



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
P.O. BOX 2675
HARRISBURG, PA 17105**

DEC 14 2006

**Nancy L. Hardy
Deputy Secretary for
Children, Youth and Families**

**Phone: (717) 787-4756
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Dear County Children and Youth Agencies/County Juvenile Probation Offices:

This is a follow up to our all county call on November 28, 2006 where, in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Update part of the discussion, I informed you of a written request I sent to ACF regarding the ACF Program Instruction 06-06, issued on August 23, 2006. This document states that, "Beginning February 8, 2006, for any foster care candidate, the State agency must redetermine the child's candidacy at least every six months until it determines, at any point prior to the removal, that the child is no longer a foster care candidate. Children who were determined to be foster care candidates as of February 28, 2006, must have a redetermination of their candidacy completed by August 31, 2006, and every six months thereafter. States may claim allowable administrative costs only if all criteria in Section 472(i)(2) are met, which includes documentation that the child is at imminent risk of removal from the home."

Because this federal policy was issued to states on August 23, 2006, it gave them only seven days to complete these candidacy redeterminations. The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) filed a written request to ACF asking that county agencies be permitted to update and complete the documentation to support the redeterminations of candidacy on foster care candidates during the February 28, 2006 through August 30, 2006 time period for those children who were already, or remained, candidates during the period. This would allow for complete documentation of candidacy and possibly decrease the error rate due to documentation errors for the impending ACF Fiscal Year (FY) 2006-2007 first quarter Title IV-E pre-placement administrative costs review.

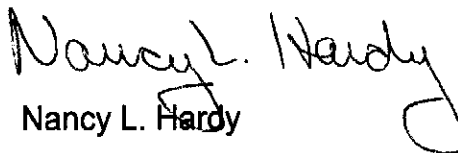
On December 6, 2006, Mr. Gary C. Koch, Regional Program Manager, ACF Region III, informed me that after review and consultation with the ACF's Children's Bureau, ACF has no authority to extend the time frame in the Deficit Reduction Act for redeterminations of case plans for candidates or to allow Pennsylvania to retroactively amend all applicable Family Service Plans. The requirement became effective with the date of the law, which was February 8, 2006.

As a result of this decision, ACF will begin the review of the first quarter (July through September) FY 2006-2007 Random Moment Time Study (RMTS) activities recorded and submitted by county children and youth agencies and county juvenile probation offices. This review will again require OCYF to obtain copies of documentation maintained at the county level that supports the program activity recorded at the specified moment in time during that quarter.

Therefore, as I have indicated on many occasions in the past, it is imperative that all county children and youth agencies and juvenile probation offices comply with all ACF documentation requirements as outlined in CYF Bulletin 3140-06-04, Random Moment Time Study Policy and Procedures – County Children and Youth Agencies, and CYF Bulletin 3140-06-03, Random Moment Time Study Policy and Procedures – Juvenile Probation Office, as soon as possible. Children are candidates for pre-placement if documentation exists that support that the child is at imminent risk of removal from his/her home. Absent effective preventive services, foster care is the planned placement for the child. Documentation of initial candidacy or a redetermination of candidacy must be in effect prior to a random moment in order to select Code 6 on an RMTS Observation Form that records that activity of that random moment. A redetermination of candidacy must be completed and documented in the record every six months. I cannot stress enough the importance of complying with all RMTS federal requirements.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. TaWonda Jones Williams at 783-3856.

Sincerely,


Nancy L. Hardy