

**Progress Report of Oversight of the Local Administration of Social
Services Programs other than Medical Assistance**

Session Law 2017-41 Section 3.3 (1)



Report to

**The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on
Health and Human Services**

by

NC Department of Health and Human Services

February 20, 2023

BACKGROUND

Session Law (S.L.) 2017-41, Section 3.3 (1) requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to submit an annual report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services (Committee) by August 1. The report concerns oversight of the county-level administration of social services programs during the previous state fiscal year (SFY). S.L. 2017-41 mandates that it should include, at a minimum: (a) A copy of the template for the written agreement required by G.S. 108A-74(a1), (b) An evaluation of the implementation of the requirement for a written agreement, and (c) a summary of any oversight action taken by the Department pursuant to the agreement or G.S. 108A-74, including a list of any federal or State funds that were withheld as a result of the State's oversight.

Section 3.1(a) of S.L. 2017-41 rewrote G.S. 108A-74 to include the following:

(a1) Beginning in fiscal year 2018-2019, the Secretary shall require all departments of social services to enter into a written agreement each year that specifies mandated performance requirements and administrative responsibilities with regard to all social services programs other than medical assistance.

(1) When possible, the mandated performance requirements shall be based upon standardized metrics utilizing reliable data.

(2) The administrative responsibilities shall address, at a minimum, staff training, data submission to the Department, and communication with the Department.

(3) The written agreement may be standardized or may be tailored to address issues in specific jurisdictions.

(4) The written agreement shall authorize the Department to withhold State and federal funds in the event the department fails to satisfy mandated performance requirements or comply with the terms of the agreement.

DHHS designed its first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during SFY 2018-2019. The MOU is a written agreement between the Department and each county outlining performance expectations across social services programs. DHHS collaborated with the NC Association of County Commissioners, the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services, and each county Director of Social Services to develop the initial template agreement.

This DHHS report reflects the progress on the implementation of the MOU required by G.S. 108A-74(a1). This report evaluates MOU implementation during SFY 2021-2022. The Appendix includes a copy the SFY 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 MOU.

A. Evaluation of Implementation of Written Agreements

In May of 2021, DHHS sent a letter to all 100 county Directors of Social Services regarding the SFY 2021-2022 MOU. The Department recognized that given the COVID-19 emergency, there would be barriers to meeting the performance measures outlined in the 2021-2022 MOU. DHHS announced that would not issue any corrective action or development plans regarding performance under the 2021-2022 MOU; however, the Department continued to monitor county performance and share data with counties during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department is planning to develop a plan in conjunction with the counties for reinstating these corrective

measures once the COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted both in North Carolina and at the federal level.

During SFY 2021-2022, DHHS established a regional support structure for a continuous quality improvement (CQI) framework in all seven regions of the State. The department has CQI Specialists in place for economic services, child support services, aging and adult services, and part of child welfare. DHHS has contracted with Public Knowledge, a public sector consulting firm, to help develop a formal CQI process and train the CQI Specialists. DHHS is using this framework in part to encourage capacity-building. Thus, the Department will no longer force “corrective action” upon counties, except in extreme cases when a county operates outside of legal statutes to severely jeopardize client safety. It will instead focus on pushing county-level development plans that analyze and solve problems through deliberate use of evidence.

DHHS sent a communication in May 2022 to all County Managers and Directors of Social Services. DHHS again reiterated that it is not taking any formal corrective actions or issuing development plans related to MOU performance while North Carolina remains under a State of Emergency for COVID-19. DHHS also announced in this letter that the current MOU would cover both SFY 2022-2023 and SFY 2023-2024.

In addition, DHHS decided that it will not publish the Rylan’s Law Dashboard to the public during the emergency declaration. It had instead opted to publish the Dashboard once the DSS Business & Analytics team can appropriately incorporate data metrics once the emergency period ends. Rylan’s law requires DHHS to oversee a plan of regional supervision and accountability for the state social services system. The Dashboard will be used in place of previous county-level reports and represents an integrated platform for county leadership to monitor progress on MOU performance measures.

The current MOU contains a total of 16 performance measures that are subject to Department evaluation and follow-up. DHHS worked with the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services to vet all measures prior to finalization. These 16 measures are the same as those found in the SFY 2021-2022 MOU. They are the only measures that will be evaluated and subject to performance improvement actions for SFY 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. A description of each measure can be found in Attachment I of the current MOU.

Attachment II of the current MOU contains five additional performance measures. These metrics are part of the federal Children’s Bureau’s Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) that examine compliance with Title IV-B and Title IV-E child welfare requirements. Ongoing monitoring and support activities will continue as they have in prior years for these measures. The Department will continue to develop reports and validate data for these additional performance measures. DHHS has advised counties to continue monitoring and striving to make progress toward meeting these performance targets because the measures will be included in the Data Review and performance for CFSR Round IV.

The Department completed the SFY 2022-2024 MOU and sent it out to all counties with a June 30th deadline for counties to return the signed document. In accordance with G.S. 108A-74(a1), the SFY 2022-2024 agreement includes performance measures and administrative

responsibilities. The administrative responsibilities are the same as in SFY 2021-2022. They include staffing and workforce development requirements, compliance, data submission, communication, and inter-agency cooperation. As of February 15, 2023, 99 of the 100 counties have signed and submitted the MOU to DHHS; the Department will continue following up with the remaining 1 county that has yet to submit an MOU.

B. Oversight Actions Taken Pursuant to the Agreement

DHHS is not currently taking any standard corrective actions or issuing development plans related to MOU performance until the State of Emergency is lifted. DHHS, will however, continue to monitor performance, provide support, and share data with counties,

As a part of this regular monitoring and oversight of counties, in April of 2022, DHHS identified serious policy and practice breeches involving the administration of child welfare services in Bertie County. Despite intensive efforts by DHHS, Bertie County DSS failed to make adequate progress to address its systemic shortcomings. On May 13, 2022, the DHHS Secretary assumed temporary operations of Bertie County DSS Child Welfare as authorized in NC General Statute 108A-14 due to violations of law, rule and policy that posed substantial risk to the safety and welfare of county children. DHHS will remain responsible for Bertie County's child welfare administration until it is assured that its families and children are receiving appropriate services in accordance with state law.

APPENDIX: MOU

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

(FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 and 2023-24)

BETWEEN

THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
AND
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 **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, 2022, 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 **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 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 administration of one or more social services programs covered by this MOU. Temporary employees hired by the County shall not be considered subcontractors under this MOU.

Assignment: No assignment of the County's obligations or the County's right to receive any funding made in any way concerning the matters covered by this MOU hereunder shall be permitted.

2.0 Terms of the MOU

The term of this MOU shall be for a period of two years beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2024.

2.1 Default and Modification

Default: In the event the County fails to satisfy the mandated performance requirements as set forth in **Attachment I** or fails to otherwise comply with the terms of this MOU, the Department may withhold State and/or federal funding. Any such withholding shall be in compliance with, and as allowed by, state and/or federal law.

Performance Improvement: Prior to the Department exercising its authority to withhold State and/or federal funding for a failure to satisfy the mandated performance requirements set forth in **Attachment I** or failure to meet the terms of this MOU, the process for performance improvement set forth in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-74 will govern. Nothing contained in this MOU shall supersede or limit the Secretary's authority to take any action otherwise set forth in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-74.

Waiver of Default: Waiver by the Department of any default or breach in compliance with the terms of this MOU by the County shall not be deemed a waiver of any subsequent default or breach and shall not be construed to be modification of the terms of this MOU unless stated to be such in writing, signed by an authorized representative of the Department and the County and attached to the MOU.

Force Majeure: Neither Party shall be deemed to be in default of its obligations hereunder if and so long as it is prevented from performing such obligations by any act of war, hostile foreign action, nuclear explosion, riot, strikes, civil insurrection, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, public health emergency or other catastrophic natural event or act of God.

Modification: The terms and conditions of this MOU may only be modified by written agreement of the Parties, signed by an authorized representative of the Parties.

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: Energy Programs
 - b. I-B: Work First
 - c. I-C: Food and Nutrition Services
 - d. I-D: Child Welfare – Foster Care
 - e. I-E: Adult Protective Services
 - f. I-F: Special Assistance
 - g. I-G: Child Support Services
- (4) Attachment II - Child Welfare - CFSR

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.
- (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 108A other than the medical assistance program (Part 6 of Article 2 of Chapter 108A). This includes, but is not limited to, child welfare programs, adult protective services, guardianship services for adults, and programs of public assistance established in Chapter 108A. It also includes the child support enforcement program, as established in Article 9 of Chapter 110 of the General Statutes, and the North Carolina Subsidized Child Care Program.

To the extent that any term used herein is defined by a statute or rule applicable to the subject matter of this MOU, the statutory or rule definition shall control. For all remaining terms, which are not defined by statute or rule, those terms shall have their ordinary meaning. Should any further definition be needed, the Parties agree that the meanings shall be those contained in the current

version (as of the time the dispute or question arises) of Black's Law Dictionary, and if not defined therein, then of a published unabridged modern American English Language Dictionary published since the year 2000.

6.0 Audit Requirements

The County shall furnish to the State Auditor, upon his/her request, all books, records, and other information that the State Auditor needs to fully account for the use and expenditure of state funds in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 147-64.7. Additionally, as the State funding authority, the Department of Health and Human Services shall have access to persons and records as a result of all contracts or grants entered into by State agencies or political subdivisions.

7.0 Record Retention

The County shall retain records at its own expense in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations. The County shall facilitate and monitor the compliance of its subcontractors with all applicable requirements of record retention and disposition.

In order to protect documents and public records that may be the subject of Department litigation, the Department shall notify the County of the need to place a litigation hold on those documents. The Department will also notify the County of the release of the litigation hold. If there is no litigation hold in place, the documents may be destroyed, disposed of, or otherwise purged through the biannual Records Retention and Disposition Memorandum from the Department's Controller's Office.

8.0 Liabilities and Legal Obligations

Each party hereto agrees to be responsible for its own liabilities and that of its officers, employees, agents or representatives arising out of this MOU. Nothing contained herein is intended to alter or change the relationship of the Parties as defined under the laws of the State of North Carolina.

9.0 Confidentiality

Any medical records, personnel information or other items exempt from the NC Public Records Act or otherwise protected by law from disclosure given to the Department or to the County under this MOU shall be kept confidential and not divulged or made available to any individual or 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 NCDHHS 2417 Mail Services Center Raleigh, NC 27699-2001	Susan Osborne NCDHHS Doretha Dix Campus, McBryde Building Phone: 919-527-6338 E-mail: Susan.Osborne@dhhs.nc.gov

For County:

IF DELIVERED BY US POSTAL SERVICE	IF DELIVERED BY ANY OTHER MEANS

13.0 Responsibilities of the Department

The Department hereby agrees that its responsibilities under this MOU are as follows:

- (1) The Department shall develop performance requirements for each social services program based upon standardized metrics utilizing reliable data. The performance requirements are identified in Attachments I and II.
- (2) The Department shall provide supervision, program monitoring and technical assistance to the counties in the administration of social services programs.
- (3) The Department shall provide leadership and coordination for developing strategies that address system-level barriers to the effective delivery of social services programs, including but not limited to: the Administrative Office of Courts, the LME/MCO, Department of Public Instruction, and the Department of Public Safety.
- (4) The Department shall have the following administrative responsibilities:
 - a. Staff Training and Workforce Development:
 - i. Develop training requirements for county personnel and provide guidance for adequate staffing patterns related to the provision of social services programs. The Department will publish annually, a list of required and recommended trainings for county personnel directly involved in the administration of social services programs covered under this MOU.
 - ii. Develop training curricula and provide, timely, adequate access to statewide training opportunities for county personnel related to the provision of social services programs. Training opportunities may include in-person, self-guided, web-based and remotely facilitated programs.
 - iii. The Department will publish a training calendar, at least quarterly, notifying the counties of training opportunities.
 - iv. Provide timely written guidance related to new federal or state statutes or regulations. The Department will provide information in advance of the effective date of new policy to the extent possible, including interpretations and clarifications of existing policy.
 - v. Provide technical assistance and training in areas where quality control, monitoring or data indicates a lack of correct application of law, rule or policy.
 - b. Performance Monitoring:
 - i. Monitor and evaluate county compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules and policies.
 - ii. Provide feedback to counties with recommended changes when necessary.
 - 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.
 - iv. Assist and support counties as needed in implementation of operational functions of mass shelter operations and as needed during other emergencies as they arise.

(5) The Department shall timely meet all of its responsibilities contained in this MOU. “Timely” shall be defined consistent with timeliness requirements set forth in relevant statute, regulation, and policy. Where timeliness is not otherwise defined, “timely” shall mean within a reasonable time under the circumstances.

14.0 Responsibilities of the County

The County hereby agrees that its responsibilities under this MOU are as follows:

- (1) The County shall adhere to the mandated performance requirements for each social services program as identified in Attachment I. The County will ultimately work toward

achievement of the Standard Measure for all performance requirements set forth in Attachments I and II.

- (2) The County shall comply with the following administrative responsibilities
- a. Staff Requirements and Workforce Development:
 - i. The personnel, including new hires and existing staff, involved in the County's provision of social services programs covered by this MOU shall complete all required and necessary training, which is documented as required by federal and state law and policy.
 - b. Compliance:
 - i. Perform activities related to its social services programs in compliance with all applicable federal and State laws, rules, regulations and policies. Nothing contained herein is intended to, nor has the effect of superseding or replacing state law, rules or policy related to social services programs.
 - ii. Develop and implement internal controls over financial resources related to the County's social services programs to ensure that all financial resources are used in compliance with applicable federal and state laws.
 - iii. Provide and adhere to corrective action plans as required based on monitoring findings and the Single Audit.
 - c. Data Submission:
 - i. Maintain accurate, thorough records of all social services programs covered by this MOU, in particular, records related to the mandated performance requirements that can be accessed for the purpose of data collection, service provision, monitoring or consultation
 - ii. Ensure reliable data entry into state systems utilized for the administration of social services programs covered under this MOU.
 - iii. Provide, upon request, data to the state for the purpose of, but not limited to, conducting monitoring, case file reviews, error analysis and quality control.
 - iv. Utilize data to understand the performance of their county and to conduct analysis and implement changes where needed if performance measures are not being met.
 - 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 leaves of absence 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.

16.0 Miscellaneous

Choice of Law: The validity of this MOU and any of its terms or provisions, as well as the rights and duties of the Parties to this MOU, are governed by the laws of North Carolina. The Parties, by signing this MOU, agree and submit, solely for matters concerning this MOU, to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of North Carolina and agrees, solely for such purpose, that the exclusive venue for any legal proceedings shall be Wake County, North Carolina. The place of this MOU and all transactions and agreements relating to it, and their situs and forum, shall be Wake County, North Carolina, where all matters, whether sounding in contract or tort, relating to the validity, construction, interpretation, and enforcement shall be determined.

Amendment: This MOU may not be amended orally or by performance. Any amendment must be made in written form and executed by duly authorized representatives of the Department and the County. The Parties agree to obtain any necessary approvals, if any, for any amendment prior to such amendment becoming effective. Also, the Parties agree that legislative changes to state law shall amend this MOU by operation of law to the extent affected thereby.

Effective Date: This MOU shall become effective July 1, 2022 and shall continue in effect until June 30, 2024.

Signature Warranty: Each individual signing below warrants that he or she is duly authorized by the party to sign this MOU and to bind the party to the terms and conditions of this MOU.

County

BY: _____
Name

BY: _____
Name

TITLE:

TITLE:

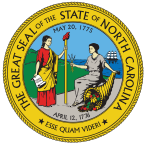
DATE:

DATE:

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

BY: _____
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services

DATE: _____



2022-23 & 2023-24 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES AT-A-GLANCE

ATTACHMENT I

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:

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 response to a particular performance requirement is measured and reported.

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, with no heat or cooling source, within one (1) business day from the date of application or date all verification is received, whichever comes first.	The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications, with no heat or cooling source, within one (1) business day from the date of application or date all verification is received, whichever comes first.	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 .0200	Monthly
2	The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications, that have heat or cooling source with a past due or final notice, within two (2) business days from the date of application or date all verification is received, whichever comes first.	The County will process 95% of Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) applications, that have heat or cooling source with a past due or final notice, within two (2) business days from the date of application or date all verification is received, whichever comes first.	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 .0200	Monthly

WORK FIRST

	Standard Measure	County Performance Measure	Rationale and Authority	Report of Performance
1	The County will process 95% of Work First applications within 45 days of receipt.	The County will process 95% of Work First applications within 45 days of receipt.	Ensure that eligible families receive Work First benefits in a timely manner. TANF State Plan FFY 2019-2022 NCGS 108A-31	Monthly
2	The County will process 95% of Work First recertifications within 60 calendar days prior to the last day of the current certification period.	The County will process 95% of Work First recertifications within 60 calendar days prior to the last day of the current certification period.	Ensure that Work First families continue to receive assistance and benefits without unnecessary interruption. TANF State Plan FFY 2019-2022 NCGS 108A-31	Monthly

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 the timeframe that allows the household to have access to the FNS benefits on or before the 7th calendar day from the date of application.	The County will process 95% of expedited FNS applications within the timeframe that allows the household to have access to the FNS benefits on or before the 7th calendar day 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 the timeframe that allows the household to have access to the FNS benefits on or before the 30th calendar day from the date of application.	The County will process 95% of regular FNS applications within the timeframe that allows the household to have access to the FNS benefits on or before the 30th calendar day 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 Letter1-2015	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

CHILD WELFARE - FOSTER CARE

Standard Measure	County Performance Measure	Rationale and Authority	Report of Performance
<p>1 The County will ensure that 95% of all foster youth have a face-to-face visit with the social worker each month.</p>	<p>The County will ensure that 95% of all foster youth have a face-to-face visit with the social worker each month.</p> <p>Virtual face-to-face visits are allowed during the current state of emergency in response to the pandemic.</p>	<p>Ensure the ongoing safety of children and the engagement and well-being of families.</p> <p>Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-288, section 7) amending Section 422(b) of the Social Security Act (42 USC 622(b))</p>	<p>Monthly</p>

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)

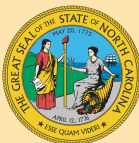
Standard Measure	County Performance Measure	Rationale and Authority	Report of Performance
<p>1 The County will complete 85% of APS evaluations involving allegations of abuse or neglect within 30 days of the report.</p>	<p>NCDHHS will work with the County to identify the County's performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>NCGS 108A-103</p>	<p>Monthly</p>
<p>2 The County will complete 85% of APS evaluations involving allegations of exploitation within 45 days of the report.</p>	<p>NCDHHS will work with the County to identify the County's performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>NCGS 108A-103</p>	<p>Monthly</p>

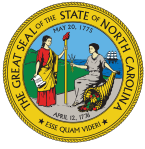
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE (SA)

	Standard Measure	County Performance Measure	Rationale and Authority	Report of Performance
1	The County will process 85% of Special Assistance for the Aged (SAA) applications within 45 calendar days of the application date.	NCDHHS will work with the County to identify the County's performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year	Ensure eligible individuals receive supplemental payments to support stable living arrangements. Timely application processing of SAA benefits is essential to an individual's proper care and treatment. 10A NCAC 71P .0604	Monthly
2	The County will process 85% of Special Assistance for the Disabled (SAD) applications within 60 calendar days of the application date.	NCDHHS will work with the County to identify the County's performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year	Ensure eligible individuals receive supplemental payments to support stable living arrangements. Timely application processing of SAD benefits is essential to an individual's proper care and treatment. 10A NCAC 71P .0604	Monthly

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

	Standard Measure	County Performance Measure	Rationale and Authority	Report of Performance
1	Percentage of paternities established or acknowledged for children born out of wedlock.	The County paternity establishment performance level must exceed 50% at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30).	Paternity establishment is an essential component in obtaining and enforcing support orders for children. 45 CFR § 305.33 (b) NCGS 110-129.1	Annual
2	Percentage of child support cases that have a court order establishing support obligations.	The County support order establishment performance level must exceed 50% at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30).	A court order creates a legal obligation for a noncustodial parent to provide financial support to their children. 45 CFR § 305.33 (d) NCGS 110-129.1	Annual
3	Percentage of current child support paid.	The County current collections performance level must exceed 40% at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30).	The current collections rate is an indicator for the regular and timely payment of child support obligations. 45 CFR § 305.33 (e) NCGS 110-129.1	Annual
4	Percentage of cases received a payment toward arrears.	The County arrearage collections performance level must exceed 40% at the end of the State Fiscal Year (June 30).	Collection of child support has been shown to reduce child poverty rates and improve child well-being 45 CFR § 305.33 (h) NCGS 110-129.1	Annual





2022-23 & 2023-24 NCDHHS/COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES AT-A-GLANCE

Note: These Performance Measures are not subject to corrective action under 108A-74 for MOU 2022-23 and 2023-24

ATTACHMENT II

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:

The federal Children’s Bureau (CB) is planning to conduct a fourth round of reviews under the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) regulations, beginning in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 (October 1, 2021). The purpose of these reviews is to determine compliance with Title IV-B and Title IV-E plan requirements, and in doing so, assess the extent to which federally funded child welfare programs function effectively to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families with whom they have contact.

The overall goals of the reviews are to:

- Ensure conformity with Title IV-B and Title IV-E child welfare requirements using a framework focused on safety, permanency and well-being through seven outcomes and seven systemic factors;
- Determine what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services including the legal and judicial processes; and
- Assist state child welfare systems in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes.*

To this end, the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services is advising counties that since these measures will be included in the Data Review and performance for CFSR Round IV, counties need to continue monitoring and striving to achieve progress toward accomplishing these measures, to ensure that North Carolina can be determined to be in “substantial conformity.” In an effort to assist counties in monitoring and achieving these progress measures, please find the following link to data provided by UNC-CH: <https://ssw.unc.edu/ma>.

*Child and Family Services Review Technical Bulletin #12 Announcement of the CFSR Round 4 reviews, August 2020, Section I. Context and Overview of Next Round of CFSR – Round 4, pp 1-3

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	NCDHHS will work with the County to identify the County’s performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County’s performance for the preceding state fiscal year	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. 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	
2 For all children who were victims of maltreatment during a 12-month period, no more than 9.1% received a subsequent finding of maltreatment	NCDHHS will work with the County to identify the County’s performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County’s performance for the preceding state fiscal year	Ensure that children who have been substantiated as abused, neglected or dependent are protected from further harm. National Standards for State Performance on Statewide Data Indicators established by the Children’s Bureau to determine conformity with Title IV-B and Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and the Child and Family Services Review.	

CHILD WELFARE - FOSTER CARE

Standard Measure	County Performance Measure	Rationale and Authority	Report of Performance
<p>3 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.</p>	<p>DHHS will work with the County to identify the County's performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year</p>	<p>Ensure that children in out-of-home placements are able to obtain safe and permanent homes as soon as possible after removal from their home.</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 Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and the Child and Family Services Review.</p>	
<p>4 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, or guardianship, no more than 8.3% re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge.</p>	<p>DHHS will work with the County to identify the County's performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year</p>	<p>Ensure that children exiting foster care are in stable homes so that they do not re-enter foster care.</p> <p>CFSR: Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.</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 Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and the Child and Family Services Review.</p>	
<p>5 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%.</p>	<p>DHHS will work with the County to identify the County's performance measure for FY 22-23 and FY 23-24 based on the County's performance for the preceding state fiscal year</p>	<p>Ensure that children who are removed from their homes experience stability while they are in foster care.</p> <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>	

