

**DHS/MACSSA Title IV-E Background Studies Workgroup
June 2, 2020 meeting minutes**

Present: Lisa Bayley, Beth Chaplain, Angie Thies, Brenda Mahoney, Joan Granger-Kopesky, Kulani Monti, Karen Saness, Stephanie Oswald, Amber Buckner, Dawn Davis, Becky Secore, Joshua Quigley, Eric Ratzman, Matt Freeman, Kirsten Anderson, Keith Kozerski

Background Studies Progress Update Outside of Pandemic:

DHS update on status on background study clearance for facilities. Beth Chaplin clarified that the new federal guidance provided that the CANR (“Child Abuse Neglect Registry”) letter must be sent (but not necessarily received back) by DHS in order to be considered “cleared”. It is unclear whether this guidance will hold long term but if it does, it may soften some of the fiscal implications for counties. She also clarified that the modification of the waiver of the enhanced background study requirement is not retroactive to April 6, 2020, because the background study is not considered ‘cleared’ until the CANR letter is sent to the other state by DHS. Two things need to happen before IV-E reimbursement can occur: 1) DHS receives a background study application. DHS then asks each facility to send to DHS a completed form for each new employee requesting a background study regarding out of state employment. 2) DHS sends the CANR letter to the other state, asking for information regarding that employee. Amber Buckner at DHS is tracking each background study and sending CANR letters to facilities when needed.

Amber is sending information to FOD and to SSIS on facilities that are in compliance with background studies. This changes frequently. It was not clear to workgroup members where this information is housed in SSIS. Beth will ask staff from SSIS to explain where this information is located in SSIS and how it can be accessed. (NOTE: The Child Well-Being MACSSA/DHS CSP Division COVID-19 meetings have been occurring twice per week and moving to weekly).

Deadline for claiming Title IV-E:

- Out of State facilities status-DHS explained that an email form has been created for counties to send to out of state facilities to obtain verification of compliance with fingerprint background checks for employees for the months the county had a child in placement. Counties need to have the out of state facility complete the form and turn this form into Amber Buckner at DHS and this needs to be done by 6/30/20 and moving forward. [NOTE: Lisa Bayley later noted this was a misstatement: the form should not be returned to DHS but should be retained in the child’s file]. Concern was raised that the deadline for reimbursement for 3rd quarter of 2019 is fast approaching. Lisa Bayley committed to DHS confirming that counties can retroactively seek reimbursement for out of state facilities that were in compliance in 2019, and to check if DHS can assist on a short term basis with tracking which facilities were in compliance. This form will be sent out again to members of this group so that it can be distributed to counties as the process and need for each county to do this process going back to July 2019 was not clear to counties.
- There needs to be some follow up about roles/responsibilities for out of state IV-E clearance and approval and what is the most expedient mechanism for information on the facilities to be available.
- Inquiry was made about the FAQ DRAFT that this group previously created. Lisa Bayley will check on this because the final draft did not get widely disbursed to counties.

Pandemic response:

CANR-CRF's were notified by DHS on 5/18/20 on CANR letters as well as each individual being studied. 35 out of 116 CANR letters have been returned by CRF's. DHS will provide Aspire with the names of the facilities that DHS is still waiting upon so that they can follow up and ensure these get submitted timely.

Impact on adoption and transfer of custody-No one present at the meeting could speak to this. The concern is the impact to permanency timelines when a potential adoptive or kinship home does not have only a name only background study and thus is not eligible for Northstar Care benefits; what is the plan for completing this post the state of emergency and will this delay permanency? Brenda Mahoney will coordinate with Lori Munsterman to have the necessary DHS staff at one of the next CWB MACSSA/DHS meetings that is scheduled for further discussion. (UPDATE: This has been added to the agendas for the meetings).

Transition back from pandemic/Ramp Down:

- Process mapping/flow charting-Dawn Davis shared a CANR flow chart that was extremely helpful and it was shared with the group. Lisa Bayley agrees with creating a process map/flow chart around the Title IV-E background study process and will work with Eric Ratzman on this. Angie Thies and Brenda Mahoney will represent MACSSA and pull additional county representation if needed. Within the next two weeks Angie and Lisa will discuss timeline and process. Lisa indicated that it needs to start with DHS to create and provide to counties for discussion/response.

Action Steps:

Beth Chaplin will ask staff from SSIS to be on one of the next CWB MACSSA/DHS calls to explain where the information is located in SSIS on facilities that are in compliance with background studies and how it can be accessed. (Update: this is added to the call agenda for future meetings).

Lisa Bayley committed to DHS figuring out whether or not counties can retroactively seek reimbursement so long as the out of state facility can confirm compliance. She will also confirm if DHS can assist with keeping track (on a short term) of which facilities are in compliance. This form that DHS needs completed by counties for out of state background checks will be sent out again to members of this group so that it can be distributed to counties.

Lisa Bayley will check on the previously developed FAQ document that was created so that it can get widely disbursed to counties.

DHS will provide Aspire with the names of the facilities that DHS is still waiting on for CANR letters so that they can follow up and ensure these get submitted timely.

Brenda Mahoney will coordinate with Lori Munsterman to have the necessary DHS staff on a CWB MACSSA/DHS meeting that is scheduled for further discussion on CANR & name only background studies and the impact it has on adoption and transfer of custody cases. (Update: this is added to the call agenda for future meetings).

Within the next two weeks Angie Thies and Lisa Bayley will discuss plan/timeline for developing the process mapping/flow chart related to background check processes and IV-E. Lisa indicated that it needs to start with DHS.