



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**  
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**  
330 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

January 17, 2020

Mr. Jess Dickinson  
Commissioner  
Mississippi Department of Children Protection Services  
P.O. Box 346  
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Mr. Dickinson:

This letter acknowledges the receipt and approval of Mississippi's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Mississippi is required to develop a program improvement plan per 45 CFR 1355.35(a) to address the outcomes and systemic factors that were identified as not having achieved substantial conformity in the final report following the state's review during the week of September 24-28, 2018.

The CFSR Final Report was issued on February 22, 2019 and Mississippi submitted an initial PIP to the Children's Bureau on May 6, 2019. After the Children's Bureau and Mississippi engaged in additional discussions, negotiations and revisions to the PIP, the state submitted a final version of the PIP on January 13, 2020.

In accordance with 45 CFR 1355.36, an estimated minimum penalty of \$1,072,251 for Fiscal Year 2018 is applicable to this level of non-conformity. However, we are suspending the withholding of funds associated with this penalty during the PIP implementation period and the subsequent period of non-overlapping data. If it is determined that Mississippi is successful in rectifying the areas of nonconformity during that time, we will rescind the withholding of Federal funds associated with those respective areas.

The final Mississippi measurement plan is approved and effective as of June 19, 2019. Mississippi will begin implementing their PIP on February 1, 2020. The PIP implementation period will end on January 31, 2022, and the non-overlapping data period will end on March 31, 2023. The state will employ a monthly rolling sampling approach for PIP measurement. Mississippi and the Children's Bureau have agreed to quarterly written updates for PIP monitoring. These reports will support the monitoring and evaluation of the program improvement plan completion per 45 CFR 1355.35(e)(2). Consistent with CFSR Technical Bulletin #9, we encourage the state to monitor its performance on statewide data indicators to provide additional context for the state's continuing work.

The state must also keep CB informed of progress and challenges around the implementation and achievement of the program improvement plan strategies, key activities and improvement goals through routine quarterly calls and onsite meetings between CB during the program improvement period.

Thank you for your commitment to improving Mississippi's child welfare system. Enclosed is a copy of the approved PIP and the PIP Agreement Form. If you have any questions regarding this or other related matters, please contact Shalonda Cawthon, Child Welfare Regional Program Manager, at (404) 562-2242 or by email [shalonda.cawthon@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:shalonda.cawthon@acf.hhs.gov), or Dianne Kelly, Child and Family Program Specialist, at (404) 562-2781 or by email [dianne.kelly@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:dianne.kelly@acf.hhs.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Milner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jerry Milner  
Associate Commissioner  
Children's Bureau

Enclosure

cc: Jennifer Haight, Supervisory Program Specialist, CFSR Unit, CB; Washington, DC  
Taylor Cheeseman, Chief of Staff; MDCPS; Jackson, MS  
Shalonda Cawthon, Child Welfare Regional Program Manager; CB, Region 4; Atlanta, GA  
Allison McDowell, Child and Family Program Specialist, CFSR Unit, CB; Washington, DC  
Dianne Kelly, Child and Family Program Specialist, CB; Atlanta, GA