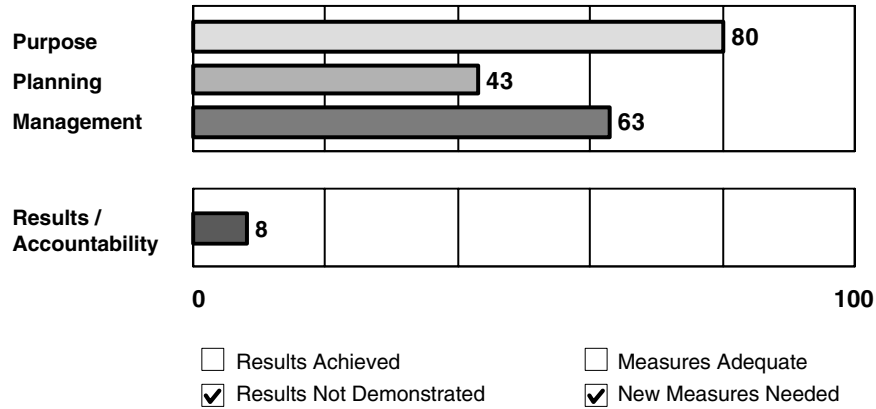


Program: Foster Care

Agency: Department of Health and Human Services

Bureau: Administration for Children and Families



Key Performance Measures

Year Target Actual

Key Performance Measure	Year	Target	Actual
Long-term measure: Measure under development			
Annual Measure: Percentage of children with substantiated reports of maltreatment that have a repeated substantiated report of maltreatment within 6 months	1999		8%
	2000		9%
	2001	7%	
	2004	7%	
Annual Measure: Percentage of children with no more than 2 placement settings, for those who had been in care less than 12 months	1999		60%
	2000		58%
	2001	72%	60%
	2002	60%	

Rating: Results Not Demonstrated

Program Type: Block / Formula Grants

Program Summary:

The purpose of the federal foster care program is to prevent maltreatment and abuse of children in troubled families by providing a stable temporary home - a foster care family - until the children can safely return to their homes, or a permanent home is found. Foster Care Maintenance Payments go to foster parents to cover the costs of a child's food, shelter, clothing, supervision, and travel home for visits.

The assessment indicates that the overall purpose of the program is clear and addresses a specific need. However, the program is suboptimal in design because the program financial structure does not provide appropriate incentives for the permanent placement of children. Additional findings include:

1. Program performance goals are non-specific and target measures are unambitious.
2. There is a lack of independent evaluations, the budget and program goals are not aligned, and the program lacks a proactive, systematic process to address strategic planning deficiencies.
3. While program management is generally sound, relatively high erroneous payments indicate that program funds are not always spent for the intended purpose. There is no existing performance measure to reduce erroneous payments.
4. Finally, there has been inadequate progress toward meeting performance goals.

To address these findings, the Administration recommends legislation to introduce an option available to all states to participate in an alternative financing system for child welfare that will better meet the needs of each state's foster care population. The change will focus on getting results. States choosing to participate will face fewer administrative burdens and will receive funds in the form of flexible grants. This will serve as an incentive to create innovative child welfare plans with a stronger emphasis on prevention and family support, and increased flexibility in services provided and population served. State flexibility will be balanced with accountability to ensure the best outcomes for vulnerable children and their families. Participating states must continue to provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children by upholding high standards of performance.

Program Funding Level (in millions of dollars)

<u>2002 Actual</u>	<u>2003 Estimate</u>	<u>2004 Estimate</u>
4,380	4,629	4,887