' home study requirements, POS contracting requirements, and post-placement standards (11 States).
- Facilitate State access to the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) so that child welfare agencies may assist in locating parents (8 States).
- Modify ICPC regulations to simplify the steps in the process (8 States).

(See Appendix E.)

3.6.5 Summary

Clearly, States place great importance on facilitating communications between caseworkers and the ICPC administrator and between caseworkers in sending and receiving States. Most of these States find their procedures highly effective. Interestingly, only 29 percent of States rated the support for modifying ICPC procedures to encourage these direct communications as effective. One explanation may be that States are already encouraging direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving States and do not require a change in procedures to do so.

At least half of reporting States are interested in implementing a system to transmit ICPC information across State lines simultaneously from and to local agencies and ICPC administrators. More than three-quarters of States would like to use a Web-based system for data transmission. However, only 31 percent of States gave an effective rating to the support to

modify ICPC procedures to allow local agencies to directly send forms to one another while providing copies to the State offices.

The majority of States thought an effective national or Federal support to facilitate communication would be to develop a Web site with links to all States' home study requirements, POS contracting requirements, and post-placement standards. As with the support suggesting a national level Web site linking to State requirements for coverage of medical and education expenses (Section 3.4.4), more States would need to put their home study requirements, POS requirements and post placement standards online for a national Web site with links to be effective. The second most popular support was to facilitate access to the FPLS to allow child welfare agencies to search for parents.

3.7 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO FACILITATE PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE WAITING FOR A PLACEMENT

This section describes the following:

- Strategies that States use to facilitate permanency. Most of these strategies are widely used and generally rated as effective.
- Details about concurrent planning, locating relatives, home studies, adoption assistance and follow-up, and monitoring and tracking placements. States' responses also illustrate court and judiciary strategies and explain the ways that some States ensure sharing of medical and education information about children they are placing.
- The most effective supports to improve the timeliness of permanency that could be provided to States at the national or Federal level.

Finally, a summary is provided to highlight widely used and effective strategies States use to reduce delays in permanency for children in foster care.

3.7.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Facilitate Permanency

States are using a wide variety of strategies to facilitate permanency for children.

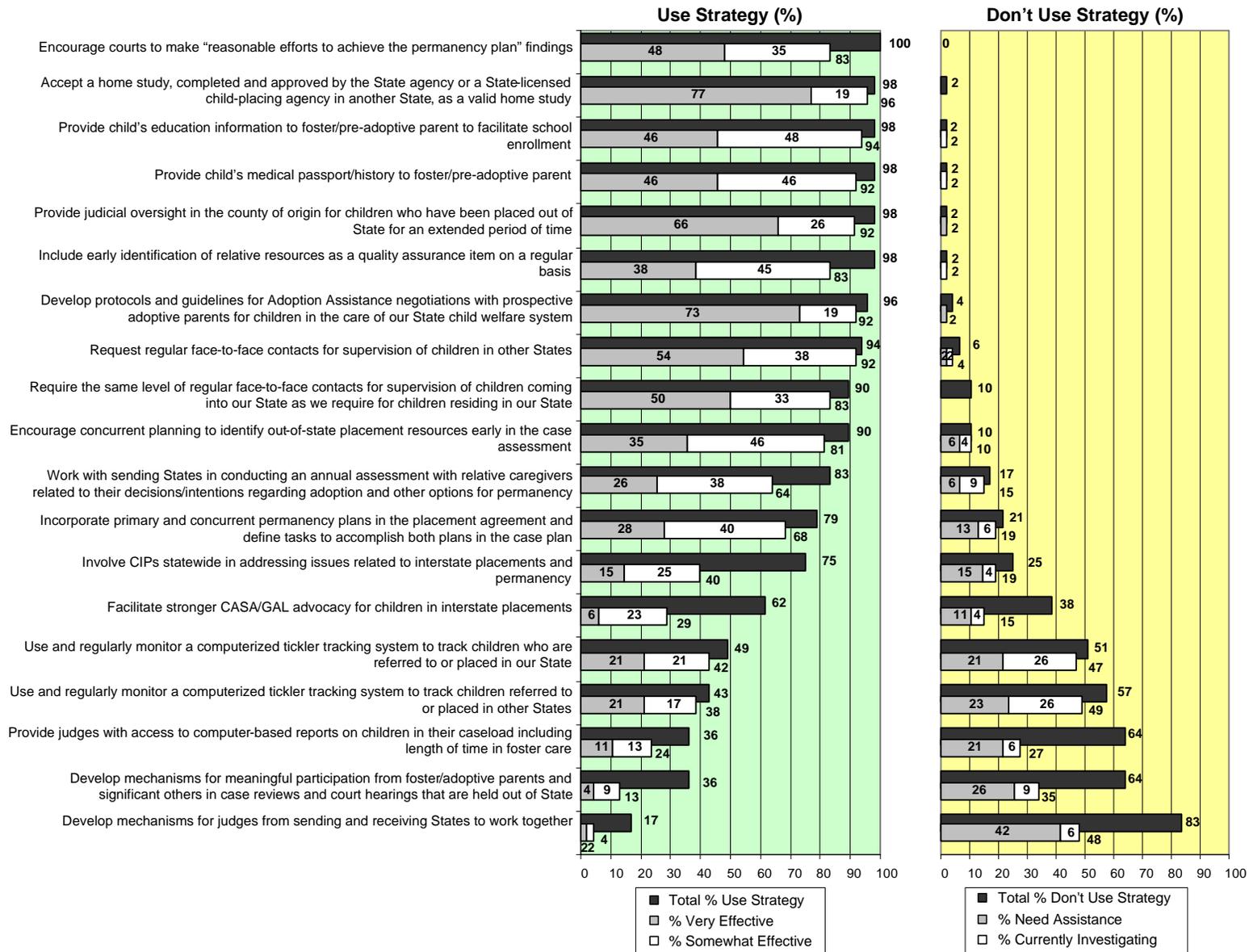
Among the 48 responding States, all use at least 6 of the 19 strategies listed on the survey; 45 States reported using at least 11. (Data not shown.) These findings illustrate that States are using many strategies in their efforts to decrease the delays often experienced in moving children to permanent homes.

The left box on Figure 3-13 shows several strategies used by all or nearly all responding States to decrease the wait to permanency:

- Encourage courts to make “reasonable efforts” findings when appropriate (100 percent).
- Accept home studies from other States (98 percent).
- Provide a child’s educational information to foster or pre-adoptive parents (98 percent).
- Provide a child’s medical information to foster or pre-adoptive parents (98 percent).
- Provide judicial oversight in the county of origin for children placed out of State (98 percent).
- Include “early identification of relative resources” as a quality assurance item (98 percent).
- Develop protocols and guidelines for negotiating Adoption Assistance agreements (96 percent).

These strategies (and other common strategies) are discussed under the following categories: home studies, negotiating adoption assistance, judicial strategies, communication with foster and pre-adoptive parents, face-to-face contacts, and concurrent planning.

Figure 3-13. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Permanency Delays



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of "ineffective" or "don't know." For Don't Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see "Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies" on page 3-3.

CIP = Court Improvement Program; CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocate; GAL = Guardian ad Litem.

“It’s a basic provision of the Compact to accept a home study provided by a private or public agency in another State.”

Home Studies

For the most part, States reported finding these strategies effective. Among these seven nearly universal strategies, five were favorably rated by more than 90 percent of responding States. Most favorably rated was **accepting home studies from other States**, the standard under the ICPC. Of States using this approach, 77 percent (37 States) described it as very effective and 19 percent (9 States) as somewhat effective. One State described this as standard practice:

It’s a basic provision of the Compact to accept a home study provided by a private or public agency in another State. There are occasions when we ask an agency to revise a study in order to more fully address a particular topic or concern, but this isn’t typical.

A few exceptions to this practice were noted. States reported that they request additional information if needed to address a particular concern or if the study was not clearly written or did not meet the standards of the State requesting the home study. A number of States mentioned that home studies or adoption studies lay the groundwork for the placements in a manner designed to avoid issues that might impact placement permanency.

Negotiating Adoption Assistance

Developing protocols and guidelines for negotiating Adoption Assistance agreements to facilitate the path to permanency were rated nearly as favorably, with positive ratings by 92 percent of States. Among the 46 States using this strategy, 35 rated it “very effective” and 9 as “somewhat effective.” This strategy would help address delays in placements caused by efforts to negotiate the financial issues identified in the previous section. Communications related to adoption assistance were described as being handled by the child’s adoption worker or by a fiscal specialist assigned to the child, following defined procedures. One State noted that such protocols were used for all adoptions: *“We do have protocols and identified personnel to facilitate the negotiation of adoption assistance, and these are applied equally to intrastate and interstate cases when adoption assistance is a factor.”*

Judicial Strategies

Another widely used and effective strategy was **providing judicial oversight in the county of origin for lengthy out-of-state placements**. Of 46 States using this strategy, 31 described it as “very effective” and 12 as “somewhat effective.” Two States described how they address communication across legal jurisdictions. The first reported:

Well-written and timely reports help to resolve barriers in this area. Problems can occur in extended cases because of limited access that the court has to the child's placement. Distance and the timeliness and clarity of reports affects the court's capacity to make key decisions.

As another State explained:

The courts receive a list of children in foster care that pertains to the respective jurisdiction semi-annually. Additionally, we have in place a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate a stronger working relationship between sending and receiving judges.

The strategy reported as used by all responding States, **encouraging courts to make “reasonable efforts” findings** to achieve the permanency plan, was rated positively by 83 percent of States. Among States using this strategy but not rating it favorably, nearly all responses were “Don’t know” rather than “ineffective,” suggesting a lack of experience with or attention to its effectiveness, rather than a negative experience.

Among the strategies used by at least 75 percent of States, **involving Court Improvement Programs in addressing issues related to interstate placement and permanency** appeared to generate far less enthusiasm than others. Of 36 States using this strategy, only 7 described it as very effective, and 12 rated it as somewhat effective. This strategy also garnered the highest number of ineffective ratings of all (4 States) as well as 13 States for whom its effectiveness was unknown. However, no specific problems were noted by any States.

Communication with Foster and Pre-Adoptive Parents

Two related strategies, **providing medical and educational information to foster and pre-adoptive parents**, were also described as effective by most States. Of responding States, 92 percent rated these communications favorably, with reports evenly divided between very effective and somewhat effective. Among States describing how they managed communications around medical history, one State noted that medical passports have always been provided to prospective caretakers. Another reported that medical information was sent as part of the interstate placement request packet. States described educational information as “a means of ensuring child wellness,” and required workers to obtain this information from schools.

Face-to-Face Contacts

Ideally, receiving States should provide the same level of contact for supervision for children sent from other States as they do for children who are in their custody and reside in their State. Most sending States (45) **request face-to-face contacts for supervision** and this strategy is generally considered effective. Although nearly all States using these strategies rated them “very effective” or “somewhat effective,” States rated this strategy somewhat more positively when they were the sending State than when they were the receiving State. Comments in this area noted the difficulty of requiring face-to-face contact for children placed outside the State. As one said:

While we had not been asking for this regularly, we have begun including the out-of-state children [on] a “Children Not Seen” report and due to the high number of out-of-state children on the list, [we] have instructed staff to request monthly supervision both in the original requests and when placement notification is made.

“We require monthly contact for our children in placement, and that is what we provide for children from other States even if the other State has not required this.”

Standards for face-to-face contact applied for some States, regardless of where the child was placed, as illustrated by this remark: *“We require monthly contact for our children in placement, and that is what we provide for children from other States even if the other State has not required this.”*

However, States varied as to whether they reported “requiring” or “requesting” face-to-face visits. Among States commenting on this issue, some expressed concern about the lack of

practice standards for conducting and documenting face-to-face contacts as shown by this typical comment: *"... because there isn't a standard supervisory format, those reports may not clarify face-to-face contact even when this occurred."*

While the policy of an agency may be to apply the same supervision standards to children who reside in their State, regardless of custody, actual practice may vary. It is not clear whether State policy is even practiced consistently across in-state custody cases.

Concurrent Planning

As one State reported, *"Concurrent planning is a challenge since most States require starting a whole new process when it changes from a relative or foster care placement to an adoptive placement. We have experienced delays as long as a year in achieving permanency."*

Several strategies focus on developing adoptive home resources among out-of-state relatives. **Early concurrent planning to identify out-of-state placement resources** was used by 90 percent of States, with nearly all describing this strategy as either "very effective" (17 States) or somewhat effective (22 States). Most States (79 percent) reported **incorporating primary and concurrent planning in the placement agreement and defining tasks to accomplish both goals in the case plan**. One tool used for this purpose was a supervisory review checklist that emphasized concurrent planning. One State added that they use Permanency Team meetings to *"review all safe permanency options and placement resources including those out of State."*

Nearly all States reported **including early identification of relative resources as a quality assurance item**. Several States noted that this was required by agency policy or by their Court Improvement Protocol. Of responding States, 83 percent reported **conducting annual assessments with relative caregivers** of children placed from other States to assess their intentions regarding permanency. One State noted that these annual assessments *"should be considered concurrent planning"* and that, in addition, they provide quarterly reports to the sending State to keep them informed. While the latter two strategies were generally rated positively, six and eight

States using them, respectively, did not rate their effectiveness.

3.7.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Facilitate Permanency

Table 3-7 shows the seven strategies that were rated as “very effective” by at least half of the States that used and rated the strategies. (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness.) The first six strategies in this table are commonly used and are discussed in the previous section. The last strategy, **use and regularly monitor a computerized tickler tracking system to track children placed in other States**, is used and rated by only 19 States, 10 of which found it very effective. Comments related to this strategy were confined to confirmation of using the strategy and specific references to SACWIS and the ICPC database to track these cases.

Table 3-7. Very Effective Strategies to Reduce Permanency Delays

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated “Very Effective”	Percent Rated “Very Effective”
Accept a home study, completed and approved by the State agency or a State-licensed child-placing agency in another State, as a valid home study	46	37	80.4
Develop protocols and guidelines for Adoption Assistance negotiations with prospective adoptive parents for children in the care of our State child welfare system	45	35	77.8
Request regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children in other States	44	26	59.1
Provide judicial oversight in the county of origin for children who have been placed out of State for an extended period of time	43	31	72.1
Require the same level of regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children coming into our State as we require for children residing in our State	42	24	57.1
Encourage courts to make “reasonable efforts to achieve the permanency plan” findings when appropriate for interstate placement cases to move children toward permanency	40	23	57.5
Use and regularly monitor a computerized tickler tracking system to track children referred to or placed in other States	19	10	52.6

Strategies that are rated as “very effective” by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated “Don’t know” with regard to effectiveness).

3.7.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Facilitate Permanency

For strategies not currently used, each State was asked to indicate whether they needed assistance to implement the strategy, they were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or they had no plans to use the strategy. This section focuses on the strategies for which at least one-third of reporting States indicated they were interested in trying.

Although most of the strategies offered for this area were already in use by at least 75 percent of States, States reported interest in some not yet widely implemented. As shown by the right box in Figure 3-13, the following four strategies were of interest to the most States:

- Use computerized tickler tracking system to track children *placed in other States* (49 percent).
- Develop mechanisms for judges from sending and receiving States to work together (48 percent).
- Use computerized tickler tracking system to track children *placed in our State* (47 percent).
- Develop mechanisms for participation in out-of-state court hearings (35 percent).

Computerized **tickler tracking systems** to facilitate the monitoring of children placed across States, were used by fewer than half the responding States. Among those not currently implementing these systems, nearly all wanted to implement such a system.

Considerable interest was also expressed in two strategies to improve court processes. Although only 17 States reported having **mechanisms for judges from sending and receiving States to work together**, nearly half of the responding States expressed interest in this strategy. Similarly, although only 17 States reported having **mechanisms for meaningful participation from foster and adoptive parents and significant others in case reviews and court hearings**, more than a third of States report that they are investigating or would like assistance with this strategy. Most of the States that use these two strategies reported that they did not know their effectiveness. This finding suggests that the success of these strategies should be explored further with the States that have effectively implemented them.

3.7.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Facilitate Permanency

States were provided with a list of potential actions that could be implemented at the State, national, or Federal level to support their efforts. These actions are designed to improve the timeliness of finding permanent placements for children. States were asked to rate these supports on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. States had the opportunity to describe other supports that they thought would be effective.

To illustrate the supports for which States have the most enthusiasm, Figure 3-14 shows the percentage of States that rated each support as a four (somewhat effective) or five (very effective). Of the top five highly rated supports, three addressed home studies:

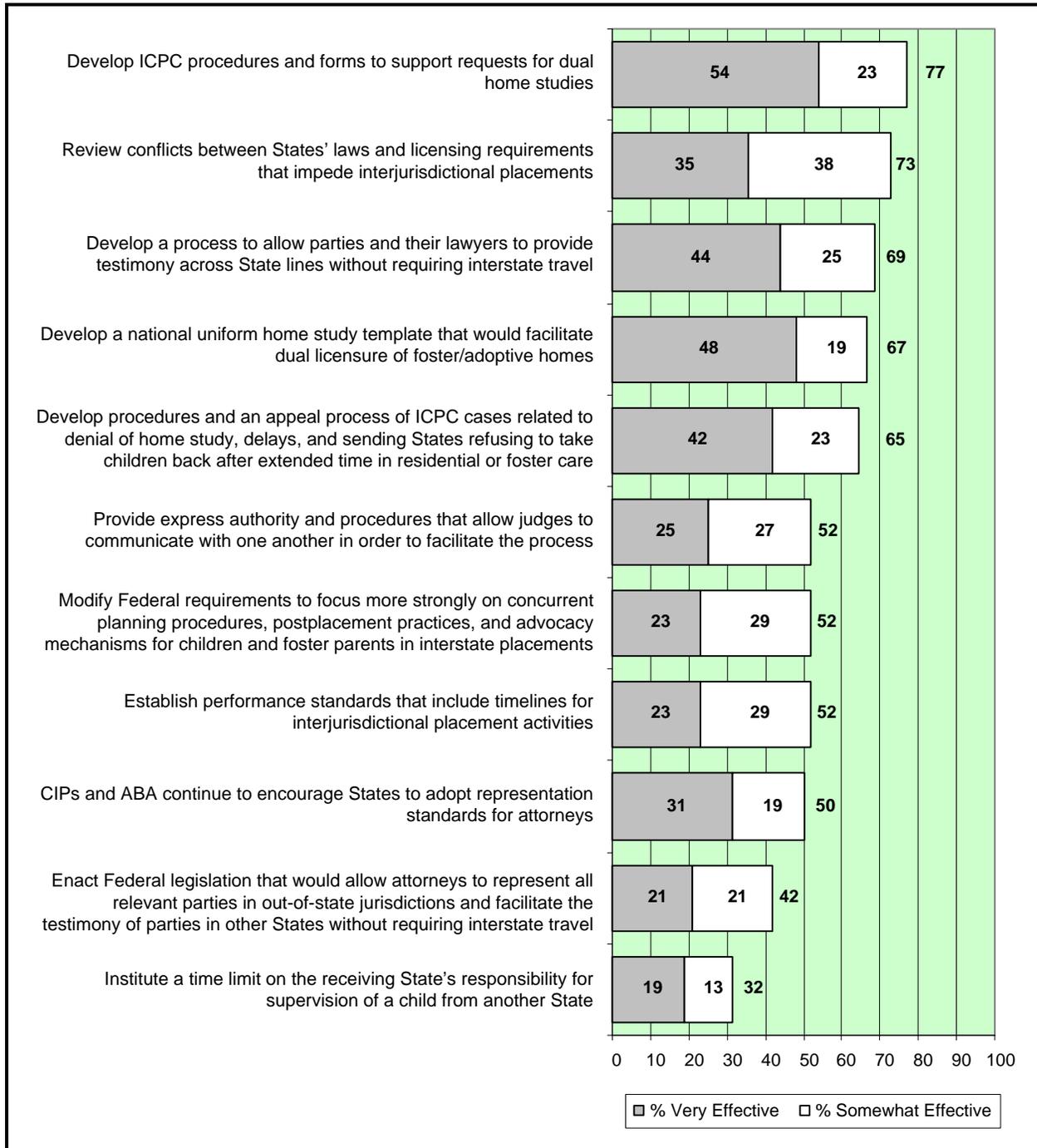
- Develop procedures and forms to support requests for dual home studies (77 percent).
- Develop a national uniform home study template to facilitate dual licensure (67 percent).
- Develop procedures and an appeals process for the denial of a home study, delays, and refusal to take children back after long placements (65 percent).

Two other highly rated supports relate to communication across court systems:

- Review conflicts between States' laws and licensing requirements that impede interjurisdictional placements (73 percent).
- Develop a process to allow testimony across State lines without requiring interstate travel (69 percent).

States were asked to identify a single strategy that would facilitate the most positive change in this area. The uniform home study template and development of procedures and appeals processes related to denial of home study, delay and other issues, noted above, were each selected by the same number of States (21 percent). (See Appendix E.)

Figure 3-14. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Reduce Permanency Delays



Two States added supports for consideration:

- Convene a national workgroup to examine universal subsidized guardianship standards.

- Provide incentives for timeliness without a financial penalty.

3.7.5 Summary

The most widely used strategies for promoting and supporting permanency for children who are waiting for a placement cover home studies, judicial action, communication with potential permanency resources, concurrent planning, and adoption assistance. Of the 12 strategies used by more than three-quarters of the States, 6 are reported to be very effective by at least half the States that used and rated them:

- Encourage courts to make “reasonable efforts to achieve the permanency plan” findings.
- Accept a home study, completed and approved by the State agency or a State-licensed child-placing agency in another State, as a valid home study.
- Provide judicial oversight in the county of origin for children who have been placed out of State for an extended period of time.
- Develop protocols and guidelines for Adoption Assistance negotiations with prospective adoptive parents for children in the care of our State child welfare system.
- Request regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children in other States.
- Require the same level of regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children coming into a State as is required for children residing in the State.

Developing a uniform home study template and developing procedures and appeals processes related to the denial of a home study, delays, and other issues were rated as top supports that could facilitate the most positive change in regards to permanency.

3.8 STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE TRACKING AND REPORTING

The ability to track and report on interjurisdictional placements is an important step in improving outcomes for children in the public child welfare system. This section describes

- strategies that States use to track and report on interjurisdictional cases and the steps involved in the interstate process,
- the most effective strategies used by States,

- the national or Federal supports that States would like to see implemented, and
- open-ended responses that provide additional information on the benefits and limitations of States' current data systems.

A summary section reviews the significant findings related to overcoming barriers to tracking and reporting interjurisdictional placement information.

3.8.1 Assessment of Strategies Used to Improve Tracking and Reporting

The survey listed seven strategies that States could use to improve tracking and reporting of interjurisdictional referrals and placements and tracking steps in the interstate placement process. Sixteen States use two or fewer strategies, just over half of the reporting States (25) use three or four strategies, and seven use five or six.⁸ (Data not shown.) States that use only a few strategies may be effective in tracking and reporting their cases in a SACWIS, whereas States that are using several strategies may not be compliant with SACWIS. Therefore, the number of strategies used does not reflect directly on the quality of a State's practice.

Seventy-one percent of reporting States can track steps in the placement process.

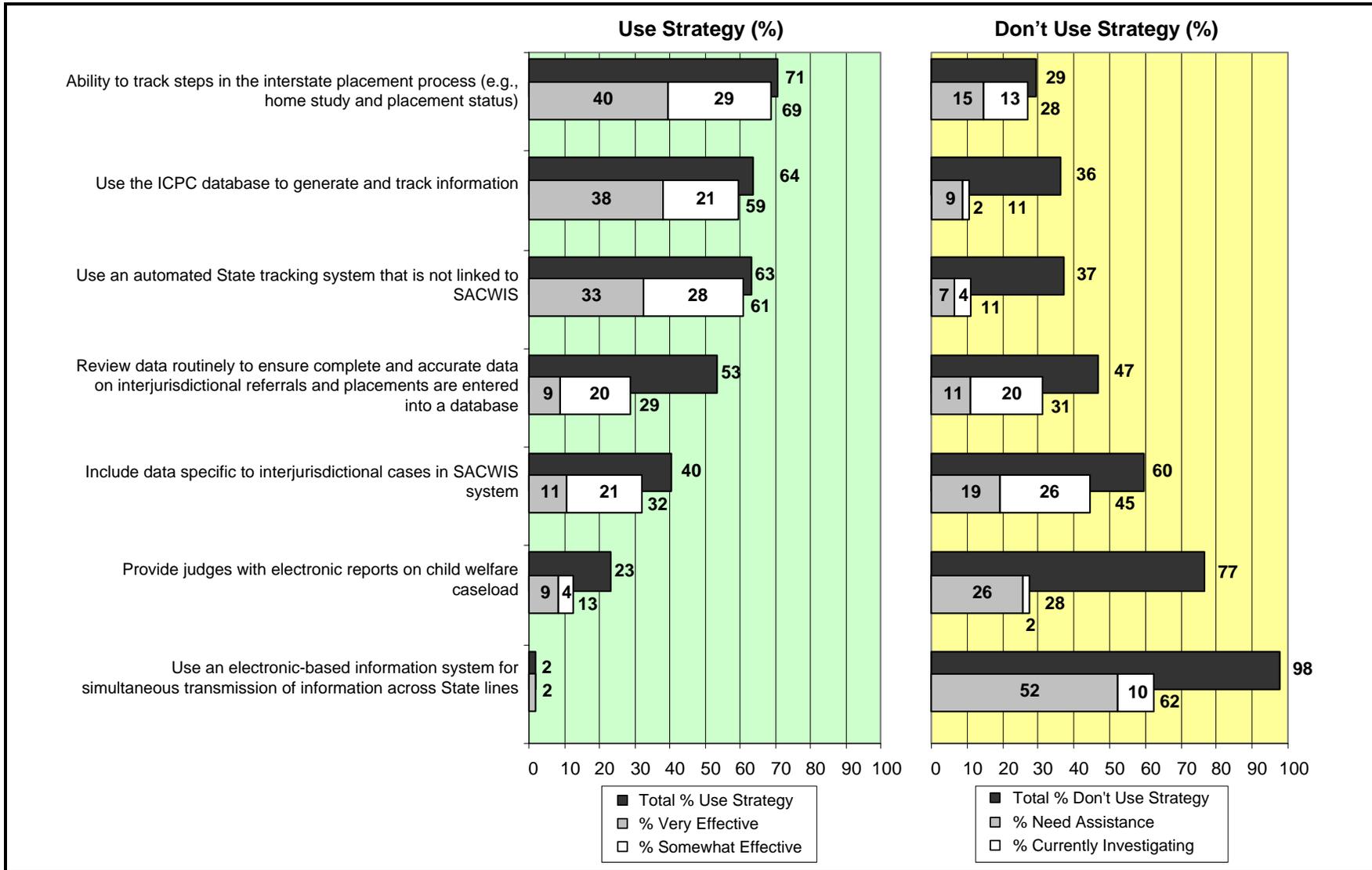
The three most widely used strategies were also rated the most effective overall, as shown in the left box in Figure 3-15.

- Track steps in the interstate placement process.
- Use the ICPC database to generate and track information.
- Use an automated State tracking system that is not linked to SACWIS. (It should be noted that this is a business process which should be included in SACWIS.)

Of the reporting States, 71 percent can **track steps**, such as the home study and placement status, in the placement process. Of these 34 States, 33 found tracking steps effective and 1 reported "Don't know." One State noted that this capability is "effective in maintaining awareness and accountability."

⁸One State reported not using any of these strategies.

Figure 3-15. Assessment of Strategies to Improve Tracking and Reporting



The denominator for each percentage shown is based on the total number of States reporting data for that strategy. For Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that reported strategy use with a rating of “ineffective” or “don’t know.” For Don’t Use Strategy, the gap between each pair of upper and lower bars represents the percentage of States that do not use the strategy and have no plans to implement. For further explanation, see “Guide to Figures for Assessment of Strategies” on page 3-3.

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; SACWIS = Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System.

Some States described different databases that they use for tracking the steps in the interstate process including Microsoft Access and FoxPro. One State described their system and its capability:

We have a FoxPro database that captures all information pertinent in out-of-state placements. We are able to answer all questions in the quarterly ICPC reports regarding how many study requests have come in or gone out, to and from which States, what types of placement requests, etc. We have reports to compile the information. Our district or zone ICPC specialists are able to track outstanding home studies, out-of-state children they are to be supervising, most common types of requests, etc.

Another State that rated this strategy as very effective said:

We use a stand-alone database created by our agency's programmers using Microsoft Access. It has fields for entering and saving all of the data [such as the status of home studies, placement approval, placement, etc.]. Our current database is able to generate the reports that, up until recently, were required by APHSA on a quarterly basis.

States were asked specifically about their use of the ICPC database and other databases not linked to SACWIS for tracking and reporting information. Sixty-four percent of reporting States (30 States) use the **ICPC database**. The ICPC database was developed in 2001 by APHSA through a contract with Caliber Associates. The database maintains a history of home study requests, the children served and their placements, and all transmittal letters sent and received for each child. It generates reports, alerts users if a particular case has overdue reports, and can assist in determining the location of delays within the ICPC system. However, it is not clear whether States use this specific database or a different database they refer to as their ICPC database.

Of reporting States, 63 percent (29 States) use an automated **tracking system that is not linked to a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)**. It is interesting to examine the overlap in systems used by States. A total of 35 States (74 percent) use the ICPC database and/or an automated tracking system that is not linked to a SACWIS. (Data not shown.) Twenty-four use both systems.

Five of these 24 States use a tracking system not linked to a SACWIS that is a system other than the ICPC database, but it is not clear whether the remaining 19 States that report the use of both are actually using separate systems or whether their ICPC database *is* their tracking system that is not linked to a SACWIS.

Although used by fewer States, it is relevant to note that 40 percent (19) of reporting States **include data specific to interjurisdictional cases in their SACWIS** (described in more detail in Section 3.8.3). A SACWIS is a comprehensive automated case management tool that supports child welfare case practice including foster care and adoption assistance case management practice. By law, a SACWIS is required to support the reporting of data to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

In dealing with the data needs and tracking services for interjurisdictional placement, six States reported using all three strategies, but it is not clear whether these six States are actually using separate systems.

“We have got all ICPC referrals on the ICPC database and all referrals except independent adoptions and residential referrals on our SACWIS.”

Two States described how they use two different systems to track different types of cases. The first one reported: *“Our [SACWIS] system tracks family approvals. Our ICPC database tracks other steps.”* The second State noted: *“We have got all ICPC referrals on the ICPC database and all referrals except independent adoptions and residential referrals on our SACWIS.”*

States discussed their experience with and the effectiveness of the ICPC database. One State noted:

We are using the ICPC database to generate and track information. It was very helpful when contracted assistance was available to use this tool effectively. We sent our workers to training to use the database, and it has been an effective tool.

A second State explained:

About 2 years ago, we implemented the national ICPC database, which has allowed for improved tracking of interstate placements. This database has been extremely helpful in improving timeliness of placements. We do not have a SACWIS system, and the ICPC

database is not linked to our statewide information management system.

A couple of States mentioned recent implementation of an ICPC database that is either not yet fully functional or too new to evaluate its effectiveness. One State that uses a SACWIS containing ICPC data and a separate automated State system voiced limitations in the utility of the two systems—they can enter and track data but cannot retrieve a report from their current statewide system. Other States pointed out that their SACWIS or other database, although functional and inclusive of interjurisdictional case data, is lacking in some ways and needs improvement. One State noted that their system was *“applicable for interjurisdictional foster care placements, however not for adoption.”*

Other States are still trying to bring their SACWIS in compliance with Federal requirements such as generating reminders for upcoming steps in the process or producing reports that show the schedule of child welfare activities. As one State noted, *“The system is not capable of generating reports that significantly aid in the management of cases, such as something that tells us when things are coming due or are overdue.”*

Although more than half of reporting States (53 percent) indicated that they **review data routinely** to ensure that complete and accurate data are entered in a database, only 13 of these 24 States found this practice effective. One State noted a limitation as a receiving State:

As a sending State, it is very effective. As a receiving State, the child’s record is opened on SACWIS, and status can be tracked by the supervisor. These cases, however, are not being specifically picked up in a regular automated supervisor reports.

Another State noted the reviews are very effective for adoption cases: *“Success is due to monthly leadership meetings, which make data readily available the Deputy Compact Administrator, [who] is available to deal with issues immediately with the supervisors.”*

One State that rated this strategy as somewhat effective noted that the *“volume of work sometimes makes monthly review difficult.”*

A common difficulty cited in efforts to develop or improve current systems is the lack of funding and/or staff to do so. Three States commented on this problem. One said,

We have the data systems. However, we do not have enough staff both in the Interstate Office and in the local offices to track the pending status of interjurisdictional referrals.

Another noted, "... we are unable to notify our local offices and the other States when cases are in an overdue status due to lack of staff."

A third State commented on cost as a barrier:

We are continuously improving our data systems but expense is a barrier. We have many systems that track data and are working toward one integrated system.

One State is seeking a grant to help develop a database. It currently tracks case events, and supervisors review these data but this is all done manually.

3.8.2 Highly Effective Strategies to Improve Tracking and Reporting

The previous section discussed the most widely used strategies and their overall effectiveness (based on the total number of reporting States). Another way to examine these data is to focus on the number of States that rated a strategy as "very effective" out of those States that actually used and rated that strategy, regardless of how commonly used the strategy is. This approach will highlight those strategies that have been successfully implemented by only a few States as well as the more common strategies. Table 3-8 shows the strategies for which at least 50 percent of the States that used and rated the strategy assigned it a "very effective" rating. (These analyses exclude States that used the strategy and indicated "Don't know" with regard to effectiveness.)

Table 3-8. Very Effective Strategies to Improve Tracking and Reporting

Strategy	States that Rated the Strategy	Number Rated "Very Effective"	Percent Rated "Very Effective"
Ability to track if a home study is pending, if placement approval is pending, if approval has been given but a child has not been placed, and other steps in the interstate placement process	33	19	57.6
Use the ICPC database to generate and track information	30	18	60.0
Use an automated State tracking system that is not linked to a SACWIS	28	15	53.6
Provide judges with electronic reports on child welfare caseload	6	4	66.7
Use an electronic-based information system for simultaneous transmission of information across State lines	1	1	100.0

Strategies that are rated as "very effective" by at least half of the States are presented. Percentages are based on the number of States that used and rated the strategy (excludes States that indicated "Don't know" with regard to effectiveness).

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; SACWIS = Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System.

Only one State reported an electronic-based information system for **simultaneous transmission of information** across State lines,⁹ and it rated the strategy "very effective."

Four of the six States that **provide judges with electronic reports** on child welfare caseload (and rated its effectiveness) rated it as very effective. One State sends a report each month *"to the presiding Circuit Court Judge or Tribal court of all children in care through their respective court."* Another State reported an innovative strategy—they provide *"each judge access to a computer-based report which represents their respective caseload. This report also shows the length of time the child is in foster care."*

More than half of the reporting States that can **track steps** in the interstate process find it a very effective strategy.

⁹Analysis of this survey item shows that only one State is using electronic simultaneous transmission as a strategy to facilitate the placement process. However Section 3.6.3 reports that 10 States use simultaneous transmission to send data to the local agency and the sending and receiving ICPC administrators. The apparent discrepancy may be due to the wording differences between these two items. The item in this section explicitly refers to *electronic* transmission of data; the item in Section 3.6.3 does not specify electronic transmission. The reader may infer that the States responding to the item in Section 3.6.3 are using methods other than electronic to send data.

3.8.3 Most Common Strategies States Want to Implement to Improve Tracking and Reporting

For strategies not currently used, each State was asked to indicate whether they needed assistance to implement the strategy, they were currently investigating the feasibility of the strategy, or they had no plans to use the strategy. This section focuses on the strategies where at least one-third of reporting States indicated they were interested in trying the strategy (currently investigating or need assistance). As shown by the right box in Figure 3-15, the following two strategies were of interest to the most States:

- Use an electronic-based information system for simultaneous transmission of information across State lines (62 percent).
- Include data specific to interjurisdictional cases in a SACWIS system (45 percent).

As noted in the previous section, only one State is using an electronic-based information system for **simultaneous transmission** of information across State lines. However, a significant number of States are interested in and need assistance to implement this strategy (25 States), and five are investigating it on their own.

Also mentioned previously, 19 States include **data specific to interjurisdictional cases in their SACWIS**. All 15 States that ranked the strategy think it is very or somewhat effective (four States reported “Don’t know”), and 21 States (75 percent of States that do not use this strategy) are interested in implementing this strategy. One State explained the benefit of such a system:

The Division included ICPC in its SACWIS system in the mid-1990s. This has helped create an alert system for workers, helped make information about incoming cases more accessible to workers, and eliminated the duplicate entry of ICPC data onto a separate database.

Another State described their SACWIS as “*excellent*” and added that it is used by all caseworkers and administrators in their department and includes regular case reviews.

Several States noted that they are currently in the process of developing a SACWIS and/or including ICPC cases in their SACWIS. Two States that currently use the ICPC database

referred to their plans to improve their data tracking capabilities with the implementation of a SACWIS or integration of interjurisdictional data into a current SACWIS in the future. The first one said:

For the past 4 years, we have been using the National ICPC ACCESS data entry and tracking system that has served us well. It is hoped with the eventual full implementation of SACWIS that communication with the field can be integrated with the ICPC office and Central Office operations.

The second State explained:

[Our State] utilized a database provided by APSHA specializing in ICPC-related cases. This has been effective for the Deputy ICPC Administrator. [Our State] is currently transferring data from this system into our SACWIS, which will allow for concurrent use and tracking by field supervisors.

One State was optimistic that future improvements would be made:

The ICPC data base and use of e-mail and other communication systems provide the bulk of our tracking and reporting systems. However, with the recent implementation of SACWIS and eventual incorporation with ICPC, it is hoped that further improvements will be made to the current system.

Of the 34 States that track steps in the placement process, 33 agree it is effective, and 13 of 14 who do not track steps want to.

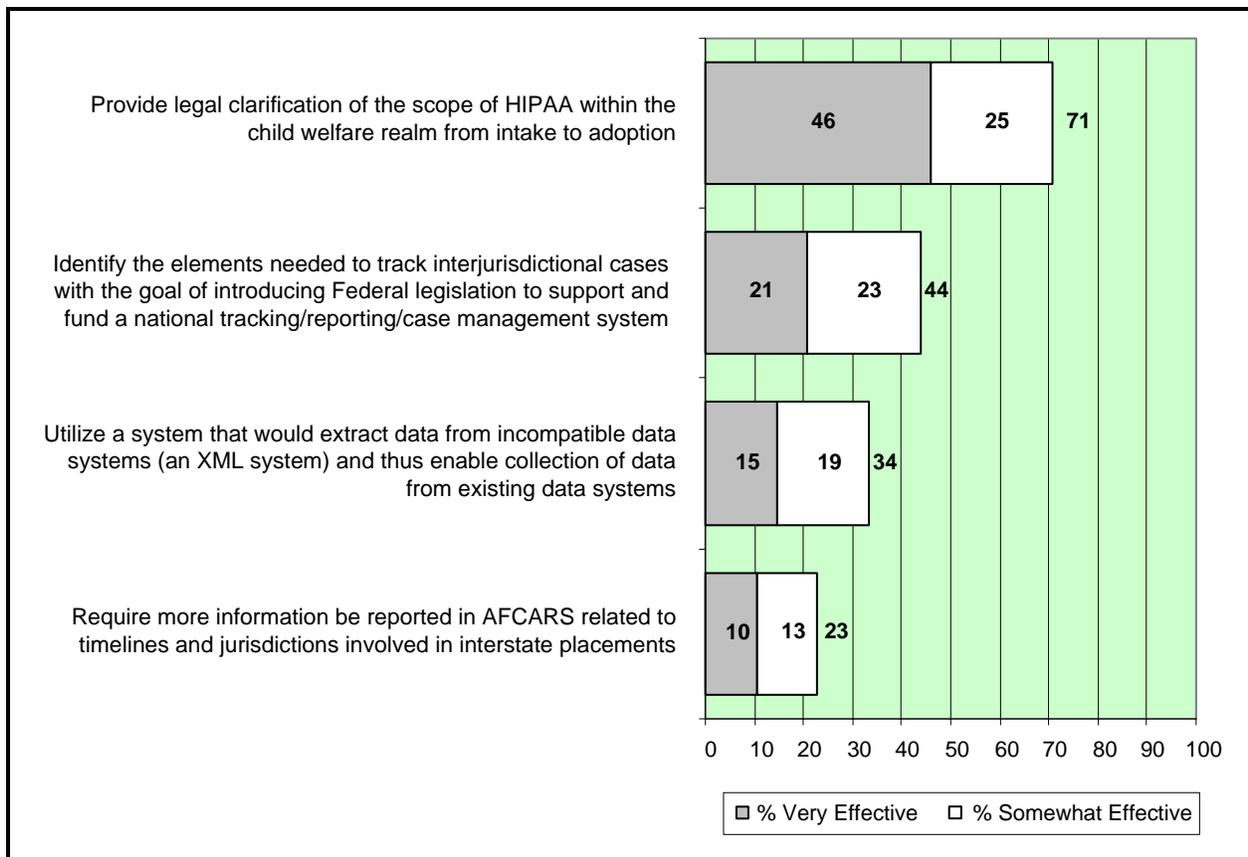
Nearly two-thirds of the States report they have the ability to track steps in the interstate placement process and most of the ones that already do this find it very effective. The remaining one-third of States (28 percent) reported interest in developing this ability and the one State that doesn't track steps does not plan to do so.

3.8.4 Assessment of Potential Supports to Improve Tracking and Reporting

States were provided with a list of potential actions that could be implemented at the national or Federal level to support State efforts in tracking and reporting their interjurisdictional placements. States were asked to rate these supports on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. States also could describe other supports that they thought would be effective.

Figure 3-16 shows that 71 percent of reporting States indicated that **providing legal clarification on the scope of HIPAA** within the child welfare realm would be most effective. HIPAA, the Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, requires that DHHS establish national standards for electronic health care transactions. Regulations were presented in parts 160, 162 and 164 of Subchapter C of Title 45 of the **Code of Federal Regulations** and are quite extensive. HIPAA also addresses the security and privacy of patient health data, which raises some important questions about information sharing practices in child welfare cases.

Figure 3-16. Effectiveness of Potential Supports to Improve Tracking and Reporting



States were also asked to identify the one support that they thought would facilitate the most positive change in tracking and reporting. Two supports were almost equally important—16 States chose **identify elements for inclusion in a national tracking, reporting, and case management system**, and 15 States chose **provide legal clarification on the scope of**

HIPAA in regards to child welfare. (See Appendix E.) Federally-funded SACWIS systems partially address the first support. However, these systems do not necessarily communicate case level information from State to State. States frequently use hard copy forms or e-mail to send information across States.

One State added that they thought additional funding for States to link data that is currently in separate systems would be very effective in improving their capabilities.

3.8.5 Summary

The majority of reporting States use between one and four strategies related to tracking and reporting interjurisdictional placements. The greatest number of States have the ability to track steps in the interstate placement process, and all that use it rate it as effective. States use different automated database systems, including the ICPC database; an automated database not linked to a SACWIS; and less commonly, a SACWIS that includes data on interstate cases. States discussed the ways in which these databases are used, their effectiveness, and their limitations. The need for staff and financial resources to improve the utility of data systems was noted by a few States.

Tracking steps in the interstate placement process and providing judges with electronic reports were all strategies States rated as highly effective. Simultaneous transmission of information across State lines, although used by only one State, was rated as “very effective” by this State. There is a lot of interest in this strategy among States that are not using simultaneous transmission. Also, many States are interested in the ability to track steps and to include data on interjurisdictional cases in a SACWIS system.

States consider that providing legal clarification on the scope of HIPAA within the child welfare realm and support and funding for the development of a national tracking, reporting, and case management system would promote the most positive change.

3.9 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENTS

This section describes States’ responses to a series of open-ended questions. The first three sections describe changes States have made in the past 5 years to improve their interstate cases and the changes they recommend, and

recommend against, for nationwide promotion. Suggestions for changes in ICPC regulations are presented in the fourth section. The fifth section focuses on strategies that States use to facilitate intercounty placements, and the sixth section outlines the benefits and barriers to Purchase of Service (POS) contracts. A summary of these findings is provided in Section 3.9.7.

3.9.1 Changes Made in Past 5 Years to Improve Handling of Interstate Cases

States were asked to describe changes that their State had made in the past 5 years to improve the handling of interstate cases that they had not already discussed previously in the survey. Of the 48 reporting States, 40 described changes, many of which were reiterations of strategies included in the first section of the survey.

A total of 12 States made changes in **staffing resources**. States added new staff, designated staff to handle ICPC cases, and/or reassigned ICPC cases to different staff (i.e., transferred *“freed children onto an adoption social worker caseload”*).

A total of 12 States discussed improvements in tracking and the use of **computerized database systems**. Nine States implemented a computerized database, three States began using the ICPC database, and one State described entering ICPC referrals into their SACWIS. Related to the tracking of cases, one State described how they revamped and reorganized their record-keeping system *“in a logical and easily accessible manner.”*

A total of 11 States reported an increase or extension of **training** for staff or the development of training materials.

Only eight States discussed **policy** changes. States developed new policy or revised their existing policy *“to reflect current ICPC regulations and expectations.”* Three States implemented policy that specifies time frames for the completion of home studies or transmittal of information to and from sending and receiving agencies.

A variety of changes related to practice were described by several States:

- contract with private agencies
- implemented changes to home studies (i.e., revised format, emergency licensing component, dual licensure, birth parent assessment)
- express commitment to ICPC cases
- emphasize relative placements
- developed closer working relationships with the ICPC office, judges, Guardians ad Litem, local departments, and the administration
- work with the Department of Education to reduce barriers associated with the provision of educational services related to ICPC placements
- clear the backlog and quickly process ICPC cases
- implement border agreements

3.9.2 Changes Made in Past 5 Years to Promote Nationwide

States were asked what aspects of the changes they had made in the past 5 years would they recommend be promoted nationwide. A total of 36 States made recommendations.

Ten States recommended that there should be **adequate staffing** to handle ICPC cases either by adding new staff or designating specific people to handle all interjurisdictional cases. Seven States encouraged training for all involved in interjurisdictional placements. A judges' handbook was also suggested.

Five States recommended an **increase in Federal or State resources** or **monetary incentives** to improve timeliness and quality of home studies. One State clarified especially for "high receiving" States, and one State remarked,

If there were Federal monetary incentives provided for the timely completion of home studies, we would be able to create more competition between private providers to improve timeliness and quality of home studies.

Five States recommended changes related to **data tracking and record-keeping**, including use of the ICPC database or another automated ICPC system, a *"mechanism for transmittal of information through the system,"* and entry of ICPC data into a SACWIS.

Additional suggestions were many and varied:

- Contract out home studies and supervision services
- Increase coordination
- Develop clear, consistent national standards
- Formalize ICPC regulations through the States' regulation process
- Modify ICPC forms
- Allow dual approval of foster and adoption families
- Allow emergency and temporary licensure during full home study
- Use "birth parent assessment"
- Impose time limits

One State recommended that all States take the steps they have taken to decrease delays in home study approvals:

In our view the biggest barrier to interstate placements is the time it takes to get approval. The most significant factor that causes delays in approval is the length of time it takes to complete a home study. The steps that [our State] has taken to ensure timely completion of home studies, including relatively quick background checks, ensuring adequate numbers of staff are assigned to conduct studies, and providing foster parents with ready access to the training necessary for certification, would undoubtedly improve the timeliness of interstate placements if practiced nationally.

3.9.3 Changes Not Recommended

States were also asked to identify aspects of the changes they would not recommend. A total of 16 States responded to this question, and responses included a variety of suggestions.

Four States warned against implementing changes without the resources to support the change (i.e., mandates or standards without additional funding, computer database without additional staff, use of POS contracts without oversight by State child welfare agency). Two States would not recommend border State agreements, and one State warned against initiating border agreements *"and then not follow[ing] through because it may require starting from scratch if the parties are no longer there who participated."* Two States responded that they would not suggest an increase in Federal oversight or requirements. Other actions which are "not recommended" included

implementing a totally paperless process, transferring legal responsibility of court wards received from another State, and allowing workers from sending States to conduct home studies in receiving States.

3.9.4 Suggested Changes in ICPC Regulations

States were asked what changes in ICPC regulations are needed to facilitate interjurisdictional placements and to achieve permanency in a timely manner for children currently in interjurisdictional placements. Of the 48 reporting States, 42 made suggestions.¹⁰

Many States recommended the **establishment of time frames** for the completion of home studies and other tasks. Although, not appropriate for an ICPC regulation change, many States called for uniformity across States and suggested the creation of **standards and uniform processes** for home studies (e.g., a “*uniform dual-purpose assessment for foster care and adoption*,” and “*dual licensure when required*”), licensing and approvals, and appeals, as well as a standard format for supervisory reports and to communicate educational, financial, and medical responsibility. Developing standards for processing interjurisdictional placements is appropriate for a practice change; a uniform home study would need to be developed and then an agreement instituted between the States to require its use.

A few States suggested that the ICPC regulations be written using **clearer, more consistent language**. One State that made this suggestion believes that greater clarity would possibly increase States’ and courts’ compliance with the regulations:

It’s our belief that the ICPC regulations aren’t particularly in need of change. It could be that greater clarity in how the regulations are written could help to eliminate the differences in interpretation among compacting States, but the bigger issue is the lack of adherence to the regulations. Adherence varies considerably from State to State. In many instances there is a willingness and ability to comply with the regulations on the part of child welfare authorities, but the court will act in a manner that violates the regulations. In any case, adherence and interpretation is

¹⁰States’ survey answers are presented regardless of whether they are within the purview of the ICPC regulations.

far from uniform among compacting States, and the consequences for violations are very limited.

In accord with this State, several other States reported that there is a need for **enforcement** of the ICPC regulations, as well as for time frames and violations. However, States disagreed about how much involvement the Federal government should have in the ICPC process. A couple of States recommended Federal mandates and incentives, whereas two States clearly said that they do not support increased Federal involvement. One State that does not recommend more Federal regulations commented:

It was difficult to know how to respond to many of these questions. Issues raised are relevant ones and need attention. However, we do not believe increased Federal control and more Federal regulations or requirements would be an effective way to assure that improvements happen. We believe that States need to continue to work with the ICPC Secretariat to determine what should happen and how. ACF can partner with the States in such an effort, providing technical assistance and dealing with issues that the States cannot control, such as allowing use of Federal funds for Medicaid in the State of residence even when a child is not IV-E eligible. Therefore, our positive responses to some of the questions simply mean that we think action is needed or would be helpful. They do NOT necessarily mean that we believe the Federal government should be taking the lead in development of or requiring a particular strategy.

As noted earlier, survey responses may not reflect the State's position on this issue and may be limited to the views of the person or persons completing the survey.

Changes to **specific articles and regulations** were recommended:

- Rewrite, standardize nationwide, and enforce Regulation 1, Conversion of Intrastate Placement into Interstate Placement.
- Seek agreement on licensure for relatives relating to Regulation 7, Priority Placement.

Regulation 1 of the Compact outlines the process that should be followed to place a child, currently in an in-state placement, across State lines. Required documentation and procedures are listed. The recommendations highlight the need for standardization and enforcement. Barriers that contribute to

variations in the use of the Compact, in general, have been identified. The language in the Compact is broad and sometimes interpreted differently by States (Arnold-Williams & Oppenheim, 2004). Additionally, the Compact does not include clear standards for family assessments nor specify timeframes for completing assessments of possible placements (Family Builders, 2001). Violations of the Compact are a significant problem (DHHS, 1999).

Regulation 7, Priority Placement, outlines procedures for expedited placement of a child with certain specified relatives. It requires that the receiving State make a decision about the placement within 20 business days of receipt of the placement proposal. Specifically, the priority procedures may be used when the child (1) is under the age of two, (2) is in an emergency shelter, or (3) the court finds that the child has spent a substantial amount of time in the relative's home. Regulation 7 does not apply, however, to cases in which "the request for placement of the child is for licensed or approved foster family care or adoption" (APHSA, 2002a, pg. 20). Although the State that suggested this change did not elaborate on their recommendation, we can assume that the State wishes to see priority placement be allowed for cases in which there is a licensed family.

A couple of States recommended that ICPC regulations not extend in applicability to private and independent adoptions and residential placements, especially when the parent is making the placement, and one State suggested the addition of a section on permanency plans.

Several States suggested changes to **expedite placements**. They suggested that ICPC:

- allow study or closure on non-offending parents,
- expedite placement with relatives,
- allow provisional licensing, and
- encourage dual home studies for foster care and adoption.

Additional recommendations included the following:

- Use tools such as subsidized guardianship outside one's own State borders and adequate adoption subsidies.
- Allow for supervision by public agency for cases with a private home study.
- Allow visits between the child and prospective family even after a request for a home study is made. (Currently, such a visit can be construed as a placement.)
- Establish criteria for placement disruption and reasonable efforts to preserve the placement.
- Provide training for judges and courts.

Several States recognized the need for an increase in staff resources to track and complete ICPC referrals and supervisory reports to ensure their completion in a timely manner. Federal funding to this end was suggested. One State, recognizing that resource issues extend beyond ICPC regulations, stated, *"The problem is not with current regulations but adequate resources within the States to provide staffing that can do home studies and supervision of cases once placement is made."*

3.9.5 Strategies to Facilitate Intercounty Placements

Similar to interstate placements, States also face barriers to intercounty and interdistrict placements within their own State borders. The survey asked States to describe any strategies that they have tried to facilitate intercounty and interdistrict placements and share their ideas for facilitating these types of placements.

A total of 39 States provided a response to this question, of which 7 indicated that the question was not applicable and 13 reported that intercounty or interdistrict barriers do not exist or that intercounty or interdistrict placement is not an issue in their State. Four States specified that because their child welfare system is State administered, county-to-county placement is not an issue.

A strategy discussed by seven States is the **development of policies and procedures to address county-to-county placements**, including emergency placement and supervision across county lines. One State's procedures include protocols for notification and communication as well as an agreement

that *“identifies financial and administrative responsibilities in intercounty foster care placement.”* Another State’s counties have developed a statewide interjurisdictional policy *“to help facilitate smoother transfers,”* with a significant majority of counties supporting the policy.

Staff training and staff networking, strategies used by seven States, include

- regional meetings of foster and adoptive social workers,
- regional training that advances networking,
- setting aside time for staff to “match” children and families during statewide meetings of child placement staff,
- follow-up by case managers and networking with staff to do what’s best for the child,
- presentation of intercounty-related policies at staff training, and
- development of a curriculum on helping workers “let go” and prepare children for the transition into a new family.

Materials are used to communicate policy and provide guidance to staff about intercounty placements. One State is developing flow charts to illustrate the necessary procedures, whereas another uses bulletins.

Four States reported that barriers have been avoided due to **close working relationships** either between counties or between the State agency and the counties. One State explained that different jurisdictions within the State conduct home studies for each other to avoid travel expenses; similarly, another State said that *“counties work together to provide courtesy home studies and supervision.”*

Another State said they **work with judicial staff** to improve their knowledge and understanding of the issues related to intercounty placements.

Other strategies reported include the following:

- Form a workgroup to explore ideas to address barriers related to foster and adoptive training requirements.
- Propose State legislation to allow changes in name searches in the law enforcement systems to address the barrier of criminal history background checks.

- Contract with a university for recruitment and exchange network.
- Work with Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), Homeland Security Office, to develop an outline of requirements for a home study, which has led to CIS reporting *“significant improvement in the quality of studies for [our State’s] families after the implementation of the detailed outline of requirements for home studies.”*
- Operate an OTI (Out of Town Inquiry) system, similar to ICPC.

3.9.6 Benefits and Barriers to POS Contracts

States were asked two questions about POS contracts: “What are the benefits of POS contracts?” and “What barriers to implementing POS contracts for interjurisdictional cases have you experienced in your State?” A total of 27 States responded, although some States explained how they used contracts instead of reporting the benefits of and barriers to POS contracts.

The key benefits reported by States included

- improved timeliness of home studies and monitoring,
- alleviation of staff time and workload,
- improved service delivery, and
- increased cost-effectiveness.

Limited funding or cost to the public child welfare agency was the primary barrier to POS contracts reported by 18 States. Several States also described ways in which the contracting process is problematic: the process is cumbersome and time consuming; receiving timely payments and ensuring accountability are problematic; there is uncertainty in what will be provided; and there are administrative barriers. Additional barriers cited were the differences and inconsistencies between States and the poor quality of services provided by the private sector.

3.9.7 Summary

As an overall assessment, States were asked to report the changes that they have made in the past 5 years to improve the handling of interstate cases. Of the States that described changes, most reiterated strategies that were included in the

survey, including changes in staffing resources, training, policy, and the implementation of a computerized database system. States also described several changes related to practice, including changes in home studies, closer working relationships, and contracts with private agencies.

States offered their recommendations of changes to be promoted nationwide and changes not to be pursued. Several States recommend that there should be adequate staffing to handle interjurisdictional cases, and a small number of States suggested changes that would improve the tracking of interstate cases. A few States would like to see an increase in Federal or State resources and monetary incentives, whereas other States do not support an increase in Federal oversight or requirements, and several States warned against implementing changes without the necessary resources to support the change.

Suggestions for changes to the ICPC regulations were solicited. Among the recommendations, the most frequently reported suggestions were the establishment of time frames and standards and uniform processes across States. Some States think that the regulations could be written more clearly and that ICPC regulations should be enforced. Additional recommendations were many and varied and included changes to help expedite the interstate placement process.

Finally, States reported the strategies that they have used to address barriers to intercounty and interdistrict placements within their own State borders. Development of policies to address county-to-county placements, training and staff networking, and development of close working relationships among counties and between the State agency and counties were some of the most common strategies used by States.

3.10 ASSESSMENT OF ADOPTION OPPORTUNITY GRANTS

Several Adoption Opportunity Grants (AOG), which were designed to improve the interstate placement process, were awarded by the Children's Bureau/ACF/ACYF/DHHS over the last 5 years. With funding from one of these grants between 1999 and 2002, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) developed training manuals and provided ICPC training to States as part of their AOG funding. This

survey asked States to report if they participated in this training. If they did, they were asked to rate the effectiveness of the training, describe the benefits and limitations of the training, and provide recommendations for future training. The next two sections describe the findings. The third section describes an AOG received by a State to facilitate interjurisdictional placements with another State.

3.10.1 ICPC Training Provided to States

Of the 48 reporting States, 22 indicated that they participated in APHSA's training (46 percent).¹¹ Table 3-9 shows that 17 of the 20 States that rated the training reported that it was somewhat effective or very effective. (One reported "somewhat ineffective," two reported "don't know," and one State did not rate the effectiveness.)

Several States reported that the training provided new and experienced staff with a **better understanding of the ICPC**, including the Compact requirements and clarification of when ICPC procedures are necessary.

Several benefits to participating in the **training with other States** were noted, including sharing information and networking with other State staff. One State reported that the training "*increased awareness of [national] standards and best case practices in other States.*" Another State commented that it was helpful to participate in the training with other States: "*It was also beneficial to hear the perspective of our counterparts from other States and to work through scenarios they described based on their experiences.*"

¹¹The number of States that claimed they received training may be underreported because (1) staff that received training may no longer be working in the same area and (2) the respondent(s) completing the survey may not be aware of training that was conducted several years ago.

Table 3-9. Assessment of ICPC Training

Training Assessment	N	%
Participated in training		
No	26	54.2
Yes	22	45.8
Total	48	100.0
Effectiveness		
Not at all effective	0	0.0
Somewhat ineffective	1	5.0
Somewhat effective	11	55.0
Very effective	6	30.0
Don't know	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0

Note: APHSA was funded by a Children's Bureau Adoption Opportunity Grant to conduct ICPC training. Two States that participated in the training did not rate the effectiveness.

Several other benefits to training were mentioned by at least one State:

- The size of the training group provided an opportunity for *"one-on-one interaction with the trainer and other members of the group."*
- It increased the availability and distribution of training materials and information.
- The training raised staff awareness of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) and barriers, as well as the supports needed in placements.
- It was a more advanced ICPC training.
- Manuals that were specifically for judges and child welfare staff were comprehensive.

Two primary limitations of the training were mentioned by several States:

- Not enough time was allotted to cover the material.
- Not all staff that could have benefited from the training were able to attend (mostly due to the State's financial constraints).

States provided several recommendations to improve future trainings:

- Expand training to a wider variety of participants (e.g., field staff and supervisors, the judiciary, and attorneys).
- Conduct more regional trainings.
- Allow more time to cover the material.
- Offer regular training.
- Include a discussion component during the trainings.
- Continue to make electronic copies of training materials available for those who cannot attend the trainings.
- Set up audio interactive training to enable more staff to participate. These modules could be introduced after an overview, so that the training could cover the more unusual situations by discussing actual cases as examples.
- Financially compensate States for sending personnel to the trainings as a means to achieve better attendance and broader impact.

3.10.2 ICPC Training Manuals

Three training manuals—for ICPC administrators, caseworkers, and judges—were developed under this grant. One reference manual that included ICPC court cases was also developed.

Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of the 48 reporting States use these training manuals developed by APHSA. As shown in Table 3-10, 25 of these 30 States reported that the manuals were somewhat effective or very effective. (Four reported they were “somewhat ineffective,” one reported “don’t know,” and one State did not rate the effectiveness.)

The most popular benefit to using the manuals was that they serve as a good reference tool for ICPC procedures and they *“... can be used by the novice or the experienced case worker.”* Several States also thought the manuals were useful for training new staff (including local staff), attorneys, private child placement agencies, and the public. One State reported that the manuals provided basic guidelines upon which their State office would build their own State-specific training guidelines.

Table 3-10. Assessment of ICPC Training Manuals

Training Manual Assessment	N	%
Used training manuals		
No	17	35.4
Yes	31	64.6
Total	48	100.0
Effectiveness		
Not at all effective	0	0.0
Somewhat ineffective	4	13.3
Somewhat effective	8	26.7
Very effective	17	56.7
Don't know	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Note: APHSA was funded by a Children's Bureau Adoption Opportunity Grant to develop ICPC training manuals. One State that uses the manuals did not rate the effectiveness.

Another State reported that they use the manual as a tool when discussing cases with other States. Another mentioned that the *"briefings of court cases were very beneficial when unusual legal issues arose in the State. The sample quizzes were helpful when developing training."*

Although most States found the manuals to be effective, several limitations were noted:

- Content
 - The manuals do not contain enough specific case scenario examples.¹²
 - Information is not very helpful to the local caseworker who is making the referral.
 - The manuals do not contain enough information on "Release of Custody."
- Availability
 - Not every State has these manuals.
 - Access within States is limited.
 - Materials are not updated.

¹²The ICPC court case manual has been updated and disseminated to States (L. Oppenheim, APHSA, personal communication, June 13, 2005).

- Other
 - Manuals are available only in paper form.
 - They are too lengthy to incorporate into new worker training.
 - The language in some sections is difficult to understand.
 - Specific information is somewhat difficult to locate.

States provided several recommendations to expand the manuals in terms of the content, format, future versions, and additional manuals:

- Content
 - Add a section on financial and medical requirements.
 - Update the manual on court cases to include more recent case decisions.
 - Add a section for frequently asked questions.
 - Group Secretariat Opinions, court decisions, case scenarios, etc. together according to subject area.
 - Keep manuals updated.
- Training Format
 - Pair national-level trainers with State trainers.
 - Develop training on CD or video media.
 - Make training available on the Web.
 - Conduct training using Microsoft PowerPoint.
 - Create a short version of the manual to be used for families.
- Suggestions for future manuals
 - Develop future manuals in conjunction with AAICPC and other associations with an investment in interjurisdictional placements.
 - Develop a basic manual for use in training local staff in ICPC procedures.
 - Develop a manual for teaching quality assurance and case reviews of interjurisdictional placements.
 - Update the “Guide to Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (APHSA, 2002a)” and make it available on a regular basis.

3.10.3 Assessment of State Adoption Opportunity Grants

As noted in Chapter 1, the Children's Bureau awarded Adoption Opportunity Grants to five States in fiscal years 1999 and 2000. These grants were designed to facilitate collaborative planning to increase interjurisdictional adoptions. Although the grantees submitted final reports for their projects, this survey included a question on whether States had received one of these Adoption Opportunity Grants and if so, they were asked to answer a series of questions about their projects. We expected that the survey responses would provide additional insight beyond the final reports, specifically related to whether States were aware of changes in practice, long-term impact on adoptions, and challenges identified as a result of the grant program.

Although five States were funded under these grants, only one State acknowledged receipt. This may be because staff that were involved in the grants were no longer part of the agency or were not involved in completing the survey.

The responding State described the project in terms of improving interjurisdictional placements between their own State and a neighboring State. They used a liaison to coordinate matching children and families across State lines and to provide support services to adoption staff. These services included obtaining home studies for potential adoptive families (upon request), researching community resources to support the placement, and arranging pre-placement visits. Technology, such the Web and video conferencing, was used for meetings to "match" waiting children with potential families. Finally, an advisory committee met regularly to address barriers to placements.

Through this project, the State successfully developed an infrastructure that enabled effective communication between the two States and simplified paperwork. According to this State, participants from both States acknowledged their common goals for reducing delays and other barriers to timely placements across State lines. Several positive outcomes resulted from this collaboration: the interstate process was streamlined, interstate practices were standardized and procedures were clarified, and staff showed an *"increased ownership of the interstate process."*

One lesson learned through the project was that *“the use of technology depends on the technical knowledge of the workers rather than the lack of capacity of the consumers.”* This comment suggests that the investment in new technologies should include adequate training for the staff that will use them.

3.10.4 Summary

Several survey questions were included to explore outcomes of programs funded by the Children’s Bureau’s Adoption Opportunity Grants. These programs were funded specifically to improve the interstate placement process.

An assessment of APHSA’s training on ICPC issues and the manuals they developed was described. Almost half of the States said they participated in the training and most of these indicated that it was effective. Even more States reported that they use the training manuals developed by APHSA and all but four States thought the manuals were at least a “somewhat effective” tool. Several States specifically noted that the training benefited both new and experienced staff and that it was helpful to network with other State staff during the face-to-face training.

Although five States were awarded AOGs for their work to improve interstate processes, only one State responded to the survey questions that targeted these programs. This State described their efforts to successfully develop an infrastructure to facilitate communication between the grantee and their neighboring State.

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Appendix A:
Interjurisdictional
Placement of
Children Workgroup
Members

INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WORKGROUP MEMBERS

- | | |
|---|---|
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This list includes individuals that participated in one or both of the workgroup meetings. Members from ACF, AdoptUSKids, and Teamwork for Children participated in the discussion but abstained from making the recommendations included in this report.

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Children's Bureau Survey on Strategies to Address Barriers and Reduce Delays in Interjurisdictional Placements

INTRODUCTION

Concerns about delays to [interjurisdictional placements](#) of children have motivated calls for reform from multiple sources. The Children's Bureau has responded to these concerns by sponsoring this survey through a contract with RTI International (RTI) [[Click here to read about the survey development](#)]. This survey seeks to assess the strategies that state child welfare agencies have developed, or hope to develop, to facilitate interjurisdictional as well as interstate placements for children in the child welfare system and to determine what supports are needed to facilitate these placements.

Initially, concerns surfaced from the Children's Bureau analysis of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data indicating that foster children placed across state lines wait an entire year longer to achieve adoption permanency than children placed in-state. A number of child welfare organizations have called for system reform in the interjurisdictional as well as interstate placement process, and several surveys in recent years have identified barriers to interjurisdictional placements. [[Click here to read background information](#)].

This survey pulls the previously identified barriers together and seeks to identify strategies to address the barriers. By obtaining feedback from the states about which strategies they see as most effective, the Children's Bureau hopes to assist in directing efforts to support those strategies. The Children's Bureau will use this information to develop a national direction for system reform and wants to ensure that the needs of all states are addressed. For these reasons, it is extremely important for all states to respond to this survey.

As discussed in [the letter](#) sent to state child welfare directors on February 7, 2005, we ask that you form a workgroup to review and discuss the questions in this survey. We recommend the workgroup model [[Click here for our suggestions for workgroup membership](#)] due to the fact that the strategies presented may cross one or more manager's area of program responsibility and a single central office manager may not be aware of all the initiatives in which local offices are engaged. After workgroup members have discussed the survey questions, please formulate a coordinated response from your state/territory and then complete the online survey. If you cannot finish the entire survey at one time, you may save your work, exit the survey and return to it at a later time.

There are four sections to the survey:

- A. Your State's Strategies for Facilitating Interjurisdictional Placements
- B. Supports Needed to Facilitate Interjurisdictional Placements
- C. Overall Assessment of Interjurisdictional Placements
- D. Assessment of Adoption Opportunities Grants

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. However, a response from each state/territory is crucial to ensure that the results of this study accurately represent the experiences and perspectives of everyone involved. Public reports/publications will not include information that directly identifies individual states/territories or the individuals involved in responding to the survey. The funding that you receive now or in the future will not be affected by whether you or not you participate or how you respond to the questions. Once survey responses are analyzed, a report on the results and recommendations of this study will be made available to your state/territory.

"THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995." Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

SECTION A: YOUR STATE'S STRATEGIES FOR FACILITATING INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENTS

The primary goal of the current study is to identify the most promising [strategies](#) for addressing [systemic barriers](#) to interjurisdictional placements and to evaluate the [supports](#) needed to implement these strategies. We would like for you to assess the strategies your state has used to address barriers and to consider the feasibility of trying other strategies to facilitate interjurisdictional placements.

This section is divided into eight categories of barriers to interjurisdictional placement. Potential strategies to address each barrier are listed below each barrier. Please consider your responses in the context of a [sending state](#) and [receiving state](#).

Please select the one number (1 – 7) that most closely represents your assessment of each strategy as it pertains to your state.

If your state uses (or has used) this strategy, please assess the effectiveness of the strategy:

- 1 = We believe the strategy is very effective.
- 2 = We believe the strategy is somewhat effective.
- 3 = We believe the strategy is ineffective.
- 4 = We do not know degree of effectiveness.

If your state does not use this strategy, please select the best answer from below:

- 5 = We do not plan to implement this strategy.
- 6 = We are interested in trying this and/or are currently investigating feasibility.
- 7 = We are interested in trying this but need further assistance or guidance on implementation.

After you have assessed all strategies for a particular barrier, you will be prompted to describe the steps your state took to successfully implement those strategies that you identified as very effective or somewhat effective.

1. BARRIER: Inadequate staffing and/or other resources in our state interfere (or have interfered) with timely handling of interjurisdictional responsibilities as a [sending state](#) or as a [receiving state](#).

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. As a [receiving state](#), we contract with private agencies to conduct home studies and/or supervision of children referred to our state.
- _____ b. As a [receiving state](#), we use a [broker contract](#) with a private agency to expeditiously contract with private agencies for home studies and/or supervision of children referred to our state.
- _____ c. As a [sending state](#), we contract with private agencies for home studies/supervision of children we send to other states.
- _____ d. As a [sending state](#), we use a [broker contract](#) with a private agency to expeditiously contract with private agencies to conduct home studies and/or supervision of children we send to other states.
- _____ e. As a [sending state](#), a caseworker from our state conducts the home study and/or supervision of children we send to other states.
- _____ f. As a [receiving state](#), we allow caseworkers from other states to conduct the home study and/or supervision of children referred to our state.
- _____ g. We have a protocol in place to complete home studies in a timely manner for an [ICPC](#)-approved placement of a child in another state's

custody who moves to our state with their preadoptive or foster family or relatives.

- _____ h. As a [receiving state](#), we accept foster and adoptive parent training provided by other states for approval of families who move to our state with their foster or preadoptive child.
- _____ i. We use [border agreements](#) with other states to allow caseworkers to cross state lines to conduct home studies and postplacement supervision visits.
- _____ j. We have selected to use the uniform home study format developed by several states for all our intra- and interstate home studies.
- _____ k. We changed procurement requirements to allow for timely Purchase of Service (POS) arrangements.
- _____ l. As a [receiving state](#), we maintain a list of Purchase of Service (POS) agencies with active contracts with our state for [sending states](#) to use.
- _____ m. As a [receiving state](#), we arrange Purchase of Service (POS) contracts with agencies to conduct home studies for interjurisdictional cases.
- _____ n. As a [receiving state](#), we arrange Purchase of Service (POS) contracts with agencies for supervision of interjurisdictional cases.
- _____ o. We designate specific caseworkers to handle all interstate placement cases.
- _____ p. We define workload responsibilities to more accurately determine staffing needs for interjurisdictional responsibilities.
- _____ q. We added staff positions to better meet interjurisdictional responsibilities.
- _____ r. We have resources to facilitate visitation between parents and children placed in other jurisdictions (when Termination of Parental Rights [TPR] has not occurred and it is appropriate and/or required by the courts).
- _____ s. We use videoconferencing to maintain connections for children when visits are too costly or distance prevents appropriate level of contact.
- _____ t. Other strategy, please explain: _____

u. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

2. BARRIER: Lack of knowledge and training related to interstate and other interjurisdictional placement procedures and responsibilities interferes with effective practice in this area.

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. We offer training on interstate placement responsibilities to supervisors on a regular basis.
 - _____ b. We use a Web tutorial or CD/video to train caseworkers on interjurisdictional processes (or use "[just in time training](#)").
 - _____ c. Our regular caseworker training includes a component to increase awareness on the importance of considering interjurisdictional placements to achieve permanency for some children.
 - _____ d. Our regular caseworker training includes a component to increase competency in interjurisdictional placement procedures.
 - _____ e. We train on how to diligently search for relatives (maternal and paternal) within and outside our state.
 - _____ f. We provide the tools (e.g., use of Child Support Agency, Web sites, and search agencies) to assist in the diligent search for relatives.
 - _____ g. We work with our state's Court Improvement Project to train judges and Guardians ad Litem ([GAL](#))/Court Appointed Special Advocates ([CASA](#)) on interjurisdictional issues and how to conduct interjurisdictional placements and improve timeliness of placements.
 - _____ h. We have an in-state expert on interjurisdictional issues available for legal or social work consultation on interstate cases.
 - _____ i. Other strategy, please explain: _____
-

- j. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

3. BARRIER: Staff attitudes and/or their belief system interfere with interjurisdictional responsibilities. For example, administrators/supervisors/caseworkers may view responsibilities for interstate placements as a lower priority or be reluctant to pursue resources outside our state for a child.

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. Our organizational leadership communicates its commitment to interjurisdictional placement responsibilities to the caseworker level.
- _____ b. Our state agency's expectations for supervisors/caseworkers to consider out-of-state placements to achieve permanency for children is clearly defined in policy and communicated to staff.
- _____ c. We have supports, such as training, for caseworkers and caretakers to help them deal with the emotional process of "letting go" of the child for whom an in-state permanent placement has not been found.

- _____ d. We have training for caseworkers and supports for the child to prepare and help the child transition to a new placement in another state.
- _____ e. We use techniques, such as open adoption and guardianships, to support children in maintaining (when appropriate) important connections in the [sending state](#).
- _____ f. Our administrative case review protocol encourages staff to routinely consider interjurisdictional placement options that support the permanency plan.
- _____ g. We developed a system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload.
- _____ h. We developed a protocol for handling interjurisdictional placement responsibilities.
- _____ i. We developed a system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner.
- _____ j. We hold supervisors and caseworkers accountable to seek interstate resources when needed for children.
- _____ k. Staff are required to document their response to out-of-state inquiries for children awaiting adoption by families with complete home studies.
- _____ l. We clarify in training for caseworkers that Adoption and Safe Families Act ([ASFA](#)) timelines apply to interjurisdictional cases.
- _____ m. We set statewide guidelines or standards for completion of interjurisdictional activities at each step in the process.
- _____ n. Other strategy, please explain: _____

o. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

4. BARRIER: Difficulties exist in obtaining funding for educational or medical expenses for children awaiting or already placed in interstate placements.

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. As a [receiving state](#), we changed state law/policy to allow foster children or children in preadoptive placements to be considered residents of our state for the purposes of providing education.
- _____ b. As a [sending state](#), we fund the educational expenses of children placed in foster care or preadoptive placements in other states.
- _____ c. As a [receiving state](#), we cover educational expenses of children sent from other states.
- _____ d. As a [receiving state](#), we generally cover medical expenses not covered by [sending states](#) for children lacking [Title IV-E eligibility](#).
- _____ e. As a [receiving state](#), we provide Medicaid to children receiving state-funded adoption assistance from another state residing in our state.
- _____ f. As a [receiving state](#), we offer Medicaid coverage as part of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) child-only grants for children in relative placements.

- _____ g. As a [sending state](#), we provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for [Title IV-E](#) children.
- _____ h. As a [sending state](#), we provide coverage for medical expenses for children placed interstate but lacking [Title IV-E](#) eligibility.
- _____ i. As a [sending state](#), we include a form indicating our expectations about medical and educational expenses will be covered when referring a child for placement in another state.
- _____ j. We developed a process for resolving interstate issues with educational and medical expenses in a timely manner.
- _____ k. As a [receiving state](#), we specify availability and accessibility of resources to meet the child's needs.
- _____ l. We place (and update) information on our state's Web site regarding coverage of medical and educational expenses of children placed in our state from other states.
- _____ m. Other strategy, please explain: _____

n. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

5. BARRIER: Criminal background checks delay expeditious placement of children across state lines.

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. We use electronic fingerprinting for background checks to expedite the process.
- _____ b. Our child welfare staff have access to a name-based criminal database and conduct name checks directly.
- _____ c. We conduct a prescreening name check early in the home study process to determine if a full state criminal background check is needed.
- _____ d. We have entered into an agreement with state or local law enforcement agencies to conduct criminal record checks in a timely manner.
- _____ e. As a [sending state](#), we routinely inform [receiving states](#) of our criminal record check requirements during the referral process.
- _____ f. As a [sending state](#), we accept the criminal background requirements of the receiving state if they are less extensive than our requirements.
- _____ g. As a [receiving state](#), we will conduct the criminal background requirements of the [sending state](#) if they are more extensive than our requirements.
- _____ h. As a sending state, we will conduct the criminal background checks if the [receiving state's](#) requirements are less extensive than our requirements.
- _____ i. Our criminal background record requirements (as a [sending state](#) or [receiving state](#)) are available on our state's Web site.
- _____ j. We have streamlined the criminal background check process to limit the number of individuals and agencies involved in the process.

_____ k. Other strategy, please explain: _____

l. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

6. BARRIER: Communication delays and difficulties interfere with expeditious interjurisdictional placement of children.

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. We use a secure Web-based system for transmitting Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children ([ICPC](#)) referral information across jurisdictions or state lines.
- _____ b. We use simultaneous transmission to send information from our state's local agencies to both [sending](#) and [receiving states'](#) [ICPC](#) Administrator and to the sending/receiving local agency.
- _____ c. We encourage direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving states.
- _____ d. We have established procedures to facilitate communication between our caseworkers and our [ICPC](#) Administrator.
- _____ e. We have coordinated events for caseworkers and supervisors to interact with staff from outside their jurisdiction to promote potential networking.
- _____ f. We have developed a mechanism for judicial oversight including communication from the [sending state's](#) judge to the [receiving state's](#) judge to ensure timely placement decisions.
- _____ g. We use a [tickler tracking system](#) to alert caseworkers of time-sensitive events such as expected date of home study completion.
- _____ h. We developed a process for negotiating which state pays to maintain an emergency placement until the emergency is resolved when a placement disrupts and an emergency placement is needed.
- _____ i. Other strategy, please explain: _____

j. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

7. BARRIER: Children who are in interjurisdictional placements or who are awaiting placement may not move in a timely fashion toward permanency.

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. We encourage concurrent planning to identify out-of-state placement resources early in the case assessment.
- _____ b. We incorporate primary and concurrent permanency plans in the placement agreement and define tasks to accomplish both plans in the case plan.
- _____ c. As a [sending state](#), we provide the child's medical passport/history to the foster/preadoptive parent.
- _____ d. As a [sending state](#), we provide the child's education information to the foster/preadoptive parent to facilitate school enrollment.
- _____ e. For the children in their caseload, judges have access to computer-based reports, including length of time in foster care.
- _____ f. We involve Court Improvement Projects statewide in addressing issues related to interstate placements and permanency.
- _____ g. Mechanisms (e.g., [MOUs](#)) have been developed for judges from sending and receiving states to work together in moving children toward permanency.
- _____ h. We encourage courts to make "[reasonable efforts to achieve the permanency plan](#)" when it is appropriate for interstate placement cases to move children toward permanency.
- _____ i. We facilitate stronger [CASA/GAL](#) advocacy for children in interstate placements.
- _____ j. As a [receiving state](#), we developed mechanisms for meaningful participation from foster/adoptive parents and significant others (therapists, teachers) in case reviews and court hearings that are held out of state.
- _____ k. Judicial oversight is provided in the county of origin for children who have been placed out of state for an extended period of time.
- _____ l. We include early identification of relative resources as a quality assurance item on a regular basis.
- _____ m. As a [sending state](#), we accept as a valid home study one that is completed and approved by the state agency or a state-licensed child-placing agency in another state.
- _____ n. As a [receiving state](#), we work with [sending states](#) in conducting an annual assessment with relative caregivers related to their decisions/intentions regarding adoption and other options for permanency so that the case can be closed and years of supervision are not required by the [receiving state](#).
- _____ o. As a [sending state](#), we have protocols and guidelines for Adoption Assistance negotiations with prospective adoptive parents for children in the care of our state child welfare system.
- _____ p. As a [sending state](#), we request regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children in other states.
- _____ q. As a [receiving state](#), we require the same level of regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children coming into our state as we require for children residing in our state.
- _____ r. As a [sending state](#), we use and regularly monitor a computerized [tickler tracking system](#) to track children referred to or placed in other states.
- _____ s. As a [receiving state](#), we use and regularly monitor a computerized [tickler tracking system](#) to track children who are referred to or placed in our state.

_____ t. Other strategy, please explain: _____

u. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

8. BARRIER: Many states have difficulty tracking and reporting interjurisdictional referrals and placements as well as tracking the timeliness of each step of the interjurisdictional process.

STRATEGIES:

- _____ a. We include data specific to interjurisdictional cases in our statewide automated child welfare information systems ([SACWIS](#)).
- _____ b. We use an electronic-based information system for [simultaneous transmission](#) of information across state lines.
- _____ c. Based on data in our system, we are able to track if a home study is pending, if placement approval is pending, if approval has been given but a child has not been placed, and other steps in the interstate placement process.
- _____ d. We use an automated state tracking system that is not linked to [SACWIS](#).
- _____ e. We use the [ICPC](#) database to generate and track information.
- _____ f. We routinely provide judges with electronic reports on their child welfare caseload.
- _____ g. Supervisors review data routinely to ensure complete and accurate data on interjurisdictional referrals and placements are entered into a database.
- _____ h. Other strategy, please explain: _____

i. You have rated the following strategies as somewhat or very effective in your state: [applicable strategies will be listed automatically from above on the Web-based version]. Please describe the steps your state took to successfully implement these strategies or the circumstances surrounding the situation that helped facilitate successful implementation of the strategy.

SECTION B: SUPPORTS NEEDED TO FACILITATE INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENTS

This section is divided into eight categories of [supports](#) that correspond to the eight barriers in Section I. These supports could be used to facilitate interstate placements and are listed below each of the eight areas of need. "Supports" refers to actions that can be taken on a national level to provide assistance to states in alleviating barriers and needs. These potential supports are not the responsibility of the individual states. Please evaluate how effective each of these potential supports would be for meeting your state's needs to address interjurisdictional placement issues.

Please rate each possible support on a scale of 1 to 5, where
 1 means it would NOT be effective and
 5 means it would be very effective.

In the box to the right of each support, select one number, 1 through 5, that indicates how effective you think the support would be for facilitating interjurisdictional placements.

1. Potential supports to address staffing needs.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Provide federal funding incentives for timely practices around interstate placements	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Create a federal requirement that states complete home studies (either by their own staff or Purchase of Service contracts) within reasonable time frames at the request of sending states	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Require sending states to pay for home studies and supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Clarify through an Information Memorandum what Title IV-B can pay for in purchase of services	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Provide additional/specific federal funding for staff designated for interjurisdictional responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Create a federal requirement that states must process an ICPC -approved placement of a child in another state's custody who moves to a different State with their preadoptive or foster family or relatives within a reasonable time frame.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Other support, please describe: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

h. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

2. Potential supports to increase knowledge of staff and the judiciary to effectively facilitate interjurisdictional placements.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Develop and use a national database to report back to administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers on timeliness of interjurisdictional practices	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Offer federally sponsored training to Court Improvement Project staff on interjurisdictional issues	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Develop "bench briefs" to educate judges on interjurisdictional issues and what questions to ask in interstate cases	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Review the applicability of ICPC to nonagency placements and provide subsequent guidance to states on this issue	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Review issues on children in interjurisdictional placements to develop best practices	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Develop CD training for interjurisdictional placements procedures and practices	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Other support, please describe: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

h. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

3. Potential supports for modifying attitudes or beliefs that interfere with effective practices for interjurisdictional placements.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Establish stronger federal expectations to ensure accountability for performance on interstate placement cases, particularly in CFSRs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Provide financial incentives to receiving states for timely completion of interstate home studies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Provide clear expectations that interjurisdictional placements that support the permanency plan should be considered early in case review procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Provide training to keep a child-centered focus regarding interjurisdictional issues	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Develop a curriculum that helps allay concerns of caseworkers, providers, and GAL/CASAs about "letting go," and to give them the tools necessary to help successfully transition the child	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Other support, please describe: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

g. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

4. Potential supports for addressing financial barriers to interstate placements, both for funding educational and medical expenses of children.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Develop a national ICPC ombudsman office to mediate conflicts between states regarding financial responsibilities that pose barriers to interstate placement of a child	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Enact federal legislation that prohibits states from charging sending states for educational costs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Enact federal legislation that requires receiving states to cover children under their Medicaid who qualify for SSI in the sending state	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Support states in their efforts to change state legislation to make foster care children placed in their state residents for purposes of educational funding	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Develop a Web site with links to all states' requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Other support, please describe: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

g. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

5. Potential supports for expediting criminal background checks.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	
a. Extend criminal background checks to routinely include all adults in the home	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Establish deadlines for FBI criminal background checks and mechanisms for enforcing these	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Provide federal financial support for states to develop electronic fingerprinting capability	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Develop a comprehensive information resource on all states' procedures for criminal background checks	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Provide support for the development of state models for streamlining the criminal background check process	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Create a federal interagency agreement between DHHS and the FBI regarding time frames for returning background checks	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Provide easier or online access to the National Crime Information Bureau (NCIB)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
h. Other support, please describe: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

i. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

6. Potential supports to address communication difficulties that interfere with expeditious interjurisdictional placements.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Modify ICPC procedures to encourage direct communication between local agencies at all stages of the process	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Revise ICPC procedures to allow local agencies to directly send forms to one another while simultaneously providing copies to the appropriate state officials	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Modify ICPC forms to include any treatment or service needs of the child	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Modify ICPC forms to include frequency of contact needed (sending state) and conditional requirements for placement (receiving state)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Develop a Web site with links to all states' home study requirements, Purchase of Service (POS) contracting requirements, and post-placement standards	<input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Create a mechanism for timely communication and documentation of legitimate reasons for delays in home study completion such as weather-related issues or scheduling conflicts with the family	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Explicate policies and procedures for interstate communication between caseworkers and between caseworkers and families, and define the range of acceptable networking activities across state lines (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
h. Establish an appeal system for denial of a home study that can be used by both individual families and agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Interjurisdictional Placement of Children in the Child Welfare System: Improving the Process

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. Develop curriculum on foster parents' rights and responsibilities and the court system to be shared with the states	<input type="checkbox"/>					
j. Facilitate state access to the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) so that child welfare agencies may assist in locating parents	<input type="checkbox"/>					
k. Modify ICPC regulations to simplify the steps in the process	<input type="checkbox"/>					
l. Other support, please describe: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

m. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

7. Potential supports for moving children in interstate placements toward permanency.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Institute a time limit on the receiving state's responsibility for supervision of a child from another state	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Develop a national uniform home study template that would facilitate dual licensure of foster/adoptive homes	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Develop ICPC procedures and forms to support requests for dual home studies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Establish performance standards that include timelines for interjurisdictional placement activities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Modify federal requirements to focus more strongly on concurrent planning procedures, post-placement practices, and advocacy mechanisms for children and foster parents in interstate placements	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Enact federal legislation that would allow attorneys to represent all relevant parties in out-of-state jurisdictions and facilitate the testimony of parties in other states without requiring interstate travel	<input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Court Improvement Projects and the ABA continue to encourage states to adopt representation standards for attorneys	<input type="checkbox"/>					
h. Provide express authority and procedures that allow judges to communicate with one another to facilitate the process	<input type="checkbox"/>					
i. Develop a process to allow parties and their lawyers to provide testimony across state lines without requiring their interstate travel (such as through telephone hearings)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
j. Develop procedures and an appeal process for ICPC cases related to denial of home study, delays, and sending states refusing to take children back after extended time in residential or foster care (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
k. Review conflicts between states' laws and licensing requirements that impede interjurisdictional placements (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
l. Other support, please describe: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

m. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

8. Potential supports for tracking and reporting interstate placements.

Potential Support	Not effective				Very effective	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	
a. Provide legal clarification of the scope of HIPAA within the child welfare realm from intake to adoption	<input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Require more information be reported in AFCARS related to timelines and jurisdictions involved in interstate placements	<input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Use an XML system that would extract data from incompatible data systems and thus enable data collection from existing databases	<input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Identify the elements needed to track interjurisdictional cases with the goal of introducing federal legislation to support and fund a national tracking/reporting/case management system (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Other support, please describe: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>					

f. Please select the letter of the ONE support from the above list that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. _____

SECTION C: OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENTS

- 1a. What changes, if any, that you have not already described in Section A has your state made in the past 5 years to improve handling of interstate cases?
- 1b. What aspects of these changes would you recommend be promoted nationwide?
- 1c. What aspects would you not recommend?

2. What changes in [LCPC](#) regulations do you think are needed to facilitate interjurisdictional placements and to achieve permanency in a timely manner for children currently in interjurisdictional placements?

- 3a. What benefits of Purchase of Service (POS) contracts for interjurisdictional cases have you experienced in your state?
- 3b. What barriers (including current practices and/or statutory requirements) to implementing Purchase of Service (POS) contracts for interjurisdictional cases have you experienced in your state?

4. Although this survey pertains primarily to interstate placements of children, we recognize that barriers may also exist that prevent the expedient placement of children from one county or district to another within the same state. If such barriers exist in your state, could you please describe what strategies your state has tried to facilitate intercounty and interdistrict placements and any ideas you may have for facilitating these types of placements?

SECTION D: ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S BUREAU'S ADOPTION OPPORTUNITIES GRANTS FUNDED TO FACILITATE INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENTS

1. Did staff from your state participate in training on [ICPC](#) placement issues provided by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) as part of their Adoption Opportunity Grant funding between 1999 and 2002?
_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please continue to 1a.
If no, please skip to Question 2.

- a. Please select the number that best describes the effectiveness of this training in meeting your training needs related to interjurisdictional placement issues:
1 = not at all effective
2 = somewhat ineffective
3 = somewhat effective
4 = very effective
5 = DON'T KNOW
- b. What were the primary benefits of this training?
- c. What were the limitations of the training?
- d. What recommendations do you have for future trainings such as these?
2. Did staff from your state obtain and use the training manuals on ICPC placement issues provided by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) as part of their Adoption Opportunity Grant funding during the past 4 years?
_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please continue to 2a.
If no, please skip to Question 3.

- a. Please select the number that best describes the effectiveness of these training manuals in meeting your training needs related to interjurisdictional placement issues:
1 = not at all effective
2 = somewhat ineffective
3 = somewhat effective
4 = very effective
5 = DON'T KNOW
- b. What were the primary benefits of the training manuals?
- c. What were the limitations of the training manuals?
- d. What recommendations do you have for future training manuals such as these?
3. Has your state received an Adoption Opportunities Grant (AOG) either to facilitate interjurisdictional placements or to address interjurisdictional issues as one aspect of the grant?
_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please continue to 3a.

If no, please review your responses to the survey and submit the completed survey.

- a. Describe the AOG project and the services developed to facilitate interjurisdictional placements.
- b. What mechanisms were created to facilitate collaboration across jurisdictions through the AOG project?
- c. What were the measurable outcomes of this AOG project?
- d. What other benefits or accomplishments were achieved through this AOG project?
- e. What lessons did you learn from this AOG project?
- f. Based on this AOG project, what recommendations do you have for facilitating interjurisdictional placements in other states?

CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact person from your state/territory for the survey is:

[Current contact information will appear here on Web-based survey]

If this information is incorrect, please tell us who we may contact if we have any questions about your survey responses.

Name:

Title:

Phone number:

Email address:

Thank you for your participation

SURVEY DEFINITIONS

ABA – American Bar Association

AFCARS – Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

APHSA – American Public Human Services Association

ASFA – Adoption and Safe Families Act (P.L. 105-89)

Border agreements – Allow caseworkers to cross state lines to complete home studies on prospective foster or adoptive families; usually include safeguards to assure that laws in both states are observed.

Broker contract – An agreement between the sending state and a private agency in the receiving state for professional work in completing home studies or placement supervision.

CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate

CFSR – Child and Family Service Reviews

DHHS – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dual licensure – Process by which a prospective family can be approved to foster or adopt a child through one screening and interview, home study, training, and background check, thus eliminating the need to conduct two separate home studies.

Dual home studies – A home study that explores a family's suitability for foster care and adoption.

GAL – Guardian ad Litem

HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

Interjurisdictional placements – Placements that occur from one governmental unit or jurisdiction to another. While this can mean county to county, for the purposes of the Interstate Compact and for this survey, unless otherwise specified, interjurisdictional placements refer to placing a child from one state to another state.

ICPC – Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children

Just in time training – Training available to staff on an immediate basis before doing a task.

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

“Reasonable efforts to achieve permanency plan” – ASFA requires child welfare systems to make concerted efforts to find permanent families for children who cannot return home. This legislation extends “reasonable efforts” beyond the requirement of the Adoption Assistance & Child Welfare Act of 1980 to try to preserve or reunify birth families.

Receiving state – The state in which the child is to be placed.

SACWIS – Statewide automated child welfare information systems

Sending state – The state in which the child resides prior to placement in another state.

Simultaneous transmission – ICPC information sent from the local office to the sending state ICPC office is also sent at the same time to the receiving state ICPC office and the receiving local office.

SSI – Supplemental Security Income

Strategies – Steps that states take to overcome barriers to timely interjurisdictional placements.

Supports – Actions that take place at a federal level to support state efforts.

Systemic barriers – Conditions that are intrinsic to the child welfare system or other systems with which it interacts and that delay or impede interjurisdictional placement of children from the child welfare system.

Tickler Tracking System – Produces automated alerts that inform the caseworker, supervisor, and ICPC office if response to a home study request that had been assigned at the local level in the receiving state does not occur within a reasonable time frame.

Title IV-E – Public Law 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, which amended Title IV of the Social Security Act to establish a new Part E, which provides for federal payments to the states for foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments made on behalf of certain eligible children.

Workgroup membership – We recommend that you form a workgroup to review and discuss the questions in this survey and to develop a response from your state/territory. This workgroup should include the foster care manager, adoption specialist, and the ICAMA and/or ICPC administrators for your state/territory, as well as any others who have significant expertise in interjurisdictional placements, such as Court Improvement Project directors, judges with expertise related to interjurisdictional placements, adoption organizations, and private agencies. You may wish to include representatives from local offices that have piloted initiatives around interjurisdictional placements.

XML system – XML (Extensible Markup Language) is a flexible way to create common information formats and share both the format and the data on the World Wide Web, intranets, and elsewhere. For example, agreement on a standard or common way to describe the information contained in different databases could facilitate tracking and reporting of information in different formats.

Appendix C: Assessment of Strategies Tables

ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BARRIERS

The tables in this appendix show which strategies States are using. States were asked to report whether they used each strategy and, if so, to rate its effectiveness. If a State had not used a strategy, the State could indicate whether it was currently investigating the strategy, needed assistance to implement the strategy, or if it does not plan to use the strategy. The strategies are grouped by each of the eight barrier categories.

Table C-1. Assessment of Strategies to Address Inadequate Staffing and/or Other Resources

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Contract with private agencies to conduct home studies and/or supervision of children referred to our State	48	32	66.7	11	22.9	21	43.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	33.3	5	10.4	3	6.3	8	16.7
Use a broker contract with a private agency to contract with private agencies for home studies and/or supervision of children referred to our State	48	6	12.5	3	6.3	2	4.2	0	0.0	1	2.1	42	87.5	5	10.4	2	4.2	35	72.9
Contract with private agencies for home studies/supervision of children we send to other States	48	30	62.5	3	6.3	24	50.0	1	2.1	2	4.2	18	37.5	2	4.2	4	8.3	12	25.0
Use a broker contract with a private agency to contract with private agencies to conduct home studies and or supervision of children we send to other States	48	3	6.3	0	0.0	1	2.1	1	2.1	1	2.1	45	93.8	4	8.3	2	4.2	39	81.3
A caseworker from our State conducts the home study and/or supervision of children we send to other States	48	4	8.3	1	2.1	1	2.1	2	4.2	0	0.0	44	91.7	3	6.3	3	6.3	38	79.2
Allow caseworkers from other States to conduct the home study and/or supervision of children referred to our State	48	3	6.3	0	0.0	1	2.1	2	4.2	0	0.0	45	93.8	3	6.3	4	8.3	38	79.2

(continued)

Table C-1. Assessment of Strategies to Address Inadequate Staffing and/or Other Resources (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Have a protocol in place to complete home studies in a timely manner for an ICPC-approved placement of a child in another State's custody who moves to our State with their pre-adoptive or foster family or relatives	48	38	79.2	11	22.9	22	45.8	3	6.3	2	4.2	10	20.8	4	8.3	4	8.3	2	4.2
Accept foster and adoptive parent training provided by other States for approval of families who move to our State with their foster or pre-adoptive child	48	36	75.0	13	27.1	19	39.6	1	2.1	3	6.3	12	25.0	1	2.1	3	6.3	8	16.7
Use border agreements with other States to allow caseworkers to cross State lines to conduct home studies and post-placement supervision visits	48	5	10.4	0	0.0	3	6.3	1	2.1	1	2.1	43	89.6	16	33.3	10	20.8	17	35.4
Use the uniform home study format developed by several States for all intra- and interstate home studies	48	5	10.4	2	4.2	2	4.2	0	0.0	1	2.1	43	89.6	18	37.5	10	20.8	15	31.3
Changed procurement requirements to allow for timely POS arrangements	47	7	14.9	3	6.4	2	4.3	1	2.1	1	2.1	40	85.1	9	19.1	1	2.1	30	63.8
Maintain a list of POS agencies with active contracts with our State for sending States to utilize	47	20	42.6	6	12.8	8	17.0	0	0.0	6	12.8	27	57.4	7	14.9	1	2.1	19	40.4

(continued)

Table C-1. Assessment of Strategies to Address Inadequate Staffing and/or Other Resources (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Arrange POS contracts with agencies to conduct home studies for interjurisdictional cases	47	12	25.5	6	12.8	3	6.4	1	2.1	2	4.3	35	74.5	9	19.1	0	0.0	26	55.3
Arrange POS contracts with agencies for supervision of interjurisdictional cases	47	11	23.4	4	8.5	4	8.5	2	4.3	1	2.1	36	76.6	9	19.1	1	2.1	26	55.3
Designate specific caseworkers to handle all interstate placement cases	47	29	61.7	13	27.7	13	27.7	0	0.0	3	6.4	18	38.3	2	4.3	1	2.1	15	31.9
Define workload responsibilities to more accurately determine staffing needs for interjurisdictional responsibilities	46	16	34.8	4	8.7	9	19.6	1	2.2	2	4.3	30	65.2	9	19.6	4	8.7	17	37.0
Added staff positions to better meet interjurisdictional responsibilities	46	4	8.7	1	2.2	3	6.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	42	91.3	8	17.4	7	15.2	27	58.7
Have resources to facilitate visitation between parents and children placed in other jurisdictions (when TPR has not occurred and it is appropriate and/or required by the courts)	47	18	38.3	3	6.4	8	17.0	1	2.1	6	12.8	29	61.7	11	23.4	3	6.4	15	31.9
Use videoconferencing to maintain connections for children when visits are too costly or distance prevents appropriate level of contact	47	3	6.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	6.4	44	93.6	17	36.2	10	21.3	17	36.2

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; POS = Purchase of Service; TPR = termination of parental rights

Table C-2. Assessment of Strategies to Improve Knowledge and Training

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Offer training on interstate placement responsibilities to supervisors on a regular basis	48	29	60.4	10	20.8	18	37.5	1	2.1	0	0.0	19	39.6	1	2.1	14	29.2	4	8.3
Use a Web tutorial or CD/video to train caseworkers on interjurisdictional processes (or use "just in time" training)	48	6	12.5	0	0.0	3	6.3	2	4.2	1	2.1	42	87.5	23	47.9	11	22.9	8	16.7
Regular caseworker training includes a component to increase awareness of the importance of considering interjurisdictional placements to achieve permanency for some children	47	34	72.3	9	19.1	17	36.2	2	4.3	6	12.8	13	27.7	2	4.3	9	19.1	2	4.3
Regular caseworker training includes a component to increase competency in interjurisdictional placement procedures	47	26	55.3	7	14.9	12	25.5	5	10.6	2	4.3	21	44.7	4	8.5	15	31.9	2	4.3
Training includes how to diligently search for relatives (maternal and paternal) within and outside our State	48	40	83.3	17	35.4	18	37.5	1	2.1	4	8.3	8	16.7	4	8.3	4	8.3	0	0.0
Provide the tools (e.g., Child Support Agency, Web sites, search agencies) to assist in the diligent search for relatives	48	37	77.1	18	37.5	15	31.3	0	0.0	4	8.3	11	22.9	4	8.3	7	14.6	0	0.0

(continued)

Table C-2. Assessment of Strategies to Improve Knowledge and Training (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Work with State's Court Improvement Program to train judges and GAL/CASA members on interjurisdictional issues and how to conduct interjurisdictional placements and improve timeliness of placements	48	28	58.3	4	8.3	15	31.3	2	4.2	7	14.6	20	41.7	13	27.1	7	14.6	0	0.0
In-state expert on interjurisdictional issues available for legal or social work consultation on interstate cases	48	45	93.8	36	75.0	9	18.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	6.3	2	4.2	0	0.0	1	2.1

GAL = Guardian ad Litem; CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocate

Table C-3. Assessment of Strategies to Address Staff Attitudes and their Beliefs

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Communicate commitment to interjurisdictional placement responsibilities to the caseworker level	48	44	91.7	15	31.3	22	45.8	3	6.3	4	8.3	4	8.3	2	4.2	1	2.1	1	2.1
To consider out-of-state placements to achieve permanency for children is clearly defined in policy and communicated to staff	48	46	95.8	15	31.3	26	54.2	3	6.3	2	4.2	2	4.2	1	2.1	0	0.0	1	2.1
Have supports, such as training, for caseworkers and caretakers to help them deal with the emotional process of "letting go" of the child for whom an in-state permanent placement has not been found	48	24	50.0	8	16.7	12	25.0	1	2.1	3	6.3	24	50.0	12	25.0	6	12.5	6	12.5
Provide training for caseworkers and supports for the child to prepare and help the child transition to a new placement in another State	47	29	61.7	7	14.9	16	34.0	2	4.3	4	8.5	18	38.3	9	19.1	7	14.9	2	4.3
Use techniques, such as open adoption and guardianships, to support children in maintaining (when appropriate) important connections in the sending State	48	37	77.1	14	29.2	20	41.7	1	2.1	2	4.2	11	22.9	5	10.4	4	8.3	2	4.2

(continued)

Table C-3. Assessment of Strategies to Address Staff Attitudes and their Beliefs (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Encourage staff to routinely consider interjurisdictional placement options that support the permanency plan	48	44	91.7	19	39.6	18	37.5	1	2.1	6	12.5	4	8.3	3	6.3	1	2.1	0	0.0
Develop system for factoring interstate case duties into caseworker workload	48	18	37.5	8	16.7	5	10.4	2	4.2	3	6.3	30	62.5	13	27.1	8	16.7	9	18.8
Develop protocol for handling interjurisdictional placement responsibilities	48	38	79.2	14	29.2	17	35.4	2	4.2	5	10.4	10	20.8	6	12.5	2	4.2	2	4.2
Develop system of accountability for processing interjurisdictional cases in a timely manner	48	32	66.7	15	31.3	9	18.8	3	6.3	5	10.4	16	33.3	8	16.7	6	12.5	2	4.2
Hold supervisors and caseworkers accountable to seek interstate resources when needed for children	48	41	85.4	11	22.9	24	50.0	2	4.2	4	8.3	7	14.6	5	10.4	2	4.2	0	0.0
Require staff to document their response to out-of-state inquiries for children awaiting adoption by families with complete home studies	48	40	83.3	17	35.4	17	35.4	1	2.1	5	10.4	8	16.7	4	8.3	2	4.2	2	4.2

(continued)

Table C-3. Assessment of Strategies to Address Staff Attitudes and their Beliefs (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Clarify in training for caseworkers that ASFA timelines apply to interjurisdictional cases	48	45	93.8	21	43.8	19	39.6	3	6.3	2	4.2	3	6.3	1	2.1	0	0.0	2	4.2
Set statewide guidelines or standards for completion of interjurisdictional activities at each step in the process	48	29	60.4	9	18.8	13	27.1	2	4.2	5	10.4	19	39.6	5	10.4	6	12.5	8	16.7

ASFA = Adoption and Safe Families Act

Table C-4. Assessment of Strategies to Address Funding Issues for Educational or Medical Expenses

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Change State law/policy to allow foster children or children in pre-adoptive placements to be considered residents of the State for purposes of the provision of education	48	24	50.0	16	33.3	3	6.3	1	2.1	4	8.3	24	50.0	4	8.3	1	2.1	19	39.6
Fund the educational expenses of children placed in foster care or pre-adoptive placements in other States	48	32	66.7	16	33.3	10	20.8	4	8.3	2	4.2	16	33.3	0	0.0	1	2.1	15	31.3
Cover educational expenses of children sent from other States	48	40	83.3	26	54.2	11	22.9	2	4.2	1	2.1	8	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	16.7
Generally cover medical expenses not covered by sending States for non-Title IV-E children	48	23	47.9	12	25.0	9	18.8	1	2.1	1	2.1	25	52.1	0	0.0	1	2.1	24	50.0
Provide Medicaid to children receiving State-funded adoption assistance from another State residing in our State	48	41	85.4	33	68.8	7	14.6	0	0.0	1	2.1	7	14.6	2	4.2	1	2.1	4	8.3
Offer Medicaid coverage as part of TANF child-only grants for children in relative placements	48	42	87.5	29	60.4	10	20.8	0	0.0	3	6.3	6	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	12.5

(continued)

Table C-4. Assessment of Strategies to Address Funding Issues for Educational or Medical Expenses (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Provide coverage for additional medical costs not covered by Medicaid for Title IV-E children placed in another State	48	41	85.4	24	50.0	12	25.0	2	4.2	3	6.3	7	14.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	14.6
Provide coverage for medical expenses for children placed in another State but lacking Title IV-E eligibility	48	44	91.7	24	50.0	12	25.0	5	10.4	3	6.3	4	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	8.3
Include a form indicating our expectations regarding how medical and educational expenses will be covered when referring a child for placement in another State	48	38	79.2	20	41.7	16	33.3	0	0.0	2	4.2	10	20.8	3	6.3	3	6.3	4	8.3
Develop process for resolving interstate issues with educational and medical expenses in a timely manner	48	28	58.3	4	8.3	19	39.6	2	4.2	3	6.3	20	41.7	12	25.0	4	8.3	4	8.3
Specify availability and accessibility of resources to meet a referred child's needs	48	43	89.6	15	31.3	24	50.0	2	4.2	2	4.2	5	10.4	4	8.3	0	0.0	1	2.1
Place information on State's Web site regarding coverage of medical and educational expenses of children placed in State from other States	48	10	20.8	4	8.3	5	10.4	0	0.0	1	2.1	38	79.2	17	35.4	10	20.8	11	22.9

TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Table C-5. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Criminal Background Check Delays

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Use electronic fingerprinting for background checks to expedite the process	48	13	27.1	8	16.7	4	8.3	0	0.0	1	2.1	35	72.9	13	27.1	11	22.9	11	22.9
Provide access to a name-based criminal database and conduct name checks directly	48	27	56.3	14	29.2	12	25.0	0	0.0	1	2.1	21	43.8	5	10.4	4	8.3	12	25.0
Conduct a prescreening name check early in the home study process to determine if a full State criminal background check is needed	48	19	39.6	9	18.8	6	12.5	2	4.2	2	4.2	29	60.4	4	8.3	3	6.3	22	45.8
Enter into an agreement with State or local law enforcement agencies to conduct criminal record checks in a timely manner	48	44	91.7	21	43.8	17	35.4	5	10.4	1	2.1	4	8.3	1	2.1	2	4.2	1	2.1
Routinely inform receiving States of our criminal record check requirements during the referral process	48	28	58.3	15	31.3	8	16.7	2	4.2	3	6.3	20	41.7	6	12.5	4	8.3	10	20.8
Accept the criminal background requirements of the receiving State if they are less extensive than our requirements	48	31	64.6	16	33.3	12	25.0	1	2.1	2	4.2	17	35.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	35.4
Conduct the criminal background requirements of the sending State if they are more extensive than our requirements	48	20	41.7	9	18.8	5	10.4	0	0.0	6	12.5	28	58.3	0	0.0	2	4.2	26	54.2

(continued)

Table C-5. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Criminal Background Check Delays (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Conduct the criminal background checks if the receiving State's requirements are less extensive than our requirements	48	21	43.8	7	14.6	9	18.8	2	4.2	3	6.3	27	56.3	3	6.3	3	6.3	21	43.8
Make criminal background record requirements available on State's Web site	48	25	52.1	13	27.1	8	16.7	1	2.1	3	6.3	23	47.9	3	6.3	10	20.8	10	20.8
Streamline criminal background check process to limit the number of individuals and agencies involved in the process	48	37	77.1	17	35.4	15	31.3	1	2.1	4	8.3	11	22.9	3	6.3	2	4.2	6	12.5

Table C-6. Assessment of Strategies to Address Communication Delays and Difficulties

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Use a secure Web-based system for transmitting ICPC referral information across jurisdictions or State lines	48	3	6.3	1	2.1	2	4.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	45	93.8	33	68.8	4	8.3	8	16.7
Use simultaneous transmission to send information from State's local agencies to both sending and receiving States' ICPC Administrators and to the sending/receiving local agency	48	10	20.8	3	6.3	5	10.4	0	0.0	2	4.2	38	79.2	21	43.8	4	8.3	13	27.1
Encourage direct communication between caseworkers in sending and receiving States	48	45	93.8	23	47.9	20	41.7	0	0.0	2	4.2	3	6.3	1	2.1	0	0.0	2	4.2
Establish procedures to facilitate communication between caseworkers and ICPC Administrator	48	45	93.8	36	75.0	8	16.7	0	0.0	1	2.1	3	6.3	1	2.1	1	2.1	1	2.1
Coordinate events for caseworkers and supervisors to interact with staff from outside their jurisdiction to promote potential networking	48	24	50.0	11	22.9	10	20.8	0	0.0	3	6.3	24	50.0	9	18.8	4	8.3	11	22.9

(continued)

Table C-6. Assessment of Strategies to Address Communication Delays and Difficulties (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Develop a mechanism for judicial oversight including communication from sending State's judge to receiving State's judge to ensure timely placement decisions	48	5	10.4	1	2.1	0	0.0	2	4.2	2	4.2	43	89.6	23	47.9	3	6.3	17	35.4
Use a tickler tracking system to alert caseworkers of time-sensitive events such as expected date of home study completion	48	19	39.6	5	10.4	10	20.8	3	6.3	1	2.1	29	60.4	11	22.9	13	27.1	5	10.4
Develop a process for negotiating which State pays to maintain an emergency placement until the emergency is resolved when a placement disrupts and an emergency placement is needed	48	26	54.2	15	31.3	8	16.7	1	2.1	2	4.2	22	45.8	5	10.4	3	6.3	14	29.2

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

Table C-7. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Permanency Delays

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Encourage concurrent planning to identify out-of-state placement resources early in the case assessment	48	43	89.6	17	35.4	22	45.8	1	2.1	3	6.3	5	10.4	3	6.3	2	4.2	0	0.0
Incorporate primary and concurrent permanency plans in the placement agreement and define tasks to accomplish both plans in the case plan	47	37	78.7	13	27.7	19	40.4	2	4.3	3	6.4	10	21.3	6	12.8	3	6.4	1	2.1
Provide child's medical passport/history to foster/pre-adoptive parent	48	47	97.9	22	45.8	22	45.8	1	2.1	2	4.2	1	2.1	0	0.0	1	2.1	0	0.0
Provide child's education information to foster/pre-adoptive parent to facilitate school enrollment	48	47	97.9	22	45.8	23	47.9	0	0.0	2	4.2	1	2.1	0	0.0	1	2.1	0	0.0
Provide judges with access to computer-based reports on children in their caseload including length of time in foster care	47	17	36.2	5	10.6	6	12.8	0	0.0	6	12.8	30	63.8	10	21.3	3	6.4	17	36.2
Involve Court Improvement Programs statewide in addressing issues related to interstate placements and permanency	48	36	75.0	7	14.6	12	25.0	4	8.3	13	27.1	12	25.0	7	14.6	2	4.2	3	6.3

(continued)

Table C-7. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Permanency Delays (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy						Don't Use Strategy											
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Develop mechanisms for judges from sending and receiving States to work together in moving children toward permanency	48	8	16.7	1	2.1	1	2.1	1	2.1	5	10.4	40	83.3	20	41.7	3	6.3	17	35.4
Encourage courts to make "reasonable efforts to achieve the permanency plan" findings when appropriate for interstate placement cases to move children toward permanency	48	48	100.0	23	47.9	17	35.4	0	0.0	8	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Facilitate stronger CASA/GAL advocacy for children in interstate placements	47	29	61.7	3	6.4	11	23.4	2	4.3	13	27.7	18	38.3	5	10.6	2	4.3	11	23.4
Develop mechanisms for meaningful participation from foster/adoptive parents and significant others (therapists, teachers) in case reviews and court hearings that are held out of State	47	17	36.2	2	4.3	4	8.5	2	4.3	9	19.1	30	63.8	12	25.5	4	8.5	14	29.8
Provide judicial oversight in the county of origin for children who have been placed out of State for an extended period of time	47	46	97.9	31	66.0	12	25.5	0	0.0	3	6.4	1	2.1	1	2.1	0	0.0	0	0.0

(continued)

Table C-7. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Permanency Delays (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Include early identification of relative resources as a quality assurance item on a regular basis	47	46	97.9	18	38.3	21	44.7	1	2.1	6	12.8	1	2.1	0	0.0	1	2.1	0	0.0
Accept a home study, completed and approved by the State agency or a State-licensed child-placing agency in another State, as a valid home study	48	47	97.9	37	77.1	9	18.8	0	0.0	1	2.1	1	2.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.1
Work with sending States in conducting an annual assessment with relative caregivers related to their decisions/intentions regarding adoption and other options for permanency so that the case can be closed and years of supervision are not required by the receiving State	47	39	83.0	12	25.5	18	38.3	1	2.1	8	17.0	8	17.0	3	6.4	4	8.5	1	2.1
Develop protocols and guidelines for Adoption Assistance negotiations with prospective adoptive parents for children in the care of our State child welfare system	48	46	95.8	35	72.9	9	18.8	1	2.1	1	2.1	2	4.2	1	2.1	0	0.0	1	2.1
Request regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children in other States	48	45	93.8	26	54.2	18	37.5	0	0.0	1	2.1	3	6.3	1	2.1	1	2.1	1	2.1

(continued)

Table C-7. Assessment of Strategies to Reduce Permanency Delays (continued)

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Require the same level of regular face-to-face contacts for supervision of children coming into our State as we require for children residing in our State	48	43	89.6	24	50.0	16	33.3	2	4.2	1	2.1	5	10.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	10.4
Use and regularly monitor a computerized tickler tracking system to track children referred to or placed in other States	47	20	42.6	10	21.3	8	17.0	1	2.1	1	2.1	27	57.4	11	23.4	12	25.5	4	8.5
Use and regularly monitor a computerized tickler tracking system to track children who are referred to or placed in our State	47	23	48.9	10	21.3	10	21.3	1	2.1	2	4.3	24	51.1	10	21.3	12	25.5	2	4.3

CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocate; GAL = Guardian ad Litem

Table C-8. Assessment of Strategies to Improve Tracking and Reporting

Strategy	States N	Use Strategy								Don't Use Strategy									
		Use Strategy		Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Ineffective		Don't Know		Don't Use Strategy		Need Assistance		Investigating		No Plans	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Include data specific to interjurisdictional cases in a SACWIS system	47	19	40.4	5	10.6	10	21.3	0	0.0	4	8.5	28	59.6	9	19.1	12	25.5	7	14.9
Use an electronic-based information system for simultaneous transmission of information across State lines	48	1	2.1	1	2.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	47	97.9	25	52.1	5	10.4	17	35.4
Ability to track if a home study is pending, if placement approval is pending, if approval has been given but a child has not been placed, and other steps in the interstate placement process	48	34	70.8	19	39.6	14	29.2	0	0.0	1	2.1	14	29.2	7	14.6	6	12.5	1	2.1
Use an automated State tracking system that is not linked to a SACWIS	46	29	63.0	15	32.6	13	28.3	0	0.0	1	2.2	17	37.0	3	6.5	2	4.3	12	26.1
Use the ICPC database to generate and track information	47	30	63.8	18	38.3	10	21.3	2	4.3	0	0.0	17	36.2	4	8.5	1	2.1	12	25.5
Provide judges with electronic reports on child welfare caseload	47	11	23.4	4	8.5	2	4.3	0	0.0	5	10.6	36	76.6	12	25.5	1	2.1	23	48.9
Review data routinely to ensure that complete and accurate data on interjurisdictional referrals and placements are entered into a database	45	24	53.3	4	8.9	9	20.0	3	6.7	8	17.8	21	46.7	5	11.1	9	20.0	7	15.6

SACWIS = statewide automated child welfare information system; ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

Appendix D:
Assessment of
Potential Supports
Tables

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS

The tables in this appendix show the supports States think would be the most helpful in addressing interjurisdictional placement issues. States were asked to evaluate how effective each of the potential supports would be to them by rating each support on a scale of one to five, with one meaning not effective and five meaning very effective. The supports are grouped by each of the eight barrier categories.

“Supports” refer to actions that can be taken on a national level to provide assistance to States in alleviating barriers and needs. These potential supports are not the responsibility of the individual States.

Table D-1. Assessment of Potential Supports to Address Inadequate Staffing and/or Other Resources

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Provide Federal funding incentives for timely practices around interstate placements	48	3	6.3	0	0.0	7	14.6	10	20.8	23	47.9	4.2	5	10.4
Create a Federal requirement that States complete home studies within reasonable timeframes at the request of sending States, either by their own staff or POS contracts	48	12	25.0	6	12.5	9	18.8	10	20.8	6	12.5	2.8	5	10.4
Require sending States to pay for home studies and supervision	48	28	58.3	2	4.2	3	6.3	3	6.3	4	8.3	1.8	8	16.7
Clarify through an Information Memorandum what Title IV-B can pay for in purchase of services	48	1	2.1	1	2.1	10	20.8	11	22.9	21	43.8	4.1	4	8.3
Provide additional/specific Federal funding for staff designated for interjurisdictional responsibilities	48	1	2.1	0	0.0	2	4.2	9	18.8	34	70.8	4.6	2	4.2
Create a Federal requirement that States must process an ICPC-approved placement of a child in another State's custody who moves to a different State with their pre-adoptive or foster family or relatives within a reasonable timeframe	48	7	14.6	4	8.3	7	14.6	13	27.1	11	22.9	3.4	6	12.5

POS = Purchase of Service; ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

Table D-2. Assessment of Potential Supports to Improve Knowledge and Training

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Develop and use a national database to report back to administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers on timeliness of interjurisdictional practices	48	8	16.7	3	6.3	11	22.9	9	18.8	10	20.8	3.2	7	14.6
Offer federally sponsored training to Court Improvement Program staff on interjurisdictional issues	48	2	4.2	1	2.1	6	12.5	13	27.1	25	52.1	4.2	1	2.1
Develop "bench briefs" to educate judges on interjurisdictional issues and what questions to ask in interstate cases	48	1	2.1	1	2.1	4	8.3	16	33.3	24	50.0	4.3	2	4.2
Review the applicability of ICPC to nonagency placements and provide subsequent guidance to States on this issue	48	4	8.3	3	6.3	7	14.6	14	29.2	7	14.6	3.5	13	27.1
Review issues on children in interjurisdictional placements to develop best practices	48	0	0.0	1	2.1	8	16.7	14	29.2	24	50.0	4.3	1	2.1
Develop CD training for interjurisdictional placement procedures and practices	48	2	4.2	4	8.3	10	20.8	8	16.7	22	45.8	4.0	2	4.2

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

Table D-3. Assessment of Potential Supports to Address Staff Attitudes and/or their Beliefs

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Establish stronger Federal expectations to ensure accountability for performance on interstate placement cases, particularly in CFSRs	48	10	20.8	5	10.4	9	18.8	10	20.8	7	14.6	3.0	7	14.6
Provide financial incentives to receiving States for timely completion of interstate home studies	48	4	8.3	1	2.1	6	12.5	10	20.8	24	50.0	4.1	3	6.3
Provide clear expectations that interjurisdictional placements that support the permanency plan should be considered early in case review procedures	48	2	4.2	2	4.2	8	16.7	19	39.6	17	35.4	4.0	0	0.0
Provide training to keep a child-centered focus regarding interjurisdictional issues	48	2	4.2	2	4.2	6	12.5	13	27.1	25	52.1	4.2	0	0.0
Develop a curriculum that helps allay caseworkers', providers', GAL/CASAs' concerns about "letting go," and give them the tools necessary to help successfully transition the child	48	4	8.3	4	8.3	13	27.1	13	27.1	12	25.0	3.5	2	4.2

CFSR = Child and Family Services Review; GAL = Guardian ad Litem; CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocate

Table D-4. Assessment of Potential Supports to Address Funding Issues for Educational or Medical Expenses

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Develop a national ICPC ombudsman office to mediate conflicts between States regarding financial responsibilities that pose barriers to interstate placement of a child	48	10	20.8	6	12.5	4	8.3	9	18.8	13	27.1	3.2	6	12.5
Enact Federal legislation that prohibits States from charging sending States for educational costs	48	5	10.4	0	0.0	6	12.5	8	16.7	24	50.0	4.1	5	10.4
Enact Federal legislation that requires receiving States to cover children under their Medicaid who qualify for SSI in the sending State	48	2	4.2	0	0.0	2	4.2	7	14.6	32	66.7	4.6	5	10.4
Support States in their efforts to change State legislation to make foster care children placed in their State residents for purposes of educational funding	48	2	4.2	3	6.3	1	2.1	12	25.0	23	47.9	4.2	7	14.6
Develop a Web site with links to all States' requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses	48	2	4.2	3	6.3	0	0.0	13	27.1	30	62.5	4.4	0	0.0

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; SSI = Supplemental Security Income

Table D-5. Assessment of Potential Supports to Reduce Criminal Background Check Delays

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Extend criminal background checks to routinely include all adults in the home	48	0	0.0	3	6.3	1	2.1	6	12.5	37	77.1	4.6	1	2.1
Establish deadlines for FBI criminal background checks and mechanisms for enforcing these	48	3	6.3	0	0.0	2	4.2	6	12.5	35	72.9	4.5	2	4.2
Provide Federal financial support for States to develop electronic fingerprinting capability	48	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.2	7	14.6	38	79.2	4.8	1	2.1
Develop a comprehensive information resource on all States' procedures for criminal background checks	48	4	8.3	3	6.3	7	14.6	11	22.9	22	45.8	3.9	1	2.1
Provide support for the development of State models for streamlining the criminal background check process	47	2	4.3	2	4.3	4	8.5	9	19.1	25	53.2	4.3	5	10.6
Create a Federal interagency agreement between DHHS and the FBI regarding timeframes for fingerprinting	48	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.2	6	12.5	39	81.3	4.8	1	2.1
Provide easier or online access to the NCIC	48	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.2	9	18.8	35	72.9	4.7	2	4.2

FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation; DHHS = U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; NCIC = National Crime Information Center

Table D-6. Assessment of Potential Supports to Address Communication Delays and Difficulties

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Modify ICPC procedures to encourage direct communication between local agencies at all stages of the process	48	11	22.9	5	10.4	14	29.2	4	8.3	10	20.8	2.9	4	8.3
Revise ICPC procedures to allow local agencies to directly send forms to one another while simultaneously providing copies to the appropriate State officials	48	20	41.7	6	12.5	6	12.5	8	16.7	6	12.5	2.4	2	4.2
Modify ICPC forms to include any treatment or service needs of the child	48	6	12.5	4	8.3	11	22.9	10	20.8	16	33.3	3.6	1	2.1
Modify ICPC forms to include frequency of contact needed (sending State) and conditional requirements for placement (receiving State)	48	4	8.3	2	4.2	9	18.8	13	27.1	18	37.5	3.8	2	4.2
Develop a Web site with links to all States' home study requirements, POS contracting requirements, and post-placement standards	48	1	2.1	3	6.3	6	12.5	14	29.2	23	47.9	4.2	1	2.1
Create a mechanism for timely communication and documentation of legitimate reasons for delays in home study completion such as weather-related issues or scheduling conflicts with the family	48	5	10.4	4	8.3	12	25.0	10	20.8	15	31.3	3.6	2	4.2
Explicate policies and procedures for interstate communication between caseworkers and between caseworkers and families, and define the range of acceptable networking activities across State lines (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	48	7	14.6	4	8.3	13	27.1	8	16.7	9	18.8	3.2	7	14.6

(continued)

Table D-6. Assessment of Potential Supports to Address Communication Delays and Difficulties (continued)

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Establish an appeal system for denial of a home study that can be used by both individual families or agencies	48	7	14.6	10	20.8	2	4.2	11	22.9	10	20.8	3.2	8	16.7
Develop curriculum on foster parents' rights and responsibilities and the court system to be shared with the States	48	6	12.5	5	10.4	13	27.1	12	25.0	8	16.7	3.3	4	8.3
Facilitate State access to the FPLS so that child welfare agencies may assist in locating parents	48	2	4.2	2	4.2	8	16.7	12	25.0	22	45.8	4.1	2	4.2
Modify ICPC regulations to simplify the steps in the process	48	7	14.6	5	10.4	8	16.7	9	18.8	13	27.1	3.4	6	12.5

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; POS = Purchase of Service; FPLS = Federal Parent Locator Service

Table D-7. Assessment of Potential Supports to Reduce Permanency Delays

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Institute a time limit on the receiving State's responsibility for supervision of a child from another State	48	13	27.1	3	6.3	12	25.0	6	12.5	9	18.8	2.9	5	10.4
Develop a national uniform home study template that would facilitate dual licensure of foster/adoptive homes	48	5	10.4	2	4.2	7	14.6	9	18.8	23	47.9	3.9	2	4.2
Develop ICPC procedures and forms to support requests for dual home studies	48	2	4.2	1	2.1	7	14.6	11	22.9	26	54.2	4.2	1	2.1
Establish performance standards that include timelines for interjurisdictional placement activities	48	3	6.3	0	0.0	12	25.0	14	29.2	11	22.9	3.8	8	16.7
Modify Federal requirements to focus more strongly on concurrent planning procedures, post-placement practices, and advocacy mechanisms for children and foster parents in interstate placements	48	3	6.3	7	14.6	4	8.3	14	29.2	11	22.9	3.6	9	18.8
Enact Federal legislation that would allow attorneys to represent all relevant parties in out-of-state jurisdictions and facilitate the testimony of parties in other States without requiring interstate travel	48	11	22.9	4	8.3	4	8.3	10	20.8	10	20.8	3.1	9	18.8
Court Improvement Programs and ABA continue to encourage States to adopt representation standards for attorneys	48	2	4.2	4	8.3	9	18.8	9	18.8	15	31.3	3.8	9	18.8
Provide express authority and procedures that allow judges to communicate with one another in order to facilitate the process	48	5	10.4	1	2.1	11	22.9	13	27.1	12	25.0	3.6	6	12.5

(continued)

Table D-7. Assessment of Potential Supports to Reduce Permanency Delays (continued)

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Develop a process to allow parties and their lawyers to provide testimony across State lines without requiring their interstate travel (such as through telephone hearings)	48	2	4.2	1	2.1	9	18.8	12	25.0	21	43.8	4.1	3	6.3
Develop procedures and an appeal process of ICPC cases related to denial of home study, delays, and sending States refusing to take children back after extended time in residential or foster care (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	48	2	4.2	4	8.3	6	12.5	11	22.9	20	41.7	4.0	5	10.4
Review conflicts between States' laws and licensing requirements that impede interjurisdictional placements (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	48	4	8.3	1	2.1	7	14.6	18	37.5	17	35.4	3.9	1	2.1

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; ABA = American Bar Association

Table D-8. Assessment of Potential Supports to Improve Tracking and Reporting

Potential Support	States	Not Effective 1		2		3		4		Very Effective 5		Mean	Don't Know	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%
Provide legal clarification of the scope of HIPAA within the child welfare realm from intake to adoption	48	3	6.3	3	6.3	7	14.6	12	25.0	22	45.8	4.0	1	2.1
Require more information be reported in AFCARS related to timelines and jurisdictions involved in interstate placements	48	7	14.6	6	12.5	17	35.4	6	12.5	5	10.4	2.9	7	14.6
Use a system that would extract data from incompatible data systems (an XML system) and thus enable data collection from existing data systems	48	5	10.4	2	4.2	8	16.7	9	18.8	7	14.6	3.4	17	35.4
Identify the elements needed to track interjurisdictional cases with the goal of introducing Federal legislation to support and fund a national tracking/reporting/case management system (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	48	8	16.7	3	6.3	10	20.8	11	22.9	10	20.8	3.3	6	12.5

HIPAA = Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996; AFCARS = Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System; XML = Extensible Markup Language

Appendix E: Assessment of Top Potential Supports Tables

TOP RATED POTENTIAL SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS

The tables in this appendix show the top potential supports that States reported would be the most helpful to them. States were asked to identify the one support from each of the eight groups of supports that would help them the most in placing children across jurisdictions.

“Supports” refer to actions that can be taken on a national level to provide assistance to States in alleviating barriers and needs. These potential supports are not the responsibility of the individual States.

Table E-1. Top Supports Related to Staffing and/or Other Resources

Top Support	States (N = 43)	
	n	%
Provide additional/specific Federal funding for staff designated for interjurisdictional responsibilities	28	65.1%
Provide Federal funding incentives for timely practices around interstate placements	8	18.6%
Require sending States to pay for home studies and supervision	2	4.7%
Clarify through an Information Memorandum what Title IV-B can pay for in purchase of services	2	4.7%
Create a Federal requirement that States must process an ICPC-approved placement of a child in another State's custody who moves to a different State with their pre-adoptive or foster family or relatives within a reasonable time frame	2	4.7%
Create a Federal requirement that States complete home studies within reasonable time frames at the request of sending States (either by their own staff or POS contracts)	1	2.3%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children.

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; POS = Purchase of Service.

Table E-2. Top Supports Related to Knowledge and Training

Top Support	States (N = 44)	
	n	%
Develop "bench briefs" to educate judges on interjurisdictional issues and what questions to ask in interstate cases	12	27.3%
Offer federally sponsored training to Court Improvement Program staff on interjurisdictional issues	8	18.2%
Review issues on children in interjurisdictional placements to develop best practices	8	18.2%
Develop CD training for interjurisdictional placement procedures and practices	8	18.2%
Develop and use a national database to report back to administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers on timeliness of interjurisdictional practices	6	13.6%
Review the applicability of ICPC to nonagency placements and provide subsequent guidance to States on this issue	2	4.5%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children.

CD = compact disk; ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

Table E-3. Top Supports Related to Staff Attitudes and their Beliefs

Top Support	States (N = 44)	
	n	%
Provide financial incentives to receiving States for timely completion of interstate home studies	19	43.2%
Provide training to keep a child-centered focus regarding interjurisdictional issues	9	20.5%
Provide clear expectations that interjurisdictional placements that support the permanency plan should be considered early in case review procedures	7	15.9%
Establish stronger Federal expectations to ensure accountability for performance in interstate placement cases, particularly in CFSRs	5	11.4%
Develop a curriculum that helps allay the concerns of caseworkers, providers, and GAL/CASA about “letting go” and gives them the tools necessary to help successfully transition the child	4	9.1%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children.

CFSR = Child and Family Services Review; GAL = Guardian ad Litem; CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocate.

Table E-4. Top Supports Related to Funding Issues for Educational or Medical Expenses

Top Support	States (N = 44)	
	n	%
Develop a Web site with links to all States’ requirements for coverage of medical and educational expenses	15	34.1%
Enact Federal legislation that requires receiving States to cover children under their Medicaid who qualify for SSI in the sending State	10	22.7%
Enact Federal legislation that prohibits States from charging sending States for educational costs	8	18.2%
Develop a national ICPC ombudsman office to mediate conflicts between States regarding financial responsibilities that pose barriers to interstate placement of a child	7	15.9%
Support States in their efforts to change State legislation to make foster care children placed in their State residents for purposes of educational funding	3	6.8%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. One State offered an “other” support that it rated as the top support: apply consistent interjurisdictional placement requirements and provide funding for States that must raise their standards to meet these requirements.

SSI = Supplemental Security Income; ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

Table E-5. Top Supports Related to Criminal Background Check Delays

Top Support	States (N = 43)	
	n	%
Provide Federal financial support for States to develop electronic fingerprinting capability	14	32.6%
Create a Federal interagency agreement between DHHS and the FBI regarding time frames for fingerprinting	11	25.6%
Provide easier or online access to the NCIC	8	18.6%
Establish deadlines for FBI criminal background checks and mechanisms for enforcing these	4	9.3%
Develop a comprehensive information resource on all States' procedures for criminal background checks	2	4.7%
Provide support for the development of State models for streamlining the criminal background check process	2	4.7%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. Two States offered "other" supports that they rated as the top support: (1) provide direct online access to the national criminal database and (2) require States to report details of positive criminal record matches.

DHHS = U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation; NCIC = National Crime Information Center.

Table E-6. Top Supports Related to Communications

Top Support	States (N = 42)	
	n	%
Develop a Web site with links to all States' home study requirements, POS contracting requirements, and post-placement standards	11	26.2%
Facilitate State access to the FPLS so that child welfare agencies may assist in locating parents	8	19.0%
Modify ICPC regulations to simplify the steps in the process	8	19.0%
Create a mechanism for timely communication and documentation of legitimate reasons for delays in home study completion such as weather-related issues or scheduling conflicts with the family	3	7.1%
Modify ICPC procedures to encourage direct communication between local agencies at all stages of the process	2	4.8%
Revise ICPC procedures to allow local agencies to directly send forms to one another while simultaneously providing copies to the appropriate State officials	2	4.8%
Modify ICPC forms to include frequency of contact needed (sending State) and conditional requirements for placement (receiving State)	2	4.8%
Explicate policies and procedures for interstate communication between caseworkers and between caseworkers and families and define the range of acceptable networking activities across State lines (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	2	4.8%
Establish an appeal system for denial of a home study that can be used by both individual families and agencies	2	4.8%
Modify ICPC forms to include any treatment or service needs of the child	1	2.4%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. One State offered an "other" support that it rated as the top support: create an online check list.

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; POS = Purchase of Service; FPLS = Federal Parent Locator Service.

Table E-7. Top Supports to Reduce Permanency Delays

Top Support	States (N = 43)	
	n	%
Develop a national uniform home study template that would facilitate dual licensure of foster/adoptive homes	9	20.9%
Develop procedures and an appeal process of ICPC cases related to denial of home study, delays, and sending States refusing to take children back after extended time in residential or foster care (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	9	20.9%
Review conflicts between States' laws and licensing requirements that impede interjurisdictional placements (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	8	18.6%
Modify Federal requirements to focus more strongly on concurrent planning procedures, post-placement practices, and advocacy mechanisms for children and foster parents in interstate placements	4	9.3%
Provide express authority and procedures that allow judges to communicate with one another in order to facilitate the process	3	7.0%
Develop a process to allow parties and their lawyers to provide testimony across State lines without requiring their interstate travel (such as through telephone hearings)	3	7.0%
Institute a time limit on the receiving State's responsibility for supervision of a child from another State	2	4.7%
Court Improvement Programs and ABA continue to encourage States to adopt representation standards for attorneys	2	4.7%
Establish performance standards that include timelines for interjurisdictional placement activities	1	2.3%
Enact Federal legislation that would allow attorneys to represent all relevant parties in out-of-state jurisdictions and facilitate the testimony of parties in other States without requiring interstate travel	1	2.3%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children. One State offered an "other" support that it rated as the top support: convene a national workgroup to examine universal subsidized guardianship standards.

ICPC = Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; ABA = American Bar Association.

Table E-8. Top Supports Related to Tracking and Reporting

Top Support	States (N = 44)	
	n	%
Identify the elements needed to track interjurisdictional cases with the goal of introducing Federal legislation to support and fund a national tracking/reporting/case management system (possibly through convening a national workgroup to explore this issue)	16	36.4%
Provide legal clarification of the scope of HIPAA within the child welfare realm from intake to adoption	15	34.1%
Use a system that would extract data from incompatible data systems (an XML system) and thus enable data collection from existing data systems	7	15.9%
Require more information be reported in AFCARS related to timelines and jurisdictions involved in interstate placements	6	13.6%

States were asked to select the ONE support from the list of supports that would facilitate the MOST positive change in interjurisdictional placements of children.

HIPAA = Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996; XML = Extensible Markup Language; AFCARS = Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System.