



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Social Services

Pat McCrory  
Governor

Richard O. Brajer  
Secretary

Wayne E. Black  
Division Director

November 15, 2015

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MONITORING**

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on child welfare program evaluations being conducted by the NC Division of Social Services with county child welfare agencies previously discussed in the Dear County Director Letter CWS-08-2015 (<http://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/dcdl/famsupchildwelfare/CWS-08-2015.pdf>) dated September 15, 2015. To date, 22 evaluations of child welfare programs have been completed. The Division appreciates the many learning opportunities provided by county staff to make this evaluation process meaningful and focused on how the child welfare system in North Carolina can improve outcomes for children and families.

**Evaluation Cycle**

The Division will conduct onsite evaluations with county child welfare agencies every 6 months. The evaluations will involve an assessment of county child welfare program strengths and risks through either a one day event for examination of county program data and processes, or a multi-day assessment which will include record reviews. Both evaluation methods will result in planning to improve performance.

The one day evaluation includes a data review with county staff regarding agency administration and structure, business processes, and case management activities to gain insight into the strengths and risks in county programs. Data reviewed will include program outcomes for children and families, workloads and staffing, agency policies and practices to implement law and policy, workflow, staff training, and supervision. For those counties that have previously completed evaluations and have a program development plan, progress toward improving outcomes will also be reviewed.

The multi-day evaluation will include all elements of the one day event with the addition of a record review component. The persons conducting the record review will include Division and county agency staff.

A schedule of reviews for calendar years 2016 and 2017 is attached.

**Plan Evaluation and Revision**

In the past, the Division and counties have become adept at identifying risks and weaknesses in programs. However, there has been less success in making and sustaining system changes to mitigate those risks. This evaluation cycle reinforces the need to take action to address any identified program risks. Toward that end,

Child Welfare Services

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each evaluation will produce a report to which the county agencies will respond by creating of a program development plan (PDP) that will address any identified risks. This PDP will be a guide by which the Division provides technical assistance to support county agencies to improve outcomes for children and families. The Children's Program Representatives will provide or arrange technical assistance between evaluations.

### **Process**

County agencies will be contacted a month prior to the scheduled evaluation to begin discussing the focus of the evaluation. During that contact, materials needed during the evaluation will be discussed and requests for the county to provide additional information may be made. Logistics for the onsite evaluation and identification of the county participants will be discussed. A notice will be sent 2 weeks prior to the onsite evaluation outlining the purpose for the onsite review and an agenda for the evaluation. The evaluation report will be provided within 30 days of the end of the evaluation. A time will be negotiated for the Lead Evaluator and a CPR to meet with agency staff to assist in the development of a new PDP or provide guidance on amending an existing PDP.

### **Tools**

Tools and templates are currently being reviewed for updates from lessons learned during the evaluations already completed. Minor modifications will be made to the tools issued with the Dear County Director Letter CWS-08-2015 (<http://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/dcdl/famsupchildwelfare/CWS-08-2015.pdf>) dated September 15, 2015. Revised tools will be available by January 1, 2016.

### **Further Information**

Any questions can be addressed to the Children's Program Representatives, the CW Program Monitors, Jeff Olson ([jeffrey.olson@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:jeffrey.olson@dhhs.nc.gov)) or Teresa Strom ([Teresa.strom@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Teresa.strom@dhhs.nc.gov)).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kevin Kelley, Section Chief  
Child Welfare Services

Attachments (1) Schedule of County Reviews 2016 and 2017

CWS-19-2015