

## INVESTIGATION

v1.0

### Definition

Each state and tribal title IV-E agency has definitions, policies, and procedures for responding to reports of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. After screening referrals through an intake process, title IV-E agencies use screening tools to determine the severity of the allegation(s), which result in one of several investigative tracks and associated response times.

Investigations of possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be completed timely and thoroughly, in collaboration with the affected child(ren) and caregivers, to address the well-being of child(ren) and manage safety and risk. In collaboration with the family, investigations should address whether the child is safe from abuse, neglect, and exploitation in the home. Agency staff must assess the risk of maltreatment if the child is kept in or returned to the home, if the child is not safe, what actions are required to protect the child, and the services that must be provided to the child and family to prevent further maltreatment and help mitigate the effects of the abuse, neglect, or exploitation. A Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) must allow for the timely and accurate collection of this information to support decision-making and ensure children and families receive the appropriate services to meet their unique needs.<sup>1</sup>

### Instructions

The self-assessment tool format is documented below. The Element # refers to the section number assigned to this module which will align with the respective section this self-assessment tool. The CAR document will be utilized to help score and record how well the CCWIS meets compliance with the federal regulations that describe CCWIS.

Section	Element #
Overview	B.A.xx
Self-Assessment – Part One – <i>Program Goals</i>	B.B1.xx
Self-Assessment – Part Two – <i>Foundational Requirements</i>	B.B2.xx
Resources – Functional Process Factors, Data Elements, & Additional Considerations	B.C.xx

<sup>1</sup> 45 CFR § 1355.52

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: Through this information collection, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is collecting information to document that title IV-E agencies have planned and developed their system’s conformity to federal CCWIS and Advance Planning Document requirements. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 hours per title IV-E agency choosing to develop and implement a CCWIS system, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. This is a voluntary collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-xxxx and the expiration date is 00/00/0000.

CCWIS self-assessment tools assist title IV-E agency staff with voluntary documentation of CCWIS project progress as the agency plans, develops, and deploys system functions. Agencies may use the self-assessment tools to determine what features will support federal and state or tribal child welfare program needs and document ongoing CCWIS progress. The data and information provided to ACF by the IV-E agency in the CCWIS self-assessment tools will help inform the agency's CAR process conducted by ACF under 45 CFR part 95, subpart F and § 1355.55.

The Children's Bureau will continue to pilot and utilize the self-assessment tools voluntarily with agencies to document "lessons learned" and provide agencies with opportunities to provide feedback regarding the utility of the tools. At this time, agencies may utilize tools they determine useful to document project processes, such as evaluating progress in developing the CCWIS, sharing information in an Advance Planning Document (APD), or sharing information in regular monitoring calls and other technical assistance activities. Agencies are encouraged to engage CCWIS users (users) as part of their ongoing self-assessment process to ensure the CCWIS is user-friendly and meets program and policy expectations.

Agencies may wish to attach self-assessment tools, screenshots, state or tribal policy, and other documentation to APD documents to describe project progress. The tools may also be used as part of the agency's ongoing project management practices and stored, as desired, by the project team. If a required feature is not yet in production, the agency may document an expected completion date and/or reference the planned timeframe from the most recent APD update. ACF designed the tools to help clarify potential program and technology needs and document project progress towards CCWIS compliance. Agencies are encouraged to utilize standard version control practices to reduce redundancy and promote efficiencies.

## A. Overview – Background Information

A title IV-E agency may use this self-assessment tool to collect information on the users and external systems associated with a CCWIS investigation function and any features incorporated in this component. Agencies may cross-reference information if it is already contained in an APD or project artifact. *If a question is not applicable to the investigation function, indicate "N/A" and provide the reason why it is not applicable.*

**B.A.01** Date this assessment was completed.

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**B.A.02** Provide a brief description of the implementation approach, status, and target dates for the function and/or external system(s). *Specific implementation plans are documented in the APD and the agency may reference the APD(s), or document information, here.*

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**B.A.03** If the function supports programs beyond the child welfare program (such as Juvenile Justice or Adult Services), please identify the other program area(s) below.

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**B.A.04** Is this function, or external system(s), accessed by users who are not employees of the title IV-E agency (or counties in a county-administered system), such as private providers, staff of other state or tribal agencies, court staff, or contractors? *Please identify external user groups that will access this function, including Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCAs). Please add more rows, as needed.*

User Group	Purpose of Use

**B.A.05** Do title IV-E staff, or external users, use any system(s) external to CCWIS to collect information used in this function? If so, what external system(s) are used and what data from that system is shared with the CCWIS? *External systems can include commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products, publicly available portals, and applications for mobile devices. Please add more rows, as needed.*

External System	Data Shared

**B.A.06** Are there any additional comments you would like to provide as background to this function?

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**Part One - Program Goals**

The Program Goals section of this self-assessment tool describes the critical program needs CCWIS must support, as defined at 45 CFR § 1355.52 (a)(1). These program needs apply whether staff enter data directly into the CCWIS or data are imported through a data exchange. Agencies should continually assess changing policy and practice needs to ensure CCWIS aligns with program priorities and remains relevant to support program outcomes. The program goals noted below are common child welfare program needs or are required by policy or federal law.

In this section, the title IV-E agency may document components, factors, and design elements of the function(s) or exchanges that support the program goals of the investigation function. We encourage agencies to simplify their responses by referencing submitted documentation, such as APDs or attach screen shots, system documentation, training materials, survey data, and agency policy or procedures. To ensure the CCWIS is supporting program goals, engagement with end users during all states of the system development life cycle is critical. Likewise, continuous user feedback is often necessary to ensure the system is responsive to program changes after implementation.

In the **Evidence Module & Exchanges Support the Program Goals** column, include information such as:

- how the CCWIS supports agency policies and practices;
- feedback from end users;
- how the module was designed to be user-friendly and streamline work;
- data CCWIS maintains to support the goal;
- reports CCWIS provides; and
- components, factors, and design elements of the function(s), or exchanges, that support the goal.

If the title IV-E agency has additional program goals, please include them below and add new rows, as needed.

*If a question is not applicable to the investigation function, indicate "N/A" and explain why it is not applicable. For example, other functions in the CCWIS may address the program goals.*

#	Program Goal	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Program Goal
<b>B.B1.01</b>	Provide complete and timely access to the information collected at intake and summarized intake reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.	

## B. Self-Assessment

<b>B.B1.02</b>	Provide tools and information to help workers investigate whether children are safe from abuse, neglect, and exploitation in the home and determine the risk of maltreatment if the child is kept in the home.	
<b>B.B1.03</b>	Allow users to document information for the investigation of safety and risk for assigned referrals. This includes investigation-specific and alternative response-specific information.	
<b>B.B1.04</b>	Support decision-making of the worker and supervisor if a child is unsafe or at risk for further maltreatment.	
<b>B.B1.05</b>	Provide complete referral, case, child, individual, and family history in a timely and accurate manner.	
<b>B.B1.06</b>	Support case assignment and workload management.	

**Part Two – Foundational Requirements**

Foundational Requirements identify conditions to comply with CCWIS Project requirements at 45 CFR § 1355.52. These apply whether staff enter data directly into the CCWIS, or data is imported, through a data exchange.

In this section, the title IV-E agency may document components, factors, and design elements of the function(s) or exchanges that support CCWIS foundational requirements. We encourage agencies to simplify their responses by referencing submitted documentation, such as APDs or attach screened shots, system documentation, training materials, survey data, and agency policy or procedures.

In the **Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Foundational Requirement** column, include information such as:

- feedback from end users;
- how the module was designed to be user-friendly and streamline work;
- data the CCWIS maintains;
- reports the CCWIS generates or contributes to;
- user-interfaces features; and
- automated processes and other design features.

*If a question is not applicable to the investigation function, indicate “N/A” and explain why it is not applicable. For example, other functions in the CCWIS may address the relevant foundational requirements.*

#	Foundational Requirement	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Foundational Requirement
B.B2.01	Support the federal and state or tribal practice model.	
B.B2.02	Support evaluation and reporting requirements.	
B.B2.03	Maintain data to support federal audits, reviews, and other monitoring activities, <u>including</u> title IV-E eligibility reviews and	

B. Self-Assessment

#	Foundational Requirement	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Foundational Requirement
	required federal reporting.	
<b>B.B2.04</b>	Data is consistently and uniformly collected by CCWIS, exchanged with external systems, and, if applicable, CWCA systems.	
<b>B.B2.05</b>	Data is not created by default or inappropriately assigned.	
<b>B.B2.06</b>	Data is exchanged and maintained under confidentiality requirements in section 471(a)(8) of the Social Security Act (the Act), 45 CFR 205.50, and 42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(viii) through (x) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, if applicable, and other applicable federal and state or tribal laws.	
<b>B.B2.07</b>	For states, data is included that supports specific measures taken to comply with the requirements in section 422(b)(9) of the Act regarding the state's compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.	
<b>B.B2.08</b>	For states, information is collected that is required by the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act to track abuse and neglect reports from intake through disposition.	
<b>B.B2.09</b>	Supports the determination and documentation of a child's special needs, if such discovery is made during investigation.	

#	Foundational Requirement	Evidence the Module & Exchanges Support the Foundational Requirement
B.B2.10	Collects information mandated by state or tribal law, regulation, policy, or practice model discovered during an investigation.	

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## RESOURCES

The Functional Process Factors, Data Elements, and Additional Considerations below are examples, not an exhaustive list of functional requirements, the title IV-E agencies may consider in developing an investigation function. Title IV-E agencies are encouraged to collect data required to support child welfare program outcomes, needs of respective users, and CCWIS and program regulations.

Resource 1: Functional Process Factors

Resource 2: Data Elements

Resource 3: Additional Considerations

**Resource 1 - Functional Process Factors**

Functional Process Factors identify useful *processes* to achieve an efficient, economical, and effective CCWIS, as defined at 45 CFR § 1355.52. A title IV-E agency is not required to have all the functional process factors listed below in the CCWIS. Function descriptions are based on historical perspectives and typical program needs gathered from previous reviews to promote the successful execution of adoption program goals. The functional process factors will evolve and title IV-E agencies may, as needed, include additional factors. Title IV-E agencies are encouraged to assess local program needs, federal and agency policies, and user-centric design as it develops, maintains, and enhances the CCWIS adoption functions to support positive program outcomes.

#	Functional Process Factors
B.C1.01	Investigation functions are available 24 hours a day.
B.C1.02	Remote, or web, connectivity for users.
B.C1.03	Person and/or case search that allows quick and user-friendly access and usability of historical data.
B.C1.04	Monitors statutory time frames for court appearances and reports.
B.C1.05	Supports cross-jurisdictional efforts to investigate.
B.C1.06	Allows approved users to merge person and/or case records.
B.C1.07	Support the integrity of information, as reported, and allows for auditable changes/updates.
B.C1.08	Streamlined ability to search the CCWIS and external systems to support the assessment process.
B.C1.09	Informs and collects information from law enforcement, if appropriate and practicable.
B.C1.10	Automated functions that support and track supervisory reviews and feedback.
B.C1.11	Provides for second-party review of the available information to evaluate investigative result.
B.C1.12	Supports the confidentiality of information in the CCWIS.
B.C1.13	Under state or tribal laws and policies, allows restrictions to user access for high-profile and/or sensitive cases.
B.C1.14	Links findings to the alleged perpetrator’s record.
B.C1.15	Links allegations to multiple family, or case members, without the need to copy and paste or re-enter.
B.C1.16	Generates documents in response to the investigation.
B.C1.17	Provides the ability to alert, or notify, staff of case work activities per the federal, state, and local child welfare policies.

## Resource 2 - Data Elements

The Data Elements section identifies examples of useful *data elements* to achieve an efficient, economical, and effective CCWIS, as defined at 45 CFR § 1355.52. Data Elements evolve and title IV-E agencies may include additional elements to support local program needs.

#	Data Elements
<b>B.C2.01</b>	All federal and title IV-E agency Data Elements required for program administration, federal and agency reporting, data collection, and audits typically captured during investigation. Examples of federal data collections include the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System.
<b>B.C2.02</b>	Carries data forward to other functions to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Planning;</li> <li>• Services Referrals;</li> <li>• Title IV-E Eligibility;</li> <li>• Placement and Provider Information; and</li> <li>• Adoption.</li> </ul>
<b>B.C2.03</b>	All demographic and contact information required by state or tribal law and policy.
<b>B.C2.04</b>	All abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or abandonment categories and conditions noted in state or tribal law and policy.
<b>B.C2.05</b>	Location, time, and substance of all contacts with the child, parents, caregivers, household members, and collateral contacts made during the investigation.
<b>B.C2.06</b>	Dispositions for each allegation captured at intake and additional allegations observed during the investigation.
<b>B.C2.07</b>	Services offered and delivered during the investigation and referrals by voluntary or community agencies.
<b>B.C2.08</b>	Participation, content, and outcomes of family case conferences, or similar meetings, with family members.
<b>B.C2.09</b>	Information to report child fatalities, or near fatalities, as required by federal and state or tribal policy and law.
<b>B.C2.10</b>	Narrative case notes to incorporate into the title IV-E agency's official case record.

**Resource 3 - Additional Considerations**

The Additional Considerations section describes useful features agencies may wish to incorporate into the CCWIS design/features.

#	Additional Considerations
B.C3.01	Access via mobile device (e.g., phone or tablet) application.
B.C3.02	Online access to the state or tribe’s policy, legal, or regulatory definitions of abuse and neglect.
B.C3.03	Online access to the state or tribe’s policies, procedures, and training documents regarding child abuse, neglect, and exploitation investigation and case planning.
B.C3.04	Function provides link to agency’s investigation and alternative response policy, or practice guidance documents.
B.C3.05	Forwards referrals for other services.
B.C3.06	Collects information to support worker safety.
B.C3.07	Identifies potential harmful, or risk-of-personal-safety, situations for workers.
B.C3.08	Provides voice-to-text recording of investigative notes.
B.C3.09	Data analytics of high-risk factors.
B.C3.10	Links to risk and safety assessment criteria to support decision-making.
B.C3.11	Shares information with agency legal staff.
B.C3.12	Integration with court information technology systems.

We encourage agencies to add examples of additional considerations from their investigation function they wish to highlight.

#	Agency-Submitted Additional Considerations