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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems
SACWIS ASSESSMENT REVIEW GUIDE**

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**Office of State Systems
Administration for Children and Families**

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THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

ALTERNATIVE SUBMISSIONS

States MAY provide the information requested in the SACWIS Assessment Review Guide in an alternative form to the extent that the State already has it available.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Federal and State personnel on conducting Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) Assessment Reviews.

B. BACKGROUND

The Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) provides national leadership and direction in planning, managing, and coordinating the administration and financing of a broad range of comprehensive and supportive programs for vulnerable children and families. These programs are, in large part, administered by public and private State and local agencies and are designed to promote stability, economic security, responsibility, and self-sufficiency.

For many years, concerns have been raised about the lack of information available on children in foster care and their families. To address some of these concerns, Congress amended title IV-E of the Social Security Act in 1986 by adding section 479 which require the Federal government to institute a foster care and adoption data collection system. Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355.40 (Code of Federal Regulations) set forth the requirements for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (OBRA 93) provided enhanced Federal financial participation (FFP) at the 75 percent rate (beginning October 1, 1993) for development of SACWIS systems to carry out the States' programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. In response, requirements for SACWIS were implemented under regulations at 45 CFR 1355.50. The period of eligibility for the enhanced rate was extended to September 30, 1997, by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Under these laws, enhanced funding was made available for the planning, design, development, and installation of statewide systems that:

- Meet the requirements imposed by regulations promulgated pursuant to section 479(b)(2) (AFCARS);

- To the extent practicable, are capable of interfacing with the State data collection system that collects information relating to child abuse and neglect;
- To the extent practicable, are capable of interfacing with, and retrieving information from, the State data collection system that collects information relating to the eligibility of individuals under the title IV-A program; and
- Are determined by the Secretary to improve program management and be likely to provide more efficient, economical, and effective administration of the programs carried out under a State's plans approved under title IV-B or IV-E of the Act.

C. REVIEWS

States are encouraged to develop SACWIS systems. States electing to develop such systems with Federal financial participation come under the existing Federal review and approval processes, initiated and updated by Advance Planning Documents (APDs) submitted to ACF.

MONITORING REVIEWS: The law requires that ACF continually review, assess, and inspect the planning, design, and operation of SACWIS systems to determine how such systems meet and continue to meet the requirements imposed in the law, regulations, and guidelines.

These reviews, conducted on an as-needed basis, assess the State's progress in developing the comprehensive statewide system described in the approved APD. During planning, development, and installation, these reviews generally are limited to the overall progress, work performance, expenditure reports, system deliverables, and supporting documentation. ACF assesses the State's overall conformance with the approved APD and provides technical assistance and information sharing from other State projects.

ASSESSMENT REVIEWS: Unlike regulations for Family Assistance Management Information Systems (FAMIS) and Child Support, there are not specific certification requirements for SACWIS. Once a system is operational, ACF conducts and reports the results of a SACWIS Assessment Review. The purpose of such reviews is to ensure that all aspects of the project, as described in the approved APD, have been adequately completed, and conform with applicable regulations and policies. These reviews are usually initiated by the State; however, ACF reserves the right to initiate SACWIS Assessment Reviews at any time in the system life cycle.

A SACWIS Assessment Review is based on the requirements of law, implementing regulations, the SACWIS Action Transmittal (AT), the State's approved APD, and any additional policy guidance or conditions provided to the State. Every effort will be made to reach mutually acceptable resolutions to any identified issues. However, if this is not possible the State may be subject to the remedies described at CFR 45 1355.56.

Not all SACWIS Assessment Reviews will be conducted on site nor will they necessarily be conducted at the time the system becomes operational. Therefore, States that utilize contractor assistance in the development of their system should not link final acceptance or payment to an ACF review. Instead, States are encouraged to base contractor payments on task-specific deliverables and system acceptance on demonstrations and system acceptance tests.

In preparation for a SACWIS Assessment Review, every effort will be made by ACF to conduct a technical assistance consultation with the State. This discussion should occur during or immediately after pilot implementation.

The State and ACF will use this technical assistance consultation as an opportunity to estimate system conformance with SACWIS requirements, specify a time frame for resolution of obvious issues (if needed) and discuss when the SACWIS Assessment Review should be requested by the State.

As a general rule, ACF will not conduct the Assessment Review until, at a minimum, the following conditions are met:

- 30 percent of the total foster care and adoption caseloads (State and Federal) have been converted to, and are maintained under the fully functional SACWIS system; and
- one (1) or more county/district offices are fully operational.

States should note that they MAY provide the information requested in the SACWIS Assessment Review Guide in an alternative form to the extent that the State already has it available.

AFCARS REVIEWS: AFCARS reviews are conducted specifically to review the accuracy of State data submitted to the Federal AFCARS. Therefore, AFCARS reviews have a separate and distinct purpose from SACWIS reviews and may be conducted before, during, or after a SACWIS Assessment Review.

D. AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

Title IV-E SACWIS Assessment Reviews are conducted under the authority of 45 CFR 1355.55, which requires that DHHS evaluate SACWIS system projects.

The following regulations and guidelines apply to the SACWIS Assessment Review process or are of related interest:

- Conditions for approval of funding in 45 CFR 1355.53;
- Action Transmittal (AT), ACF-OISM-001, Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System;
- AFCARS Regulations (45 CFR 1355.40), Policy Information Questions, Technical Bulletins and other policy guidance;
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87, *Cost Principles for State and Local Governments*;
- Automated data processing services and acquisitions procedures and requirements of 45 CFR Part 95, Subpart F;
- ACF's *Information Systems Review Guide*, *Cost/Benefit Guide*, and *Companion Guide 2: Cost/Benefit Analysis Illustrated for Child Welfare Systems*;
- SACWIS Conceptional Design, SACWIS Data Element Dictionary, SACWIS Integrated Data Set, and SACWIS Functional Requirements;
- NCANDS Detailed Case Data Component Guidelines and Procedures; and
- ACF's review guides for programs that interface with SACWIS systems (e.g., the *Automated Systems for Child Support Enforcement: A Guide for States*).

To obtain relevant Action Transmittals and other relevant documents, interested parties may contact the Office of State Systems in ACF's Office of Program Support or visit the Office of State Systems' Homepage at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/oss/>.

Information about AFCARS, NCANDS or other program related guidance is available from the Children's Bureau or by visiting its Homepage at [**http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/**](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/).

Additional Federal policy guidance and information related to acquiring, developing and managing information technology is available from the Federal CIO Homepage at [**http://www.cio.fed.gov**](http://www.cio.fed.gov).

E. ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCESS SUMMARY

This guide describes the SACWIS Assessment Review process and provides guidance and examples on completing the review. A major component of the SACWIS review process is the self-assessment conducted by the State. The State has the opportunity to portray the system functionality outside the framework of an "audit" environment. By writing out responses to the Questionnaire, the State can take necessary care to reflect the SACWIS system fully and accurately. The Questionnaire can be broken out by section or even by question, so that the responsibility for completing the Questionnaire may be separated into smaller components and sent to the appropriate staff for completion.

The Questionnaire sets forth the specific areas of the review and is divided into two parts, which can be found in Appendices A & B. The two parts of the Questionnaire are the *Overview* and *Process* Sections.

The *Overview* Section describes the general characteristics of the SACWIS system, including the objectives, applications, and architecture. It provides general identifying information that will help other States and ACF understand the overall size, cost, and programmatic functionality of the system.

The *Process* Section describes the SACWIS system's conformance with mandatory program requirements derived from statute and regulation. The questions in this section are derived from the SACWIS Action Transmittal (AT) No. ACF-OISM-001, dated February 24, 1995. The numbering of this Questionnaire conforms to that of the AT.

The review is normally initiated when a State submits an electronic copy of the Questionnaire, along with supporting documentation, to the ACF Central and Regional Offices. An electronic version of the Questionnaire serves as the means of documenting the review, providing the State with the Federal review team's findings and producing a final report. ACF is able to provide an electronic copy of the original document in the following formats: WordPerfect, Microsoft (MS) Word, or as a text file. ACF prefers to receive the completed document as either a WordPerfect or MS Word file. If these formats are not available, the document may be returned to ACF as an electronic text file.

After the documentation is evaluated, ACF will conduct the review, which may be conducted on-site (at the State offices) or off-site (by telephone conference calls). The electronic copy of the Questionnaire is used by ACF to record comments, issues, resolution dates and negotiated action plans. Based on these comments, the State may update the Questionnaire prior to finalization of the report.

The SACWIS Assessment Review Process is described in Chapter II, while Chapter III provides instructions for completing both parts of the Questionnaire. Additional guidance may be requested from ACF's Central and Regional Offices; ACF systems staff will be available to work with the State through the entire review process.

CHAPTER II: SACWIS ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCESS

A. OVERVIEW OF THE SACWIS ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The process of conducting an on-site SACWIS Assessment Review involves four phases, illustrated in Exhibit II-1 below. These reviews will consist of:

- Review Initiation Phase;
- Document Review Phase;
- On-Site Review Phase; and
- Post-Review Phase.

EXHIBIT II-1 SACWIS ASSESSMENT REVIEW METHODOLOGY

REVIEW INITIATION	DOCUMENT REVIEW PHASE	ON-SITE REVIEW PHASE	POST-REVIEW PHASE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · State Requests Review & Submits Documentation · Federal Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Review Documents · Plan Review & Draft Agenda · Finalize Arrangements with State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Entrance Conference & System Demo · Local Office Visit & Interviews · Document Review Findings · Conduct Exit Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Finalize Findings & Conclusions · Prepare Final Report · Post Report Activities

Depending on resource availability, reviews may be conducted off-site instead of on-site.

With the obvious exception of the site visit, the process is essentially the same. For an off-site review, the depth of the Document Review phase will be expanded and supplemented with telephone interviews with appropriate State staff.

B. REVIEW INITIATION PHASE

The Review Initiation Phase involves two steps:

1. Request Review

SACWIS Assessment Reviews are expected to take place after the SACWIS system becomes operational (see section I.C. for guidance on requesting a SACWIS Assessment Review prior to completing statewide implementation). These reviews are to be initiated no later than six months after the approved project completion date by the State's submission of a written request to:

Director, Office of State Systems
Administration for Children and Families
Department of Health and Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
Washington, DC 20447

The written request must provide assurances that the SACWIS system operates uniformly statewide (or in the converted jurisdictions if the Assessment is being conducted prior to statewide implementation) and meets all mandatory requirements.

The request must be accompanied by the following documentation:

- System diagrams (both the technical architecture and elementary processes performed by the system);
- An Organizational Chart;
- Current user manual;
- Training manual and materials;
- Numbered list of system screen prints;
- Numbered list of system alerts;
- Numbered list of system notices;
- Numbered list of reports (including management and financial);
- the State's AFCARS Mapping Forms;
- One test or actual AFCARS submission from the State's SACWIS to the Federal AFCARS database (The State must notify ACF prior to submitting a test or partial AFCARS report);
- NCANDS Detailed Case Data Component (DCDC) Mapping Forms and planned schedule for submitting DCDC data (If State's Child Abuse & Neglect system is included within the SACWIS);
- Copies of SACWIS reports used to complete the Federal IV-E 12 report
- Other cross-reference material;

Both sections of the Questionnaire must be submitted to ACF in an electronic format. If possible, ACF prefers to receive the files in either WordPerfect or MS Word. If those formats are not available, the files should be submitted as an electronic text file. In addition, if the State has received approval to link a "SACWIS type system¹ existing in a large urban area" to the new SACWIS system, the "existing SACWIS type" system must be identified, the linkages described, and the following assurances made:

- The staff using either SACWIS type systems (existing or new) must be able to easily check all SACWIS related systems for prior incidents and other available information; and
- Either system is able to generate management alerts if an individual is active in more than one of the SACWIS type systems.

A copy of all documents should also be sent to the ACF Regional Administrator.

SACWIS Assessment Reviews may or may not be scheduled for the same time as AFCARS Reviews. Beyond the condition that the system must be operational, scheduling depends on ACF and State staff time and resources.

If ACF decides to initiate a formal SACWIS Assessment Review, the State will be notified in writing of the need to conduct the review and the reasons for this decision. The failure to cooperate with an ACF-initiated SACWIS Assessment Review could result in suspension of the project's approval and the disallowance of applicable title IV-E funds.

2. Federal Response

The Federal review team and leader are selected. SACWIS Assessment Review teams are composed of Federal (Regional and Central Office) staff who have technical and program expertise and knowledge of the State requesting the review.

Federal and State staff work together to schedule the review.

^{1/} See ACF Action Transmittal number ACF-OISM-001 for discussion of alternative approaches to a single statewide system.

C. DOCUMENT REVIEW PHASE

The Document Review Phase involves the following three steps:

1. Review Documents

First, all Federal team members analyze the documents submitted by the State. Given schedule and resource availability, consideration should be given to ensure that all parties have sufficient time to either prepare or review the SACWIS Assessment Review documentation.

The preliminary review of documentation is intended to prepare the Federal team, expedite the review and evaluation process, determine if there are any impediments to the review, identify those areas of the system that require additional evaluation and document early findings. This should help maximize the effectiveness of on-site performance.

The Federal staff will review the APD to establish the scope of the State's project.

2. Plan Review and Draft Agenda

Appendix D contains a sample on-site SACWIS Assessment Review agenda. In addition to date and time, the schedule lists activities and participants. This list of activities should include all proposed visits to county and local office sites, computer center visits, and separate functional areas to be investigated. The participants in each activity should be indicated, including, if possible, the specific State, county, and local staff to be involved in each activity. To the extent possible, interviews with key State, county, and local officials should be planned and scheduled in advance. The emphasis should be on opening up lines of communication as well as advising the State on preliminary findings.

Federal team discussions should focus on: who the team must interview; where the review will take place (e.g., on- or off-site); and reach agreement on tasks, responsibilities, milestones, deliverables, and schedules.

3. Finalize Arrangements with State

At least one conference call should be conducted with State staff prior to the on-site review in order to finalize schedules, clarify expectations, organize the interviews, confirm sites for on-site visits and availability of State staff. At the discretion of the Federal team leader, the State may be asked to provide meeting space, if available, for team members during the on-site review.

Once the details are finalized, the Federal team leader will send a letter to the State which includes:

- Information on how the review will be conducted, addressing entrance and exit conferences, names of Federal team members, scheduling, etc.;
- A copy of the on-site agenda including county/local sites to be visited;
- The review techniques that will be employed, such as interviews, examination of outputs, case sampling, review of general production outputs, viewing screens and operations, collateral verifications, etc.

Appendix A of ACF's *Information Systems Review Guide* (see resource list in Chapter I of this document) contains a generic "Sample Entrance Letter to State" on page A-5.

The State should disseminate information on the nature and scope of the review to prepare program and data processing staff who will be affected by the on-site review.

D. ON-SITE REVIEW PHASE

The on-site review phase is usually conducted over a four to five-day period and includes the following:

1. Entrance Conference & Detailed System Demonstration

The first day of the on-site visit begins with the entrance conference which serves to:

- Introduce the Federal team to the State management and project staff;
- Establish contacts for consultation later in the on-site review;

- Advise the State of the nature and scope of the on-site review; and
- Respond to any questions the State staff might have related to the review process.

Immediately following the entrance conference, the State should present a detailed functional walk through of the system and provide an overview of actual and projected program improvements resulting from the system implementation. The demonstration should focus on how the system meets the SACWIS functional requirements and should be tied to the State's responses on the completed questionnaire. The state should ensure that appropriate technical and programmatic staff participate in the demonstration.

2. Local Office Visits & Interviews

Site reviews should include visits to at least two counties or local offices of varying size and complexity. In order to complete all the tasks identified on the agenda, the Federal team will divide into smaller groups. The purpose of the local Office visits and interviews is to confirm that the system functions in the field as it was described in the State's APD, Questionnaire responses and functional walk-through.

The Federal team will use a variety of techniques to assess the functional conformance of the operational system. The team will:

- interview field office managers and staff (including staff involved in referral/intake, investigation, assessment, resource development, out-of-home placement, family preservation, adoption, claims, contracts, etc.) about how they use the system, what works well and what needs to be improved;
- ask the local office staff to share their "lessons learned;"
- observe actual case information being entered into the system; and
- ask follow-up questions based on the information gathered during the review of the State documentation and on-site functional walk-through.

While State project staff should accompany the Federal team to the site visit, they should not be part of the interview. The State project staff should be available to answer questions that may arise during the interview. The importance of allowing field office personnel to share their experiences will be part of a letter to the State and should be re-confirmed at the entrance conference.

The Federal team will work with the State to identify the specific field offices to be visited (no fewer than two and no more than four). Each local office visit should include at least one hour of observing workers entering case data into the system. After the Federal team identifies the types of system users that they would like to interview, the State and local offices can work out a schedule for the interviews. This schedule should minimize disruption to the local office's regular work.

The local office visit will allow the Federal team to talk to the SACWIS system users about how the system supports the flow of work. These discussions may cover all the appropriate SACWIS functions supported by the system, but in a less formal way than was done in the questionnaire.

3. Document Review Findings

a. Daily Meetings. As necessary, the full Federal team will reconvene at the end of the day to review the day's findings, summarize results, complete documentation, and plan the next day's process. The purpose of these daily meetings is to:

- Prepare a one to two page overview of the **initial** findings to present to the State;
- Discuss issues; and
- Refine or refocus the on-site process as a result of the day's findings.

If part of the Federal team cannot return to the central site for the daily team conference, the meeting should take place by teleconference. The full team should be present the night before an exit conference to finalize findings.

b. Use of the Questionnaire. The State's completed Questionnaire is used during the on-site inspection to direct the review process. ACF will not change a State's response. Federal team members may record notes on their own copy of the Questionnaire.

The Federal team records the results of the functional review on the ACF portion of the Questionnaire. For each mandatory functional requirement and each funded optional requirement, the team notes whether the system *conforms*, *conditionally conforms*, or *does not conform*. If the system has the required functionality, no further supporting documentation is required. However, if the system does not have full functionality (conditionally conforms) or lacks functionality, an explanation or description will be

required. If the system does not fully conform to a requirement, the team will note the basis for the finding and record any known actions to be taken or information provided in the comments section of the report. This will be provided to the State after it has been reviewed by the appropriate ACF manager.

This completed questionnaire will become the draft and final report. While the ACF portion of the Questionnaire can be changed, the final version will reflect any identified issues, necessary or completed actions, and the corresponding resolution dates.

The Federal team leader ensures that appropriate documentation is collected and reported. The Questionnaire provides the primary documentation of the review and its findings. All supporting documentation collected and prepared during the preliminary evaluation, on-site inspection, and final evaluation is included in the permanent State SACWIS review file, which is retained by ACF.

c. Finding Summary Worksheet.

The Finding Summary Worksheet (see Exhibit II-1 on page II-12) may be completed if there are significant deficiencies that must be corrected in order for the system to meet the requirements established in the SACWIS AT or the State's approved APD. Use of the Finding Summary Worksheet will only be necessary when the State and Federal staffs cannot reach agreement on a specific finding. The Finding Summary Worksheet will be prepared after the on-site review is completed and the draft report has been given to the State.

The Finding Summary Worksheet is founded on the performance-based review methodology commonly used by evaluators for the examination of facts and recording a well documented finding. The methodology requires that the following information be obtained and evaluated to determine whether the finding is valid and corrective action is needed:

- *Criteria:* What should be;
- *Condition:* What is;
- *Gap:* Difference between "what should be" and "what is;"
- *Effect:* Significance;
- *Cause:* Why; and
- *Recommendations:* How to make the condition equal the criteria.

4. Conduct Exit Conference

Before the Exit Conference the Federal team summarizes its findings, consolidates the documentation, notifies Central and Regional Office management of the preliminary review results, and prepares for the last next day of meetings. The purpose of the exit conference is to:

- Present specific findings resulting from the review process;
- Report the preliminary recommendations and/or proposed resolutions to outstanding issues; and
- Answer any questions that the State might have as a result of the review.

E. POST-REVIEW PHASE

The Post-Review Phase involves three steps:

1. Finalize Findings and Conclusions

Although the major portion of the evaluation of the SACWIS system will be conducted on-site, a number of steps in the assessment and documentation process may be completed off site. These steps include:

- Consolidation of documentation from all members;
- Final consultation among Federal team members;
- Organization of the review record;
- Complete the ACF portion of the Questionnaire; and
- Collateral verifications from sources such as State plans, NCANDS and AFCARS reports/reviews, State Cost Allocation plans, etc.

All documentation or verifications from collateral sources are retained by ACF as a part of the permanent archive file on the State's SACWIS project.

2. Prepare Final Report

A SACWIS Assessment Review report will include:

- An overview of the SACWIS system;

- Summary of the functional components of this system that work particularly well;
- Summary of the deficiencies and recommendations for improvements; and
- The completed Questionnaire.

Once the Questionnaire (and any Finding Summary Worksheets) is/are complete, the Federal team can begin to draft a brief overview of the SACWIS system. The overview will describe the findings and identify any actions needed to be completed by the State. The overview will be included in the cover letter sent to the State with the completed Questionnaire.

The SACWIS Assessment Review report should be completed and approved within 60 days after the on-site review ends. The reports are unlike the "typical" audit or management review report which includes separate sections on background, purpose and scope of the review, review methodology and so forth. Instead, this guide establishes background, purpose, scope, and methodology for *all* SACWIS reviews.

The purpose of the report is to support a decision by ACF that the SACWIS system has met the tests of efficient, effective, and economical operation and qualifies for enhanced FFP.

All Federal team members will contribute to the final draft report. The draft report requires review and approval prior to issuance by the:

- Director, Division of State Systems Approvals; and
- Director, Office of State Systems.

Once approved, the draft report will be sent to the State. The State has an additional 30 days to respond to the draft report. The final report will be issued within 30 days of receiving the State comments and ACF approval of the finalized report.

Although the final report is prepared primarily for ACF, the State under review, and other States for transfer evaluation, it is public information and will be prepared in such a manner that it may be shared freely.

3. Post Report Activities

As noted at 45 CFR Part 95.605, cost benefit and other program performance improvements must be reported through the Annual APD Update until the Department determines that the projected benefits have been achieved. More rigorous follow-up is

required for systems that do not meet SACWIS functional requirements. States will be required to report the results of their approved action plan as part of their Annual APD.

ACF may also take the following steps -

- For functionally deficient systems, ACF may request an APD Update which presents a workplan for any additional development to fulfill functionality. In addition, periodic monitoring reports may be required if development is extended.
- To assist the State in eliminating reported deficiencies, the ACF Regional Office may regularly contact the State about progress in achieving each component of the functional correction schedule. If corrective actions are not undertaken in a timely way, ACF may limit funding or seek recoupment of funds.
- ACF may require revisions to the State's past claims for Federal financial participation (FFP) or the SACWIS cost allocation plan.

Prior to initiating a negative action, ACF will work diligently with the State to come to a mutual agreement on the findings. If necessary, ACF will work with the State on an action plan to resolve any outstanding issues. It is ACF's desire to support innovative State solutions and program successes that ensure that program needs are met.

EXHIBIT II-1
FINDING SUMMARY WORKSHEET

<u>FINDING:</u>	[<i>Condition:</i> What is.]
<u>BASIS FOR FINDING:</u>	[<i>Criteria:</i> What should be.] [<i>Gap:</i> Difference between what should be and what is.]
<u>CORRECTIVE ACTION:</u>	[Description of any corrective action underway or planned.]
<u>CRITICALITY:</u>	[<i>Effect:</i> Significance.]
<u>CONCLUSION:</u>	[<i>Cause:</i> Why?] [Assessment as to whether further action is required. Reflects conclusion based on "why," "so what?," and current or planned corrective action. Note that conclusion may be that a recommendation need not be developed.]
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u>	[<i>Recommendation:</i> How to make the condition equal the criteria.]

CHAPTER III: INSTRUCTIONS

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter provides instructions to complete the SACWIS Overview and Process Sections of the Questionnaire (Appendices A and B). As previously indicated in chapter II.B.1., the State initiates the review process by sending a request to ACF which includes the completed SACWIS Questionnaire. By organizing the review material as a set of questions supported by citations and narrative explanation, the processes of documenting and creating a "report" are combined in a single electronic document. This should greatly reduce the time required of reviewers, both at the State and Federal level.

This Questionnaire is divided into two segments:

- an *Overview* Section that describes characteristics of the SACWIS system, including the objectives, applications, and architecture - **Appendix A**; and
- a *Process* Section that describes the system's conformance with mandatory program requirements derived from statute and regulation - **Appendix B**.

States MAY provide the information requested in the SACWIS Assessment Review Guide in an alternative form to the extent that the State already has it available.

B. STATE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix A: Overview Section

This part of the SACWIS Assessment Review Guide provides an overview of the SACWIS system, including the objectives, applications and architecture. The following sections provides guidance and describes the purpose of requesting the information.

All State responses should be typed using **bold** text.

A. I is for general identifying information as well as information that will help other States understand the overall size, cost, and programmatic functionality of the system.

The section is self-explanatory except for the following:

Question 3. This question on system support staff is primarily intended to help other States assess the suitability of the system for transfer. By understanding the numbers and types of people who operate and maintain the system, other States may be able to make a preliminary assessment about transfer potential. This question is geared to normal support staff, not staff available for system modifications. If this information is not available because the system is maintained by a contractor and the information is considered proprietary, please provide the information that is available and note the exception.

Question 4. This question on the number of system users is also intended to help other States assess suitability for transfer. The State should specify the number of current on-line users.

A. II is for summary technical information. A paragraph or two per question should be sufficient.

A. III is for identification of contractors that participated in the planning, development, implementation, and operation.

A. IV is for financial information.

A. V is for "lessons learned." Because of the value of this section to other States, ACF strongly encourages States to spend some time completing this section. The section is for information only, and States will not be penalized for the content.

A. VI lists required enclosures. Note that the information provided will be cross-referenced to responses in Appendix B.

Appendix B: Process Section

The Process Section is intended to establish the conformance of the State's SACWIS system to the functional requirements established in the SACWIS AT. The numbering corresponds to the sections in the SACWIS Action Transmittal. Note that the functional requirements are stated as open-ended questions. In response to each, the State will (1) describe (after *State response:*) how the functionality is met and (2) provide documentation cross-references.

All State responses should be typed using **bold** text.

In the *State Response* section, the State will provide a brief narrative description of how the SACWIS supports the required and optional functional components approved in the

APD. Each response should include a self-assessment describing the extent to which the State's SACWIS system fulfills the functionality. If the State determines that a requirement is incomplete, the State should describe:

- The differences or "gaps" between what is required and what has been implemented;
- The reasons for the gaps;
- Actual or potential effect on the State's child welfare program; and
- Planned actions for closing the gaps.

Required functional components are identified with an asterisk (*) after the title. Optional functional components are followed by a table that asks if the State elected to include the functionality in the SACWIS system ("State Selected Option? Yes or No"). The State indicates whether the optional functionality was a "State Selected Option" by checking the appropriate box. It should be noted that optional functional components, for which the State was approved funding, become mandatory with APD approval.

The Questionnaire uses a table to cross-reference the brief functional description provided under the *State Response* section to the documentation provided in response to Appendix A. VI: Enclosures. The cross-reference table sections are completed as applicable to each functional component. Rarely will all sections be completed for a single functional component.

Cross-reference table used for required functional components:

Reference Source	Screen Identifier	Alert Identifier	Notice Identifier	Report Identifier

Cross-reference table used for optional functional components:

State Selected Option	YES:		NO:	
Reference Source	Screen Identifier	Alert Identifier	Notice Identifier	Report Identifier

Alternative approach for using the cross-reference tables - States may elect to complete one cross-reference table for each sub-section (e.g., B.1.A. Intake, B.1.B Screening, B.1.C. Investigations and B.1.D Assessment) rather than for each question under a sub-section. For example, if a State determines that the cross-reference materials for the eight

questions under B.1.D. (Intake Management - Assessment) are substantially the same, it may complete one cross-reference table for the sub-section (in this example, the Assessment sub-section under Intake Management). Regardless of whether the State chooses to use one cross-reference table in a sub-section, the State must still indicate if the optional functional components were included in the final system design by marking "yes" or "no" in the appropriate box on the "Cross-reference table used for optional functional components" (see page III-3).

Cross-reference table definitions -

- The *Reference Source* is for the source and page number of the enclosed document (such as a User Manual) that provides supporting evidence or additional detail on how the system meets the functional requirement.
- The *Screen Identifier* is for identifying the screen(s) used to meet the functional requirement. This can either be cross-referenced by number to a "screen print" included as an attachment or to another resource (such as a User Manual) provided by the State that identifies the use of the screen(s).
- The *Alert Identifier*, *Notice Identifier*, and *Report Identifier* are for identifying (as applicable) the alerts/ticklers, notices, or reports that relate to the particular functional element. The response should be cross-referenced by number (such as Alert No. 1) to the lists of alerts, notices, and reports provided by the State (Appendix A. VII: Enclosures).

The term "**Alert**" is used through out the Review Guide and Questionnaire. It refers to an automated or worker generated tickler (reminder) of the need to complete an important task.

Notices can refer to system generated correspondence, task lists, reports or word processing templates that are integrated into the SACWIS application.

C. EXAMPLE FOR COMPLETING THE PROCESS SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is provided as an example of how a State should complete the *Process* Section of the Questionnaire. The information presented in this example is for illustration only. The State's narrative (*State Response*) should be brief and rely on the *Documentation References* for the supporting details. The *Documentation References* should correspond to the numbering sequence of the Reference Lists provided by the State at the time the Questionnaire was submitted to ACF (see Chapter II, Section B.1.). The example uses the format provided in the Questionnaire, while the sample State text is **underlined and bolded**.

As previously described, the State would use the selected word processing program to add text to the appropriate section. The word wrapping capabilities of the word processing program will expand the document to fit the need.

Example -

1 - Intake Management - Section A: Intake

1. Record contact/referral * — Describe how the automated system records initial contacts regarding allegations of abuse or neglect, and/or provides for the input of a formal referral for protective services, voluntary placement services, juvenile corrections and other services.

State Response: **Our SACWIS includes the State's child/abuse and neglect component. The State has a 24 hour Intake Unit located at the CMI Building. That unit is responsible for receiving and processing all public and private referrals and telephone calls. Initial contacts are captured on the system's 5 intake screens. These screens capture basic information about the caller, victim, family, initial contact and allegation. Inquires and requests for voluntary services are captured on the 'contact' screen. Based on the information provided, the system prompts the intake worker to refer the case to the applicable services.**

All SACWIS requirements have been met.

Documentation References:

Reference Source	Screen Identifier	Alert Identifier	Notice Identifier	Report Identifier
<u>User Manual Chapter 4 Training Manual - Chapter 11</u>	<u>Screens 24 through 28.</u> Note to the reader: The numbers used in this example correspond to the list of screen prints that would have been provided with the Questionnaire.	<u>Alerts 2, 45, & 67</u> Note to the reader: The numbers used in this example correspond to the list of alerts that would have been provided with the Questionnaire.	<u>None.</u> Note to the reader: If one or more notices had been generated by this functional area, they would have been listed here. The numbers would have corresponded to the list of notices that would have been provided with the Questionnaire.	<u>Reports 15, 16, 34 & 37</u> Note to the reader: The numbers used in this example correspond to the list of reports (on-line and paper) that would have been provided with the Questionnaire.

2. Collect intake/referral information * — Describe how the automated system allows for input of available situation and demographic information, including the cross-referencing of relationships among participants and the reason for referral.

State Response: **The Intake Unit located at the CMI Building records situational and demographic information on the 5 intake screens. Additional information is collected during assessment and investigation of the allegation or request for services. The Reason for Referral is captured on the initial contact screen. Information can be recorded as it is provided by a caller in the applicable data fields, or the system allows the worker to use structured text fields on each of the Intake screens to capture free flowing information. If the text fields are used, the data fields are completed once the call is finished. Where applicable, the system uses pick-lists, checklist and radio buttons to simplify data entry.**

To the extent that it is known, individuals are linked to other members of the family during the initial Intake. According to State policy, the system records the relationship of all (extended) family members to the alleged victim. The system allows inquires based on the family or the individual. Furthermore, individuals can be linked to more than one family and family members to more than one victim.

While we believe that the system meets all SACWIS Requirements, the current process for linking family members to the family unit is cumbersome. We will be examining alternatives to the current process. A budget and schedule will be submitted in the next APD Update.

Documentation References:

Reference Source	Screen Identifier	Alert Identifier	Notice Identifier	Report Identifier
<u>User Manual</u> <u>Chapter 4, & 7</u> <u>Training Manual -</u> <u>Chapter 11 & 15</u>	<u>Screens 24 through</u> <u>28, & 33 through 40.</u>	<u>Alerts 16</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Reports 22</u>

4. Record "information only" requests — Describe how the automated system records calls or contacts which do not involve a specific allegation or referral.

State Response:

Note to the reader: This is an example of how a State would respond to a question about an optional component that was not included in the State's approved APD.

Documentation References:

State Selected Option	YES:		NO:	<u>X</u>
Reference Source	Screen Identifier	Alert Identifier	Notice Identifier	Report Identifier

1 - Intake Management - Section B: Screening

2. Record the results of the screening evaluation * — Describe how the automated system provides for the recording of the determination resulting from the screening process.

State Response: **Once the supervisor approves the screening recommendation, the system automatically records the determination on the case status screen. The recommendation is supported by the system's business rules and the SW's assessment.**

All SACWIS requirements have been met.

Note to the reader: This example is intended to show that some of the responses can be very brief. The purpose of the narrative is to briefly answer the questions and to provide a framework for evaluating the cross-reference material identified below.

Documentation References:

Reference Source	Screen Identifier	Alert Identifier	Notice Identifier	Report Identifier
<u>User Manual</u> <u>Chapter 9</u> <u>Training Manual -</u> <u>Chapter 6</u>	<u>Screen # 35</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Reports 12, 17 & 22</u>

D. ACF COMMENTS

Specific ACF comments will be documented in the space provided after the "*State Response*" and "*Documentation References*" sections.

ACF ONLY	Conforms? Y/C/N		Finding Summary Worksheet Completed? Yes or Blank		Resolution Date:	
ACF Comments						

Table definitions -

- *Conforms? Y/C/N* - The Federal team records the results of the functional review on the ACF portion of the Questionnaire. For each mandatory functional requirement and each funded optional requirement, the team notes whether the system *conforms (Y)*, *conditionally conforms (C)*, or *does not conform (N)*. See Chapter Two for additional information.
- *Finding Summary Worksheet Completed? Yes or Blank* - The Finding Summary Worksheet (see Exhibit II-1 on page II-12) should be completed if there are significant deficiencies that must be corrected in order for the system to meet the requirements established in the SACWIS AT or the State's approved APD. Use of the Finding Summary Worksheet ordinarily will only be necessary when the State and Federal staffs cannot reach agreement on a finding. The Finding Summary Worksheet will be prepared after the on-site review is completed and the draft report has been given to the State. This section is used to indicate that a Finding Summary Worksheet was completed.
- *Resolution Date* - Used to record the date that an issue was resolved or an action plan proposed by the State was accepted by ACF.
- *ACF Comments* - ACF draft and final comments regarding the system.