

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (FISCAL YEAR 2019-20) BETWEEN
THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
AND
ASHE COUNTY
A Written Agreement Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-74, an Act of the North Carolina
General Assembly**

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is made by and between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, (hereinafter referred to as the "Department") and Ashe County a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina (hereinafter referred to as the "County") to comply with the requirements of law, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-74. The Department and the County may be referred to herein individually as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties."

TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING

In consideration of the mutual promises and agreements contained herein, as well as other good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged by the Parties, the Parties agree to this MOU, effective July 1, 2019, in compliance with the mandates of law enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly and in recognition of possible amendments by the General Assembly, the Parties further agree to conform to changes made to the law, notwithstanding a contractual term previously agreed upon.

1.0 Parties to the MOU

The only Parties to this MOU are the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and Ashe County, a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina.

1.1 Relationships of the Parties

Nothing contained herein shall in any way alter or change the relationship of the parties as defined under the laws of North Carolina. It is expressly understood and agreed that the enforcement of the terms and conditions of this MOU, and all rights of action relating to such enforcement, shall be strictly reserved to the Department and the County. Nothing contained in this document shall give or allow any claim or right of action whatsoever by any other third person. It is the express intention of the Department and County that any such person or entity, other than the Department or the County, receiving services or benefits under this MOU shall be deemed an incidental beneficiary only.

Subcontracting: The County shall be responsible for the performance of all of its subcontractors. The County shall disclose the names of its subcontractors to the Department within thirty (30) days of the execution thereof. The County shall also provide additional information concerning its subcontractors as may be requested by the Department within thirty (30) days of the request. The County additionally agrees not to enter into any confidentiality agreement or provision with a subcontractor or other agent to provide services related to this MOU that would prevent or frustrate the disclosure of information to the Department. Subcontractors shall be defined under this MOU to mean any party the county enters into a contractual relationship with for the complete

3.0 MOU Documents

The Recitals and the following attachments are incorporated herein by reference and are part of this MOU:

- (1) The portions hereof preceding the Terms of Understanding, including but not limited to the introductory paragraph and the Recitals, which are contractual as well as explanatory.
- (2) The Terms of Understanding
- (3) Attachment I – Mandated Performance Requirements:
 - a. I-A: Child Support
 - b. I-B: Energy
 - c. I-C: Work First
 - d. I-D: Food and Nutrition Services
- (4) Attachment II – Corrective Action
- (5) Attachment III – Performance Requirements:
 - a. III-A: Child Welfare – Child Protective Services
 - b. III-B: Foster Care
 - c. III-C: Work First
 - d. III-D: Adult Protective Services
 - e. III-E: Special Assistance
 - f. III-F: Child Care Subsidy

4.0 Entire MOU

This MOU and any documents incorporated specifically by reference represent the entire agreement between the Parties and supersede all prior oral or written statements or agreements between the Parties.

5.0 Definitions

While "County" is used as an abbreviation above, the following definitions, some of which are contained in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-74(a), also apply to this MOU:

- (1) "County department of social services" also means the consolidated human services agency, whichever applies;
- (2) "County director of social services" also means the human services director, whichever applies; and
- (3) "County board of social services" also means the consolidated human services board, whichever applies.
- (4) "Child welfare services or program" means protective, foster care, and adoption services related to juveniles alleged to be abused, neglected, or dependent as required by Chapter 7B of the General Statutes.
- (5) "Social services programs" or "Social services programs other than medical assistance" means social services and public assistance programs established in Chapter

organization except as otherwise provided by law. The Parties shall comply with all applicable confidentiality laws and regulations, including but not limited to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), the administrative simplification rules codified at 45 Parts 160, 162, and 164, alcohol and drug abuse patient records laws codified at 42 U.S.C. §290dd-2 and 42 CFR Part 2, and the Health Information Technology for Economics and Clinical Health Act (HITECH Act) adopted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5).

10.0 Secretary's Authority Undiminished

Certain functions delegated to the County pursuant to this MOU are the duty and responsibility of the Department as the grantee of federal grant funds. The Parties understand and agree that nothing in this MOU shall be construed to diminish, lessen, limit, share, or divide the authority of the Secretary of the Department to perform any of the duties assigned to the Department or its Secretary by the North Carolina General Statutes, the terms and conditions of the federal funds and their applicable laws and regulations or other federal laws and regulations regarding any federal funding which is used by the Department to reimburse the County for any of its duties under this MOU.

11.0 MOU does not Diminish Other Legal Obligations

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein and to facilitate the mandated performance requirements of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-74, the Parties acknowledge and agree that this MOU is not intended to supersede or limit, and shall not supersede or limit, the County's obligations to comply with all applicable: 1) federal and state laws; 2) federal and state rules; and 3) policies, standards, and directions of the Department, as all such currently exist and may be amended, enacted, or established hereafter.

12.0 Notice

The persons named below shall be the persons to whom notices provided for in this MOU shall be given. Either Party may change the person to whom notice shall be given upon written notice to the other Party. Any notice required under this MOU will only be effective if actually delivered to the parties named below. Delivery by hand, by first class mail, or by email are authorized methods to send notices.

For the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services

| IF DELIVERED BY US POSTAL SERVICE | IF DELIVERED BY ANY OTHER MEANS |
|---|---|
| Susan Osborne, Assistant Secretary NC DHHS 2401 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-2401 | Susan Osborne NC DHHS Doretha Dix Campus, McBryde Building Phone: 919-527-6338 E-mail: Susan.Osborne@dhhs.nc.gov |

- iii. Monitor that all financial resources related to the provision of social services programs covered by this MOU are utilized by the county in compliance with applicable federal and state laws.
- c. Data Submission:
 - i. Maintain and review data submitted by counties pursuant to the mandatory performance requirements.
 - ii. Provide counties with reliable data related to their performance requirements as well as accuracy and timeliness of programs in accordance with state and federal program guidelines. This includes but is not limited to processing applications and recertification, quality control standards, program statistics and fiscal information.
 - iii. The Department shall be responsible for the maintenance and functionality of its information systems utilized in the statewide administration of social services programs covered by this MOU.
- d. Communication:
 - i. Provide counties with clarification or explanation of law, rule or policy governing social services programs when necessary or as requested.
 - ii. Disseminate policy on social services programs and provide counties with timely information on any updates to policy.
 - iii. Provide timely information to counties on any changes to federal law or policy made known to the Department.
 - iv. Provide counties with a timely response to requests for technical assistance or guidance.
 - v. Maintain all policies covering social services programs in a central, accessible location. Policies will be updated, to the extent possible, in advance of the effective date of any new policies or policy changes.
 - vi. Provide counties with an opportunity to submit questions, concerns and feedback related to the administration of social services programs to the Department and provide County a timely response to such communication.
 - vii. Communicate proactively with the County Director of Social Services on matters that effect social services programs covered under this MOU.
 - viii. Communicate directly with the County Manager, Governing Boards, and the County Director of Social Services on matters including but not limited to, corrective action, and significant changes to law, rule and policy that impact the administration of social services programs covered by this MOU.
- e. Inter-agency Coordination:
 - i. Provide guidance to counties in the event they are unable to reach a resolution on a conflict of interest that arises related to the provision of social services programs covered by this MOU.
 - ii. Provide guidance for county DSS personnel on federal and state Emergency Management, mass shelter, Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) requirements.
 - iii. Coordinate with and communicate to county DSS agencies regarding available and required training opportunities associated with DSS Mass Shelter, BCP and COOP responsibilities.

- d. Communication:
 - i. Respond and provide related action in a timely manner to all communications received from the Department.
 - ii. Provide timely information on all matters that have a potential negative impact on the social services programs they administer, including but not limited to, litigation risks (not including child welfare cases governed by Chapter 7B or adult services cases governed by Chapter 35A or 108A), network and computer issues, or data breaches.
 - iii. Provide timely information regarding temporary or permanent changes to the Social Services Governing Board. or the County Social Services Director, including retirements, separations, or any leave of absences greater than two calendar weeks.
 - e. Inter-agency Cooperation:
 - i. Ensure that county social services personnel complete required training and are prepared to engage in Disaster Management, mass shelter, BCP and COOP operations.
 - ii. Ensure that all plans and systems are in place to meet potential disaster (natural, technical, otherwise) response requirements.
 - iii. Engage with DHHS, state Emergency Management and local leadership in associated efforts.
 - iv. Assist or operate mass shelter operations or other required disaster management responsibilities.
- (3) The County shall timely meet all its responsibilities contained in this MOU. "Timely" shall be defined consistent with timeliness requirements set forth in relevant statute, regulation, policy or as otherwise required by the Department. If timeliness is not otherwise defined, "timely" shall mean within a reasonable time under the circumstances.

15.0 Data Security and Reporting

Data Security: The County shall adopt and apply data privacy and security requirements to comply with all applicable federal, state, department and local laws, regulations, and rules. To the extent that the Department and the county have already entered into one or more data privacy agreements covering all or any portion of the work to be performed under this MOU, the Parties hereby adopt and incorporate such agreements by reference into this MOU as if fully set forth herein.

Duty to Report: The County shall report all privacy and security incidents related to the provision of social services programs covered by the MOU to the Department and the Privacy and Security Office within twenty-four (24) hours after the privacy and security incident is first discovered, provided that the County shall report a breach involving Social Security Administration data or Internal Revenue Service data within one (1) hour after the incident is first discovered. During the performance of this MOU, the County is to notify the Department of any contact by the federal Office for Civil Rights (OCR) received by the County related to the provision of social services programs covered by the MOU. In case of a privacy and security incident, the County, including any subcontractors or agents it retains, shall fully cooperate with the Department.

ATTACHMENT I

MANDATED PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

I-A: CHILD SUPPORT

I-B: ENERGY

I-C: WORK FIRST

I-D: FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

The **Standard Measure** is the measure set forth in federal or state law, rule or policy that governs the particular program. This is the Measure that all counties are ultimately aiming to achieve.

The **County Performance Measure** is the measure that the County is required to achieve to be in compliance with this MOU. For some programs, the County's Performance Measure will be the same as the Standard Measure. For other programs, the County's Performance Measure may be greater or less than the Standard Measure, dependent upon previous year's performance.

The **Report of Performance** is the period of time in which a County's performance on a particular performance requirement is measured and reported.

**ATTACHMENT I-B
MANDATED PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Energy Programs

| | Standard Measure | County Performance Measure | Rationale and Authority | Report of Performance |
|---|--|--|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within one (1) business day for applicants with no heat or cooling source. | The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within one (1) business day for applicants with no heat or cooling source. | Ensure that eligible individuals in a household without a heating or cooling source receive relief as soon as possible. 42 USC §§ 8621-8630 10A NCAC 71V | Monthly |
| 2 | The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within two (2) business days of the application date for applicants who have a heat or cooling source. | The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within two (2) business days of the application date for applicants who have a heat or cooling source. | Ensure that eligible households who are in danger of losing a heating or cooling source receive financial assistance to avert the crisis. 42 USC §§ 8621-8630 10A NCAC 71V | Monthly |

**ATTACHMENT I-D
MANDATED PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Food and Nutrition Services

| | Standard Measure | County Performance Measure | Rationale and Authority | Report of Performance |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | The County will process 95% of expedited FNS applications within 4 calendar days from the date of application. | The County will process 95% of expedited FNS applications within 4 calendar days from the date of application. | Ensure all expedited FNS applications are processed within required timeframes. 7 CFR § 273.2 FNS Manual: Section 315 FNS Administrative Letter 1-2015 | Monthly |
| 2 | The County will process 95% of regular FNS applications within 25 days from the date of application. | The County will process 95% of regular FNS applications within 25 days from the date of application. | Ensure all regular FNS applications are processed within required timeframes. 7 CFR § 273.2 FNS Manual: Section 315 FNS Administrative Letter 1-2015 | Monthly |
| 3 | The County will ensure that 95% of FNS recertifications are processed on time, each month. | The County will ensure that 95% of FNS recertifications are processed on time, each month. | Ensure that eligible families have their recertification benefits processed in a timely manner without interruption. 7 CFR § 273.14 | Monthly |
| 4 | The County will ensure that 90% of Program Integrity claims are established within 180 days of the date of discovery. | The County will ensure that 90% of Program Integrity claims are established within 180 days of the date of discovery. | Ensure allegations of fraud are addressed promptly. 7 CFR § 273.18 | Monthly |

- ii. A detailed strategy with specific actions the County DSS will take to address the non-compliance and ensure ongoing compliance.
 - iii. A strategy to ensure regular supervisory oversight of the social services program at issue;
 - iv. A strategy to ensure program and case documentation is both sufficient and completed within time frames prescribed by law, rule or policy;
 - v. The performance requirements for the County that constitute successful completion of the corrective action plan;
 - vi. A plan for the continuous review of the corrective activities by both the County Director of Social Services, the County DSS Governing Board, and the Department.; and
 - vii. An acknowledgement that failure to successfully complete the corrective action plan shall result in temporary assumption of all or part of the County's administration of its social services programs.
- c. The duration of the joint corrective action plan shall not exceed 12-months. If the County demonstrates it is making progress under the joint corrective action plan, the Department may extend the duration of the plan for one additional period of 6 months.
 - d. The joint corrective action plan shall be signed by the Department and the County DSS Director. A copy of the joint corrective action plan will be sent to the Chair of the DSS Governing Board, the County Manager, and the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners.

3. Failure to Complete Corrective Action Plan/Urgent Circumstances

- a. In the event a County DSS fails to complete the joint corrective action plan or otherwise fails to comply with the terms of the joint corrective action plan, the Department may exercise its authority under the law to assume all or part of the County's social services programs.
- b. In the event a County DSS fails to complete the corrective action plan or otherwise fails to comply with the terms of the corrective action plan, the Department may exercise its authority under the law, and this MOU, to withhold federal and/or state funding.
- c. In certain urgent circumstances, the Secretary may also exercise her statutory authority to assume control of service delivery in the County pursuant to N.C.G.S. 108A-74.

**** In the event the performance requirement or term of the MOU falls outside of the authority of the County DSS, the notification of non-compliance will be sent to the County, and all subsequent steps contained herein shall be followed by the County.**

**ATTACHMENT III-A
PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Child Welfare – Child Protective Services

| | Standard Measure | County Performance Measure | Rationale and Authority | Report of Performance |
|---|---|--|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | The County will initiate 95% of all screened-in reports within required time frames | DHHS will work with the county to identify the County's performance measure for FY 20-21 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year | <p>Ensure that allegations of abuse, neglect and dependency are initiated timely. The timeframes for initiating an investigation of child maltreatment are defined in state law as, immediately, within 24 hours, or within 72 hours depending on the nature and severity of the alleged maltreatment.</p> <p>NC General Statutes § 7B-302; 10A NCAC 70A .0105; NCDHHS Family Services Manual: Vol. 1, Chapter VIII: Child Protective Services, Section 1408 - Investigative & Family Assessments</p> | Monthly |
| 2 | For all children who were victims of maltreatment during a twelve-month period, no more than 9.1% received a subsequent finding of maltreatment | DHHS will work with the county to identify the County's performance measure for FY 20-21 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year | <p>Ensure that children who have been substantiated as abused, neglected or dependent are protected from further harm.</p> <p>National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators established by the Children's Bureau to determine conformity with Title IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act and the Child and Family Services Review.</p> | Monthly |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---------|
| | in the county, the rate of placement moves per 1000 days of foster care will not exceed 4.1%. | | <p>CFSR: Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</p> <p>National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators established by the Children's Bureau to determine conformity with Title IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act and the Child and Family Services Review.</p> | Monthly |
|--|---|--|---|---------|

**ATTACHMENT III-D
PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Adult Protective Services (APS)

| | Standard Measure | County Performance Measure | Rationale and Authority | Report of Performance |
|---|---|--|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | The County will complete 95% of APS evaluations involving allegations of abuse or neglect within 30 days of the report. | DHHS will work with the county to identify the County's performance measure for FY 20-21 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year | Responding quickly to allegations of adult maltreatment is essential to case decision-making to protect the adult. State law requires that a prompt and thorough evaluation is made of all reports of adult maltreatment. NCGS 108A-103 | Monthly |
| 2 | The County will complete 85% of APS evaluations involving allegations of exploitation within 45 days of the report. | DHHS will work with the county to identify the County's performance measure for FY 20-21 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year | Protecting a disabled adult from exploitation is critical to ensuring their safety and well-being. State law requires a prompt and thorough evaluation is made of all reports of adult exploitation. NCGS 108A-103 | Monthly |

**ATTACHMENT III-F
PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Child Care Subsidy

| | Standard Measure | County Performance Measure | Rationale and Authority | Report of Performance |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | The County will process 95% of Child Care Subsidy applications within 30 calendar days of the application date. | The County will process 95% of Child Care Subsidy applications within 30 calendar days of the application date. | Ensure that families can place their children in quality child care without undue delay. North Carolina Child Care Development Fund State Plan | Monthly |

Comments
Regarding the Memorandum of Understanding for
Fiscal Year 2019-2020 between the
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the
Ashe County Department of Social Services

The Ashe County Department of Social Services (DSS) shall enter into the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was written by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and in which Ashe County DSS was not afforded an opportunity for any modifications thereof to ensure that Ashe County DSS is in compliance with the requirements of NC Gen Stat. Sec. 108A-74. However, there are several challenges to full compliance with the terms of the MOU. These concerns are outlined in this correspondence.

In addition to general concerns about the reliability of data, dysfunction of the state NCFAST computer system, and lack of workforce capacity analysis; two sections of the MOU cause particular concern. They are:

1. Attachment III-B, number 2, states that the "County will provide leadership for ensuring that 40.5% of children who enter foster care in a 12 month period are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care."
2. Attachment III-B, number 4 states that the "County will provide leadership for ensuring that all of the children who enter foster care in a 12-month period in the county, the rate of placement moves per 1000 days of foster care will not exceed 4.1%"

While both of these provisions are laudable, they do not comport with law and policy and do not provide variance in the best interest of a child.

Ashe County DSS strives to find a permanent safe home for every child in foster care in the shortest time frame possible. We are well aware of the harm that can come to children who languish in foster care. NCGS 7B 906.1 provides that there shall be a permanent plan identified by the court for the child within 12 months of the date of removal. It does not require discharge to permanence within this time frame. The distinction is significant between forming a permanent plan and discharging a child to a permanent home. Ashe County does not wish to be penalized numerically for conducting good social work and ensuring that the permanent plan selected is the right one for the child. Too much haste in this decision-making can lead to DSS having to intersect with the child's life a second time. Not a good outcome.

Frequent moves in foster care have a negative effect on the children. However some moves are necessary to ensure safety, further the permanent plan for the child, comply with recommendations of the child's mental health provider, and be responsive to caregiver's demands. Ashe County DSS strives to lessen the number of moves for each child. We could agree with this provision if additional language were included to ensure that the best interest of the child would prevail in any determination. One example might be that "... all children who enter foster care in a 12 month period in the county, the rate of placement moves per 1000 days of foster care will not exceed 4.1% unless the best interests of the child necessitated the move."

A further concern of the Ashe County Department of Social Service has been the flawed development and implementation of NC Fast in the Child Welfare area of practice. Counties across the state have documented the problems with the NC Fast system in all areas where it currently operates. Each new roll-out creates additional problems and requires the eligibility workers to constantly engage in work-arounds to make the system do what it should have been designed to do from the onset. Pilot counties of the P4 or child welfare initiative have heavily complained about the consistent struggle to retain good social workers when they begin working with such a poorly designed system. These problems have and will continue to cause the counties problems in recruiting and retaining good social workers which is essential for quality practice. The inability to obtain necessary reports from the official data system, means that workers must create their own ways of tracking necessary information in addition to doing their core social work functions and fighting with the dysfunctional official record keeper. The system is often down for hours or days making live time reporting impossible. A failure which causes workers to do double work and undue stress on an already taxed work group.

NC DHHS has not provided the counties with any guidance for workload expectations for workers outside child welfare and has not updated the workload expectations in light of the increasing demands of the dysfunctional computer system. This information is critical to the county's ability to advocate for a sufficient number of workers to meet the demands.

For all of these reasons, the Ashe County DSS submits this document and requests that it be kept in the record by the NC DHHS. It is also the hope of Ashe County DSS that the NC DHHS will take steps to alleviate the challenges facing workers and partner with counties to develop the best system possible to ensure the safety and well-being of North Carolina's vulnerable citizens. Despite the increasing challenges, Ashe County Department of Social Services remains committed to meeting the needs of children, adults, and families in Ashe County. We will do so by continuing to exercise good social work practices, making every decision in the best interest of the citizens we serve, and complying with all law, regulations and policies.



2019-20 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT ADULT SERVICES PERFORMANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

Adult
Services

Child Care
Assistance Services

Child Support
Services

Child Welfare
Services

Energy
Programs

Food and
Nutrition Services

Work First
Services

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Family/Child Accountability and Protection Act/Rylan's Law – Session Law 2017-41. The law requires all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid). The goal of the annual agreements is to support the provision of consistent, quality child welfare and social services that ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, adults and families served across North Carolina.

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities. This fact sheet is one of seven fact sheets describing the 26 performance measures in the 2019-20 Memorandum of Agreement. The seven fact sheets address: 1) Adult Services, 2) Child Care Assistance Services, 3) Child Support Services, 4) Child Welfare Services, 5) Energy Programs, 6) Food and Nutrition Services, and 7) Work First Services.

Why Were These Adult Services Measures Selected?

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes four Adult Services performance measures: two Adult Protective Services (APS) measures and two State-County Special Assistance measures. Together, these four measures address the immediate safety, ongoing protection from abuse and neglect, and long-term security and well-being of older adults and individuals with disabilities. The goal is to provide services and protections to individuals and families experiencing serious health and safety needs who are not, at least temporarily, able to assist themselves with the goal of helping them return to independent, community living.

BASIS

NC G.S 108A-103 Article 6 requires that an APS evaluation shall be completed within 30 days for allegations of abuse or neglect and within 45 days for allegations of exploitation. NC Administrative Rule: 10A NCAC 71P .0604 requires that applications be processed and a notice approving or denying the application stating the effective date be mailed within 45 calendar days from the date the application form is signed for persons aged 65 and older.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

A Closer Look: Adult Protective Services Performance Measures

1. County will complete 95% of APS evaluations involving allegations of abuse or neglect within 30 days of the report.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

Responding quickly to allegations of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation is essential in order to make a case decision that will allow the necessary services to be provided to protect the adult. While state statute does not specify a percentage, 95% was selected because counties encounter extenuating circumstances that preclude them from completing a timely evaluation. Timely completion of 95% of these reports indicates substantial compliance with the statute.

BASIS

State law requires that the director of social services receiving a report that an adult needs protective services make a prompt and thorough evaluation to determine whether the adult needs protective services and what services are needed. By statute, the evaluation shall be completed within 30 days for allegations of abuse or neglect.

- NC State Statute: [NC G.S 108A-103](#)

2. County will complete 85% of APS evaluations involving allegations of exploitation within 45 days of the report.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

Protecting a disabled adult from being improperly used for another's profit or advantage is critical to ensuring their safety and well-being. The most common form of exploitation is related to financial misuse. Therefore, evaluating reports of exploitation often requires that APS staff have access to records from care providers and financial institutions. This can lengthen the time needed to make a determination on the need for protection. Timely completion of 85% of these reports indicates substantial compliance with the statute.

BASIS

State law requires the director of social services to make a prompt and thorough evaluation of any report of potential adult abuse, neglect or exploitation and determine whether or not an adult needs protective services and what services are needed. The evaluation should be completed within 45 days for allegations of exploitation.

- NC State Statute: [NC G.S 108A-103](#)

A Closer Look: State-County Special Assistance Performance Measures

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes two State-County Special Assistance Measures. These measures address the timeliness in which the County DSS processes applications for State-County Special Assistance (SA), which pays for room and board for low-income individuals needing care in an assisted living facility. NC Administrative Code (10NCAC 71P.0604) sets the timeliness requirement for processing SA applications.

1. County will process 85% of Special Assistance for the Aged (SAA) applications within 45 calendar days of the application date.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

Individuals in need of placement in an assisted living facility generally require prompt placement to avoid further decline in health or possible harm. State-County Special Assistance (SA) pays for room and board for eligible individuals in a licensed assisted living facility. Timely receipt of these benefits is essential to ensure proper care and treatment. While state rule does not specify a percentage rate, 85% was selected because counties may encounter extenuating circumstances that preclude them from completing a timely determination of eligibility. Timely determination for 85% of applications indicates substantial compliance with the state rule.

BASIS

State administrative rules require that applications be processed and a notice approving or denying the application stating the effective date be mailed within 45 calendar days from the date the application form is signed for persons aged 65 and older.

- NC Administrative Rule: 10A NCAC 71P .0604

2. The County will process 85% of Special Assistance for the Disabled (SAD) applications within 60 calendar days of the application date.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

Individuals in need of placement in an assisted living facility generally require prompt placement to avoid further decline in health or possible harm. State-County Special Assistance (SA) pays for room and board for eligible individuals in a licensed assisted living facility. Eligibility for SA also qualifies an individual to receive Medicaid benefits. Timely receipt of these benefits is essential to ensure proper care and treatment. DSS staff are required to verify several factors to determine eligibility related to income and assets.

While the state rule does not speak to a percentage rate, 85% was selected because counties may encounter extenuating circumstances that preclude them from completing a timely determination of eligibility. Timely determination for 85% of applications indicates substantial compliance with the Rule.

BASIS

State regulations require that applications be processed and a notice approving or denying the application stating the effective date of the payment be mailed within 60 calendar days from the date the application form is signed for persons aged less than 65.

- NC Administrative Rule: 10A NCAC 71P .0604





2019-20 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE SERVICES PERFORMANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

Adult
Services

Child Care
Assistance Services

Child Support
Services

Child Welfare
Services

Energy
Programs

Food and
Nutrition Services

Work First
Services

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Family/Child Accountability and Protection Act/Rylan's Law – [Session Law 2017-41](#). The law requires all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid). The goal of the annual agreements is to support the provision of consistent, quality child welfare and social services that ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, adults and families served across North Carolina.

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities. This fact sheet is one of seven fact sheets describing the 26 performance measures in the 2019-20 Memorandum of Agreement. The seven fact sheets address: 1) Adult Services, 2) Child Care Assistance Services, 3) Child Support Services, 4) Child Welfare Services, 5) Energy Programs, 6) Food and Nutrition Services, and 7) Work First Services.

Why Were These Child Care Assistance Services Measures Selected?

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes one Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program performance measure. This measure ensures that family eligibility determination and processing of applications for Subsidized Child Care Assistance (SCCA) are performed in a timely manner. This attention to timeliness allows families to begin work or educational activities while their children access quality child care programs. If applications are not processed in a timely manner, families can lose an employment opportunity or may not be able to keep their job or remain in school, if redetermination is delayed.

BASIS

The federal [Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant Act of 2014 \(Act\)](#) provides for assistance to low-income families who are working and/or engaged in educational activities to ensure equal access to high-quality child care services. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 45 CFR Part 98 describes the requirements for implementation of the Act. Plan provisions at § 98.16 describe requirements the Lead Agency (State) must include in its triennial CCDF Plan (Plan). The State is required to describe how it will ensure timely eligibility determination and processing of applications as a required part of the Plan as stated at § 98.16 (h)(7). The State's current, approved Plan specifies 30 days as the required timeline for the processing of both initial and redetermination applications in section 3.1.8.

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE INSTRUMENTS

States are assessed for compliance on a three-year cycle. The Act at Subpart K – Error Rate Reporting at § 98.101 describes the Case Review Methodology used to assess compliance with requirements for administration of the Act. This review process meets the following requirements:

- Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPIA)
- Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA)
- Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012 (IPERIA)
- Executive Order 13520 – Reducing Improper Payments 2009

A Closer Look: Child Care Assistance Performance Measures

1. The County will process 95% of Child Care Subsidy initial and redetermination applications within 30 calendar days of the application date.

NOTE: Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure that families can place their children in quality child care without an undue delay due to administrative processes so that they can begin or ensure continuity of work or approved educational activities.

BASIS

The current, approved State Plan specifies the 30-day eligibility determination requirement in section 3.1.8.

- North Carolina Child Care Development Fund Plan





2019-20 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT CHILD SUPPORT PERFORMANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

Adult
Services

Child Care
Assistance Services

Child Support
Services

Child Welfare
Services

Energy
Programs

Food and
Nutrition Services

Work First
Services

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Family/Child Accountability and Protection Act/Rylan's Law – [Session Law 2017-41](#). The law requires all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid). The goal of the annual agreements is to support the provision of consistent, quality child welfare and social services that ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, adults and families served across North Carolina.

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities. This fact sheet is one of seven fact sheets describing the 26 performance measures in the 2019-20 Memorandum of Agreement. The seven fact sheets address: 1) Adult Services, 2) Child Care Assistance Services, 3) Child Support Services, 4) Child Welfare Services, 5) Energy Programs, 6) Food and Nutrition Services, and 7) Work First Services.

Why Were These Child Support Measures Selected?

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes five child support performance measures. The aim of the performance measures is to ensure that child support is a reliable, accessible source of income so that custodial families can become self-sufficient. Studies have shown that policies to collect child support not only increase financial resources to families, but their impact on payments increase visitation and contact between the children and their parents.

BASIS

The [Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Acts \(PRWORA\) of 1996](#), Section 454 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 654), 42 U.S.C. 658a(b)(6), [Public Law 105-200, Section 201](#), and [N.C.G.S. 110-129.1\(a\)\(9\)](#) establish guidelines for performance and an incentive system to provide additional payments to any State based on its performance under the program. The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 (CSPIA) ([Public Law 105-200, Section 201](#)) provides the legal basis for the incentive award system. The purpose of Title IV-D incentives is to reward child support programs for good performance results, while holding these programs accountable for poor performance.

Eligibility for and the amount of incentive funding depends on all of the following:

- The total amount of federal funds that are available for a fiscal year.
- The state performance levels in five program service areas (paternity establishment, support establishment, current support payments, payments toward arrearages, and cost effectiveness). The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) distributes a shared pool of federal incentive funds to the states each year. To receive these funds, states must reach a specific level of performance for each of these program service areas.
- The reliability of the state's data as determined by OCSE's annual Data Reliability Audit (DRA). States must prove that their child support collection data in their computer systems is ninety-five percent (95%) reliable and accurate, based on the DRA (pursuant to 45 CFR 305).
- The relative performance levels of other states.

Each federal fiscal year, 85% of the federal incentive funds is shared with the counties, based on their performance in the program service areas mentioned above. The North Carolina Child Support Services (NCCSS) Central Office retains the remaining 15% to enhance centralized child support services.

Federal Regulations 45 CFR 303.52 require state IV-D programs to develop a standard methodology for the disbursement of incentive funds to the county/local agencies that are designated as the administrators of their child support programs.

NOTE: For 2019-20, all Child Support performance measures will be growth measures. Counties have individual targets for the current fiscal year for these measures based on their performance for the preceding state fiscal year.

A Closer Look: Child Support Performance Measures

In accordance with Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 305.2, the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) determines incentive funding for states by measuring performance levels in these five program areas identified below. County performance measures are established not only to ensure that we meet the performance measures set by the federal government, but that our program is focused on improving the economic self-sufficiency of families with children. Counties falling below the minimum federal performance measure are subject to a corrective action plan.

1. County will achieve its given annual percentage of paternities established for children born out of wedlock.

NOTE: For 2019-20, all Child Support performance measures will be growth measures. Counties have individual targets for the current fiscal year for these measures based on their performance for the preceding state fiscal year.

RATIONALE

Paternity establishment is an essential component in obtaining and enforcing support orders for children. The Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP) is the percentage of children born out of wedlock for whom paternity has been established or acknowledged.

BASIS

Federal regulations require states to have a 90% minimum PEP rate to earn full incentives and avoid penalties to TANF block grant funding. To ensure continuous improvement, individualized county performance measures are established based on state and federal laws as listed below.

- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 652(g)(1)(A)

- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 658a(b)(6)(A)
- North Carolina General Statute: 110-129.1(a)(9)

2. County will achieve its given annual percentage of child support cases that are under an order.

NOTE: For 2019-20, all Child Support performance measures will be growth measures. Counties have individual targets for the current fiscal year for these measures based on their performance for the preceding state fiscal year.

RATIONALE

A child support order obligates noncustodial parents to provide financial support for their children and stipulates the amount of the obligation and how it is to be paid. Child support payments enable parents who do not live with their children to fulfill their financial responsibility to them by contributing to the payment of childrearing costs.

BASIS

Monthly performance is calculated for county/local agencies by determining the number of IV-D cases with child support orders as a percentage of their overall caseload. The average of these monthly percentages is reported at the end of the federal fiscal year. To ensure continuous improvement, individualized county performance measures are established based on state and federal laws as listed below.

- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 652(g)(1)(A)
- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 658a(b)(6)(B)
- North Carolina General Statute: N.C.G.S. 110-129.1(a)(9)

3. County will achieve its given annual percentage of current child support paid.

NOTE: For 2019-20, all Child Support performance measures will be growth measures. Counties have individual targets for the current fiscal year for these measures based on their performance for the preceding state fiscal year.

RATIONALE

The current collection rate is an indicator for the regular and timely payment of child support. Higher rates mean better compliance with the support order and lower accumulation of arrears.

BASIS

"Current support" is the money that is applied to current support obligations and does not include payments toward arrearages. Monthly performance is calculated by determining the amount of current support that is collected as a percentage of the total amount of current support obligations due. The average of these monthly percentages is reported at the end of the federal fiscal year. To ensure continuous improvement, individualized county performance measures are established based on state and federal regulations as listed below.

- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 652(g)(1)(A)
- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 658a(b)(6)(C)
- North Carolina General Statute: 110-129.1(a)(9)

4. County will achieve its given annual percentage of cases that received a payment towards arrears.

NOTE: For 2019-20, all Child Support performance measures will be growth measures. Counties have individual targets for the current fiscal year for these measures based on their performance for the preceding state fiscal year.

RATIONALE

Child support collections has been shown to reduce the child poverty rate and improve child well-being. Studies also show that receipt of child support has a positive effect on academic achievement and improves young children's cognitive development.

BASIS

To ensure continuous improvement, individualized county performance measures are established based on state and federal regulations as listed below.

- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 652(g)(1)(A)
- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 658a(b)(6)(D)
- NC General Statute: 110-129.1(a)(9)

5. County will meet its annual goal of total child support collections.

NOTE: For 2019-20, all Child Support performance measures will be growth measures. Counties have individual targets for the current fiscal year for these measures based on their performance for the preceding state fiscal year.

RATIONALE

Regular and consistent child support payments support family self-sufficiency. Research shows that the payment of child support leads to increased involvement and influence of noncustodial parents in their children's lives.

BASIS

In North Carolina, this performance measure is tracked by looking at the total amount of child support payments that are collected by the county. To ensure continuous improvement, individualized county performance measures are established. Due to an inability to calculate the cost-effectiveness measure on a state fiscal year, that goal is translated into a total collections goal. Even though the goal does not measure actual cost-effectiveness, Counties should remain mindful of expenditures to ensure that they are staying at or above the \$5.00/\$1.00 ratio. The cost effectiveness standard, which is the basis for the total child support collections goal is based on state and federal regulations as listed below.

- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 652(g)(1)(A)
- Federal Code: 42 U.S.C. 658a(b)(6)(C)
- North Carolina Administrative Code: 110-129.1(a)(9)





2019-20 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT CHILD WELFARE PERFORMANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

Adult
Services

Child Care
Assistance Services

Child Support
Services

Child Welfare
Services

Energy
Programs

Food and
Nutrition Services

Work First
Services

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Family/Child Accountability and Protection Act/Rylan's Law – [Session Law 2017-41](#). The law requires all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid). The goal of the annual agreements is to support the provision of consistent, quality child welfare and social services that ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, adults and families served across North Carolina.

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities. This fact sheet is one of seven fact sheets describing the 26 performance measures in the 2019-20 Memorandum of Agreement. The seven fact sheets address: 1) Adult Services, 2) Child Care Assistance Services, 3) Child Support Services, 4) Child Welfare Services, 5) Energy Programs, 6) Food and Nutrition Services, and 7) Work First Services.

Why Were These Child Welfare Measures Selected?

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes six child welfare performance measures. Together, the six measures address the immediate safety, ongoing protection from abuse and neglect, and long-term security and well-being for children entering the state's child welfare system.

BASIS

The federal [Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act \(CAPTA\)](#) of 1974 and subsequent amendments provide the foundational guidance for government's role in child protection. CAPTA requires states to identify a minimum set of acts or behaviors that define child abuse and neglect and establish timeframes for responding to reports of abuse and neglect. Other federal law, funding and regulations also govern components of child welfare — for example, both [Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act \(SSA\)](#). Title IV-B addresses the provision of child welfare services that can be used for prevention of and response to child abuse and neglect. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (SSA) focuses on providing safe and stable care for children who are in out-of-home care due to child maltreatment until they can achieve placement permanency by being safely returned home, placed permanently with adoptive families, or placed in other planned arrangements. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [Part 45 1357.10](#) further define requirements for child welfare services.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE INSTRUMENTS

The federal Children's Bureau assesses states for "substantial conformity" with federal requirements for child welfare services through a periodic Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Federal guidelines define "substantial conformity" to mean the measure is achieved in 95% of cases reviewed. Two relevant tools are used to evaluate state compliance during the CFSR. They are:

- National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators: The Data Indicators are aggregate measures, calculated using available administrative data. These measures look at outcomes for children; for example, whether or not a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect while in foster care, whether or not a child is a repeat victim of abuse or neglect, or whether or not a child is able to achieve a permanent home in 12 months.
- The Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI) includes only a limited sample of case reviews, interviews with children and families engaged in services, and interviews with community stakeholders – such as courts, community agencies, foster families, caseworkers, and service providers. The OSRI looks at **outcomes for children and the type and quality of services children and in child welfare services receive**. The OSRI involves an intensive review of small sampling of family case records and looks not only at whether or not a particular service or action occurred, but whether or not it was performed in a quality manner. Therefore, the OSRI measures are NOT used as a basis for the NCDHHS County Performance Measures, because data for the Performance Measures must be available for all counties and all cases and recipients of services.

A Closer Look: Child Welfare Performance Measures

1. County will initiate 95% of all screened in reports within required timeframes.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure to ensure allegations of child abuse, neglect and dependency are initiated within mandated timeframes. This measure addresses how quickly a "screened in" report of child maltreatment (physical, sexual or psychological abuse, neglect, dependency, or human trafficking) must be followed up on with a full investigation. A "screened in report" means that information gathered in the report of child maltreatment has been determined by a county child welfare intake caseworker and supervisors to meet the legal definition of child maltreatment. That same caseworker and their supervisor will determine the urgency of conducting the investigation depending on the nature and severity of the alleged abuse, neglect, exploitation, or dependency.

BASIS

In North Carolina, the timeframes for initiating an investigation of child maltreatment are defined in state law as, immediately, 24 or 72 hours, depending on the severity of the alleged abuse. NC Administrative Rule and the NCDHHS Family Services Manual further define the processes for adhering to the state law.

- NC State Statute: G.S. §7B-302
- NC Administrative Rule: 10A NCAC 70A.0105
- NCDHHS Family Services Manual: Vol 1, Chapter VIII, Section 1408 Investigative and Family Assessments

2. For children who were victims of maltreatment during a 12-month period, no more than 9.1% received a subsequent finding of maltreatment.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure that children who have been substantiated as abused, neglected or dependent are protected from further harm. This measure assesses whether the child welfare agency was successful in preventing subsequent maltreatment of a child if the child was the subject of a substantiated or indicated report of maltreatment.

BASIS

This performance measure is one of the National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators that the Children's Bureau uses to determine state's conformity with Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act through the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The National Standard is that the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment 9.1% or less.

- National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators; pages 3,4 and 6

3. The county will ensure that 95% of all foster youth have face to face visit by the social worker each month.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure the ongoing safety of children and the engagement and well-being of families. Caseworkers meet with children and families to monitor children's safety and well-being; assess the ongoing service needs of children, families and foster parents; engage biological and foster parents in developing case plans; assess permanency options for the child; monitor family progress toward established goals; and ensure that children and parents are receiving necessary services.

BASIS

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 amended Part B of Title IV of the Social Security Act to require that, "at a minimum ... children are visited on a monthly basis and that the caseworker visits are well-planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children."

- Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 Section 7 – Monthly Caseworker Standard; revises Section 422(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b))

4. The county will provide leadership for ensuring that 40.5% of children who enter foster care in a 12-month period are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure that children in out-of-home placements are able to obtain safe and permanent homes as soon as possible after removal from their homes. Permanency includes discharges from foster care to reunification with a child's parents or primary caregivers, living with a relative, guardianship, or adoption.

BASIS

This performance measure is one of the National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators that the Children's Bureau uses to determine state's conformity with Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act through the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The National Standard is that at least 40.5% of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care.

- National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators; pages 4 and 6

5. The county will provide leadership for ensuring that of children who enter foster care in a 12-month period who were discharged within 12 months to reunification, kinship care, guardianship, or adoption, no more than 8.3% re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure that children exiting foster care either through reunification, guardianship, or adoption are in stable homes so that they do not re-enter foster care. The measure assesses whether the agency's programs and practice are effective in supporting reunification and other permanency goals so that children do not return to foster care.

BASIS

This performance measure is one of the National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators that the Children's Bureau uses to determine state's conformity with titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act through the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The National Standard is that no more than 8.3% of all children who enter into and are discharged from foster care within a 12-month period re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge.

- National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators: pages 5 and 6

6. The county will provide leadership for ensuring that of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period in the county, the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care will not exceed 4.1%.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

Research shows that children who experience fewer placement changes are more likely to experience fewer school changes, less trauma and distress, and less mental health and behavioral problems. Research also suggests that fewer placements therefore contribute to better academic achievement and lasting positive relationships with an adult. This measure assesses whether the agency ensures that children whom the agency removes from their homes experience stability while they are in foster care.

BASIS

This performance measure is one of the National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators that the Children's Bureau uses to determine state's conformity with Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act through the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The National Standard is that of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, the average rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care does not exceed 4.1%.

- National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators: pages 5 and 6





2019-20 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT ENERGY PROGRAMS PERFORMANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

Adult
Services

Child Care
Assistance Services

Child Support
Services

Child Welfare
Services

Energy
Programs

Food and
Nutrition Services

Work First
Services

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Family/Child Accountability and Protection Act/Rylan's Law – Session Law 2017-41. The law requires all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid). The goal of the annual agreements is to support the provision of consistent, quality child welfare and social services that ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, adults and families served across North Carolina.

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities. This fact sheet is one of seven fact sheets describing the 26 performance measures in the 2019-20 Memorandum of Agreement. The seven fact sheets address: 1) Adult Services, 2) Child Care Assistance Services, 3) Child Support Services, 4) Child Welfare Services, 5) Energy Programs, 6) Food and Nutrition Services, and 7) Work First Services.

Why Were These Energy Programs Measures Selected?

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes two Energy Performance measures. Energy programs help low-income families, seniors and adults with heating and cooling to protect their health and well-being. These energy programs provide financial assistance so that vulnerable populations in our communities do not have to make difficult choices between heating and cooling their homes or affording other basic necessities such as food, medicine or shelter. Together the two measures address the federal requirements to assist households with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household energy bills.

BASIS

The Federal LIHEAP Statute and Regulations and subsequent amendments provide the foundational guidance for government's role in the administration of the Energy program. The LIHEAP statute was amended in 2005 by Subtitle B of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58) which reauthorized LIHEAP through FY 2007. The LIHEAP statute is codified in the United States Code at: 42 U.S.C. § 8621-8630 (2008).

The US HHS regulations for the LIHEAP block grant are found in 45 C.F.R. § 96. Subparts A-F, H of the US HHS block grant regulations also pertain to LIHEAP. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducts compliance reviews. States determined to be in noncompliance face penalties of repayment of misspent funds and/or withholding of federal funds.

A Closer Look: Energy Programs Performance Measures

1. The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within one (1) business day for applicants with no heat or cooling source.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure to ensure that eligible individuals in a household without a heating or cooling source receive relief as soon as possible.

BASIS

Federal Code requires that within one business day after a household applies for crisis benefits, the State will provide assistance that will resolve the energy crisis if a household is eligible to receive benefits and is in a life-threatening situation. North Carolina Administrative Code provides regulations on eligibility criteria.

- Federal Regulation: 42 U.S.C. § 8621-8630 (2008).
- NC Administrative Code: 10A NCAC 71V

2. The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications within two (2) business day for applicants with who have a heat or cooling source.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure to ensure that eligible households who are in danger of losing a heating or cooling source receive financial assistance to avert the crisis.

BASIS

Federal Code requires that within 48 hours after a household applies for crisis benefits, the State will provide some form of assistance that will resolve the energy crisis if such household is eligible to receive such benefits and is in a life-threatening situation. North Carolina Administrative Code provides regulations on eligibility criteria.

- Federal Regulation: 42 U.S.C. § 8621-8630 (2008).
- NC Administrative Code: 10A NCAC 71V





2019-20 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES PERFORMANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

Adult
Services

Child Care
Assistance Services

Child Support
Services

Child Welfare
Services

Energy
Programs

Food and
Nutrition Services

Work First
Services

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Family/Child Accountability and Protection Act/Rylan's Law – Session Law 2017-41. The law requires all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid). The goal of the annual agreements is to support the provision of consistent, quality child welfare and social services that ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, adults and families served across North Carolina.

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities. This fact sheet is one of seven fact sheets describing the 26 performance measures in the 2019-20 Memorandum of Agreement. The seven fact sheets address: 1) Adult Services, 2) Child Care Assistance Services, 3) Child Support Services, 4) Child Welfare Services, 5) Energy Programs, 6) Food and Nutrition Services, and 7) Work First Services.

Why Were These Food and Nutrition Services Measures Selected?

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes three Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) performance measures. Research shows that FNS Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits reduce poverty and food insecurity, and that this leads to improved health and economic outcomes over the long-term, especially for those who receive SNAP as children.

BASIS

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (As amended Through P.L.113-79, Effective Feb. 7, 2014) provides the foundational guidance for administration of the FNS program.

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE AND STATE INSTRUMENTS

The USDA is mandated by federal regulations to monitor program administration and operation of Food and Nutrition Services program. Monitoring of the state's compliance is completed through the Management Evaluation process. The Management Evaluation address and assess State agency achievement of program objectives and FNS' strategic performance objectives and priorities.

A Closer Look: Food and Nutrition Services Performance Measures

1. The County will process 95% of regular FNS applications within the required timeframes.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure to ensure all regular FNS applications are processed within the required timeframe. A food-secure household means that all members of the household receiving FNS benefits have access to healthy and nutritious food to support the health and well-being of the family including children, the elderly and disabled.

BASIS

The State is required to ensure benefits are available to the household no later than thirty (30) calendar days following the date of application. To ensure households are provided with benefits in a timely manner, FNS applications and reapplications must be approved no later than the twenty-fifth (25th) calendar day from the date of the application for regular FNS application and no later than four (4) calendar days for households identified as expedited.

- Federal Regulation: [7 CFR 274.2](#)
- Federal Regulation: [FNS 315 Application Time Frames](#)
- Federal Regulation: [FNS 320 Expedited Service](#)
- Federal Program Policy: [FNS Administrative Letter 1-2015](#)

2. The County will ensure that 95% of FNS recertifications are processed within the required timeframes each month.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure that families that were previously determined eligible have their recertification for benefits processed in a timely manner to ensure uninterrupted access to healthy and nutritious food to support the health and well-being of families that continue to be eligible for FNS benefits.

BASIS

In accordance with federal regulation, the State is required to ensure that households who received a notice of expiration and reapplied, receive either a notice of eligibility or a notice of denial no later than thirty (30) days from the last allotment received.

- Federal Regulation: [7 CFR 273.14 Recertification](#)

3. The County will ensure that 90% of program integrity claims are established within the required timeframe.

RATIONALE

Program integrity ensures that allegations of fraud are addressed promptly.

BASIS

The State must establish a claim within 180 days from the date of discovery. The date of discovery is the date the overpayment amount was determined. The state is required to ensure 90 percent of all claims are established or processed within the 180 days.

- Federal Regulation: [7 CFR 273.18](#)





2019-20 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WORK FIRST PERFORMANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

Adult
Services

Child Care
Assistance Services

Child Support
Services

Child Welfare
Services

Energy
Programs

Food and
Nutrition Services

Work First
Services

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Family/Child Accountability and Protection Act/Rylan's Law – [Session Law 2017-41](#). The law requires all counties to enter into an annual agreement with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for all social services programs excluding medical assistance (NC Medicaid). The goal of the annual agreements is to support the provision of consistent, quality child welfare and social services that ensure the safety, health and well-being of children, adults and families served across North Carolina.

The law requires the agreement to contain performance requirements and administrative responsibilities. This fact sheet is one of seven fact sheets describing the 26 performance measures in the 2019-20 Memorandum of Agreement. The seven fact sheets address: 1) Adult Services, 2) Child Care Assistance Services, 3) Child Support Services, 4) Child Welfare Services, 5) Energy Programs, 6) Food and Nutrition Services, and 7) Work First Services.

Why Were These Work First Measures Selected?

The NCDHHS-County Memorandum of Agreement includes four Work First performance measures. Together, the four measures assist families in reaching their goals of self-sufficiency and reduce the need for public assistance programs through job preparation and work activities. The work participation requirements govern the federal block grant funding and the provisions to provide timely assistance to eligible county residents.

BASIS

[Title IV-A of the Social Security Act \(SSA\)](#) and [The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act \(PRWORA\)](#) provide the foundational guidance for the government's accountability in assisting needy families with children. Title IV-A addresses the required submission of a State Plan in which the State program defines timelines for the determination of assistance. PRWORA and the subsequent reauthorization, [Deficit Reduction Act of 2005](#) requires states to ensure participants subject to work participation requirements meet specific work participation measures.

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE INSTRUMENT

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) assesses states for compliance with the federal requirements through the TANF Work Participation Rates, All Family and Two-Parent. Federal regulation defines compliance to mean that 50% of all families and 90% of all two-parent families receiving cash assistance and subject to the work requirements meet the required number of work participation hours. States are required to monitor and document the required work participation hours and submit the data to ACF. [Title IV-A of the SSA](#) requires that eligibility determination must be provided in a reasonable and prompt manner (timely). The [North Carolina TANF State Plan](#) defines reasonable and prompt manner or timeliness for applications as 45 calendar days from the application date. The timeliness for the recertification for a cash assistance is no later than the last day of the current certification period.

The TANF Data Report (ACF-199) is the federal tool used to evaluate state compliance. ACF uses this report to calculate the work participation rates for North Carolina. The state is required to collect relevant data monthly and report it to ACF.

When ACF determines a state to not to have achieved substantial conformity in all the areas assessed, the state must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan that addresses the areas of nonconformity. Penalties for failing to comply with requirements may include withholding of funds by the federal government that are allocated to counties by North Carolina to cover administrative costs for Work First Program services.

A Closer Look: Work First Services Performance Measures

1. The County will ensure that 50% of all work-eligible individuals complete the required number of hours of federally countable work activities.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure all work-eligible individuals are engaged in federally countable work activities. This measure promotes job preparation and work. Through this program families develop work experience which will enable them to find full-time sustainable employment, exit public assistance programs, and become self-sufficient.

BASIS

This performance measure is one of the Work Participation indicators designed to measure the state's conformity to TANF federal regulation. NC General Statute and NCDHHS TANF State Plan further define the expectations for this program.

- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.2\(10\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.6\(1\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.13\(a\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.14\(a\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.14\(b\)](#)
- State Plan: [TANF State Plan FFY 2016 – 2019](#)

2. The County will ensure that 90% of two-parent families with work-eligible individuals have completed the required number of hours of federally countable work activities.

NOTE: This measure is a growth measure. Performance over prior years will be compiled and shared with counties. For Fiscal Year 2019-2020 MOU, the Department will not initiate any corrective action for a county's performance related to this MOU performance measure.

RATIONALE

The intent of this measure is to ensure all work-eligible two-parent families are engaged in federally countable work activities for the required number of participation hours. This measure promotes job preparation and work. Through this program families develop work experience which will enable them to find full-time sustainable employment, exit public assistance programs, and become self-sufficient.

BASIS

This performance measure is one of the Work Participation indicators designed to measure the state's conformity to TANF federal regulation. NC General Statute and NCDHHS TANF State Plan further define the expectations for this program.

- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.2\(10\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.6\(1\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.13\(a\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.14\(a\)](#)
- NC General Statute: [NC GS 108A-27.14\(b\)](#)
- State Plan: [TANF State Plan FFY 2016 – 2019](#)

3. The County will process 90% of Work First applications within 45 days of receipt.**RATIONALE**

The intent of this measure is to ensure that families receive the Work First benefits for which they are eligible in a timely manner. Families that participate in the Work First Program rely on this service for cash assistance, job placement, training and education. Timely processing of applications ensures that applicants can access these services quickly and begin to receive services that lead to self-sufficiency.

BASIS

This performance measure determines the state's conformity with Title IV-A of the Social Security Act to provide eligibility determination in a reasonable and prompt manner. NC General Statute and the NC State Plan provides the basis for program policy.

- North Carolina General Statute: NC GS 108A-31
- State Plan: TANF State Plan FFY 2016 – 2019

4. The County will process 90% of Work First recertifications no later than the last day of the current certification period.**RATIONALE**

The intent of this measure is to ensure that families who were previously determined eligible for the Work First program continue to receive assistance and benefits without an unnecessary interruption in their benefits and case work services.

BASIS

This performance measure determines the state's conformity with Title IV-A of the Social Security Act to provide eligibility determination in a reasonable and prompt manner. NC General Statute and the NC State Plan provides the basis for program policy.

- North Carolina General Statute: NC GS 108A-31
- State Plan: TANF State Plan FFY 2016 – 2019

