

Caseworker Visits

States have been required to meet performance standards and submit data on monthly caseworker visits for a fiscal year (FY) since FY 2007.¹ These requirements were initiated through the passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109–288), which amended Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (the Act). This amendment also included new funding to partially support monthly caseworker visits (MCVs) with children who are in state foster care. The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 (Pub. L. 112–34) extended the requirements for states to collect and report information on MCVs in FY 2012 and in each FY thereafter.² Funding under Title IV-B, subpart 2 of the Act for MCVs with children in foster care is provided in accordance with Section 433(e) of the Act.

Reporting Population and Methodology

The reporting population subject to the caseworker visits requirements includes all children under age 18 for at least the first day of the FY (October 1) who have been in foster care for at least 1 full calendar month during the FY.

*Calculation of MCVs*³

To calculate the percentage of required visits to children in foster care that were made on a monthly basis, the following data are required:

- The denominator is the aggregate number of complete calendar months all children in the reporting population spent in care. This denominator, expressed in “visit months,” is aggregated for all children and refers to the number of months in which visits should have occurred.
- The numerator is the aggregate number of monthly caseworker visits made to children in the reporting population. If a child is visited more than once in a month, only one visit is counted.

For example, if a state had 1,000 children in its foster care caseworker visits reporting population, and if these children were in care the entire 12-month period, then each child should have been visited each month he or she was in care. Therefore, the aggregate number of “visit months” those 1,000 children should have been visited would be 12,000 for the year. That would be the MCV denominator.

¹ The FY is the 12-month period beginning October 1 and ending September 30.

² Beginning in FY 2012, states were required to use a revised methodology for calculating caseworker visits. For detailed information on the collection and reporting of caseworker visits data for FY 2007–2011, see Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-08-03, which is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi0803>. For detailed information on the collection and reporting of caseworker visits data for FY 2012 and beyond, see Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01, which is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi1201>.

³ Even though a state may keep some children in foster care beyond age 17, only children under age 18 on the first day of the FY are included in this calculation.

The numerator would be the aggregate number of required visit months where at least one actual caseworker visit was made to each of those children. For the purpose of this example, a total of 10,000 visits occurred (not the expected 12,000) during the year for the 1,000 children in the reporting population. To calculate the correct numerator for MCVs, a further assessment must be made to count only one visit for each month for each visited child. Thus, if 100 of these children were visited twice in 6 of the months of the year, a deduction of 600 (100x6) must be made to exclude multiple visits during the same month. Therefore, the total for the numerator is 9,400 (10,000-600) actual “visit months” for the year.

The MCV percentage is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator and multiplying that product by 100 [(numerator/denominator)x100]. This calculation is expressed as a percentage and rounded to the nearest whole number. In this example, the MCV percentage is 78.3 [(9,400/12,000)x100].

Calculation of Children Receiving Visits in the Home (VIHs)

To calculate the percentage of monthly VIHs, the following data are required:

- The denominator is the number of MCVs made for children in the reporting population, which will be the same number as the numerator for the MCV calculation. The number in this denominator is expressed as the number of “visit months” aggregated for all the children (but limited to counting only one visit per child per month).
- The numerator is the number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population that occurred in the child’s home.⁴ The numerator is expressed as “visit months,” and it is aggregated for all the visits to all the children in the foster care reporting population (but limited to only counting one visit per child per month).

The VIH percentage is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator and multiplying that product by 100 [(numerator/denominator)x100]. This calculation is expressed as a percentage and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Data Collection Methodology

States may choose to report caseworker visits data based on their total foster care population or based on sample data. States that choose to submit sample data must use a sampling methodology that has been approved by their Children’s Bureau Regional Office in consultation with the Administration for Children, Youth and Families’ Office of Data, Analysis, Research and Evaluation. Table 1 shows the states that elected to submit sample data for 2014, 2015, 2016, and/or 2018.

⁴ A child’s home is defined as the home where the child is residing, whether in-state or out-of-state, and can include the foster placement setting.

Table 1. States That Submitted Sample Data

State	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Alabama	X				
Hawaii	X	X	X	X	X
Idaho					
Michigan	X	X	X		
Mississippi	X				
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	X	X