

ND CFS QUALITY ASSURANCE

26C (OCT 26 – DEC 26)

STATEWIDE MESSAGE

The QA Unit will begin a new set of case reviews starting on October 1st, 2026. This review event will look a bit different than previous rounds. Instead of using a six-month measurement period, we will be conducting reviews using a single-quarter measurement period focused specifically on children who have been in foster care for an extended period (often referred to as “long stayers”). Additionally, this event will not include all applicable items within the onsite review instrument (OSRI). Instead, we will review Permanency Outcome 1 which includes:

- Item 4: Placement Stability
- Item 5: Timeliness and Appropriateness of Permanency Goals
- Item 6: Efforts to Achieve Permanency

We will also review Item 18, which is assessing and addressing the mental/behavioral health needs of children. In limited situations, additional items may be reviewed if pertinent to the case circumstances and had a direct impact on achieving permanency.

We appreciate everyone’s patience, collaboration, and continued hard work as our unit pilots a different revision to our case review process. As we begin this next review event, please review the updated QA Case Review information below. **All updated or changed information appears in bold.**

26C HIGHLIGHTS

1. Case Sampling and Outreach

- A statewide sample will be utilized. **However, we will not divide the sample by CQI Cross Zonal Team proportions, nor will we ensure a minimum/maximum number of Metro area cases, as done previously.** Each QA Reviewer will continue to be assigned to specific agencies to work within their own list throughout the review event.
- **The case list consists of 61 FRAME cases involving 90 children. We will aim to complete as many case reviews as possible by the end of December 2026, with the option to extend the review period if additional time is needed.**
- **Only foster care cases will be reviewed this quarter** since the focus is on children in foster care for an extended period of time. **No in-home cases will be reviewed.**
- The **period under review (PUR)** is **10/1/25** to the date the case is reviewed or closed (whichever happens first). **However, the majority of the items will be rated based on the life of the case to better understand factors impacting permanency delays.**

2. Case Files

- Access to case file documents will continue to be needed early in the process. QA will utilize any case files located in a Zone's SharePoint Child Welfare Files library.
 - Agencies not utilizing SharePoint will be given **five (5) business days** to gather and submit case file documentation. This can be done by uploading the case files to the assigned TEAMS channel or emailing the files to the QA Reviewer.
 - **If files are not submitted within five business days, reviews will proceed using the information available at the time.**

3. Case Related Interviews

- QA Reviewers will contact agencies as cases appear in the sample to begin the outreach process.
- The QA Reviewers will also contact relevant key case participants to determine interest and availability for interviews. We may seek the assistance of the agency to reach a case participant. **Unlike previous events, Reviewers will continue with the case review even if non-agency participants decline or cannot be reached. Case eliminations will be rare and very unlikely.**
- Interviews with agency workers must be held within **seven (7) business days** during the week the case is being reviewed. **Reviewers will remain flexible with their scheduling but may proceed without agency interviews to avoid delays.**

4. Case Review Findings

- Once a case is reviewed and finalized, agency personnel will receive a copy of the final report.
- Agencies may contact the **QA Lead who issued the report**, if they have questions about the case review results.

THE CASE REVIEWS MATTER

- **Making changes** that help children & families **begins with understanding** what individuals experience working with the North Dakota child welfare system!
- The review's overarching purpose is to support practice improvement **to strengthen** the state child welfare system's ability to achieve its goal of **Safe Children, Strong Families.**



Please visit the [QA HHS Insider Page](#) and [CFSTC Website](#) for additional information and tools.

If you have any questions about this message or the QA Case Review process, please contact any of the QA Leads:

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