

Case Files (Including Electronic Data Files)

(Revised 6/08/18)

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Introduction

Every child who is active to CWS has a CWS/CMS case file and a hard file.

Policy

Cases that remain open for more than 30 days with a completed CWS/CMS case plan require filing tabs to be inserted into the hard file.

Case contents and divider tabs

Pre-printed divider tab sets are available from each region's storeroom.

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all items will be filed in reverse chronological order (items with the latest date on the top).

The following tables show the name of each tab, the side of the file where it should be placed on, the order of the tabs, and the items which should be filed under each tab.

Genograms & Ecomaps

SWs are expected to create a genogram and ecomap (see Genograms and Ecomaps) on each referral and import them into CWS/CMS.

Form codes

Many CWS forms have a code on the bottom left side which indicates where the form should be placed in the hard file. If there is no code, see the descriptions of [left-sided](#) tabs or [right-sided](#) tabs below. In the paper file, each actual tab lists examples of what should be filed beneath it.

Blank tabs have been included in the sets to use for specialty filing such as Domestic Violence, ILS, ICPC, Family Preservation, etc.

Form codes (cont.)

Left Side Labels		Code
Pre-June 2000	As of June 2000	
Correspondence	Correspondence	L1
Psych/Medical	Psych/Medical	L2
School/ESC	School	L3
Placement/Financial	Placement	L4
Respite Care	Financial	L5
Adoptions/Verifications	Services	L6
Drug Testing/Treatment	Adoptions/Verifications	L7
none	Drug Testing/Treatment	L8

Right Side Labels		Code
Pre-June 2000	As of June 2000	
Narrative	Narrative	R1
Emergency Assistance	Assessments	R2
04-83/04-88	Case Plans	R3
Court Reports	Court Reports	R4
Court Orders	Court Orders	R5
Intake/Law Enforcement	Intake/Law Enforcement	R6
Risk Assessment/Case Consultation	Emergency Assistance	R7

Form codes (cont.)

NOTE: Some files also have an additional ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) tab on the top of the right side. This tab has no code and the items that belong beneath it are listed on the tab and are ICWA-related.

NOTE: Paperwork that has to do with who accessed a file seeking review or copies will be filed under code RØ (zero). Zero is located above R1. These documents, including but not limited to, requests to inspect records, declarations and disclosure letters will be directly on top of the right side of the file so that when a case folder is opened they are immediately viewable.

Left side

This table shows the types of case related items which should be filed on the left side of the case:

Tab Name	Items to File
Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All letters regarding the case from family members, professionals or other involved parties (except Psych/Medical Correspondence).
Psych/Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical Authorization and Release of Information forms (file at the bottom of the section).• Reports and correspondence with doctors, psychiatrists, etc.• PCC Medical, Evidentiary, Developmental, and CHDP reports.
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization for Release of Information from schools (file at the bottom of the section).• IEPs.• Any school-related reports and letters except psychological reports.
Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Placement agreements, information, expectations, certifications, assessments, etc.• Dangerous propensities.• Clothing inventories.• PCC Intake/Admissions and Behavior reports.• Quarterly reports from LGH/FFA.
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial placement paperwork and special care increments.• 04-130 series of forms.• Notice of Actions related to placement.

Left side (cont.)

This table shows the types of case related items which should be filed on the left side of the case:

Tab Name	Items to File
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificates of completion.• Notice of Actions related to respite.• Service Voucher and Extension.• Child Care Agreements.
Adoptions/ Verifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correspondence with Adoptions.• Social Security Card.• Verifications of birth, marriage, divorce, resident status, etc.• Parent/Relative Search Information.• 04-133 series forms (PPAU forms).
Drug Testing/ Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizations for drug treatment and testing.• Drug/alcohol testing results and/or treatment progress reports.• 12-Step meeting slips.

Right side

This table shows the case related items which should be filed on the right side of the hard file.

Tab Name	Items to File
ICWA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of JV-135.• Tribe noticing receipts.• Letters from tribes.
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contacts (if required to be printed or in older cases the hand written narratives). <p>NOTE: All Contacts must be recorded in CWS/CMS.</p>
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All risk assessments not in the Structured Decision Making database.• Case consultation forms.
Case Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CWS/CMS Case Plan Documents.

Right side (cont.)

This table shows the case related items which should be filed on the right side of the hard file.

Tab Name	Items to File
Court Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Court Reports.• Court Officer's Summary.• Case Plans.
Court Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ex parte and 15 Day Reviews signed and stamped by the Court, JV form orders signed and stamped by the Court (e.g., JV 220 - pre- 2008 or JV 223 post 1/1/2008, JV 535, etc.).• Petitions.• Court Orders and Minute Orders.• Guardianship Orders.• Wanted Notices.
Intake/Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Response Documents.• Suspected Child Abuse Report.• Child Abuse Investigation Report (DOJ).• Law Enforcement Reports (e.g. police reports; detective reports for DA, etc.).• Affidavit and Application for Filing of Juvenile Court Petition.• Copies of Criminal History Request (04-134).
Emergency Assistance	Emergency Assistance forms and applications

Sibling files

In court cases, each sibling in the family will have their own hard file. Reports pertaining to each individual sibling will be placed in their own file. SW should ensure that all siblings' files have copies of all pertinent information pertaining to the family as a whole, as sometimes siblings' cases are routed to separate programs as the case progresses. Each child's file must have complete case information.

Case numbers (State ID and CalWIN)

All families are assigned a State ID number which remains with the family. The State ID number consists of seven alpha/numeric digits beginning with zero. State ID numbers are assigned by the Search Merge Desk at Centralized Child Welfare Clerical.

In cases prior to June 2006:

The eligibility case number will have a person number assigned to each person/family member in the case. The parents are assigned person numbers 01 and 02. The oldest child is assigned person number 11; each subsequent child receives the next number in the series (12, 13, 14, and so on).

Case numbers (State ID and CalWIN) (cont.)

Many of the old eligibility files are being obsoleted if the case is no longer active (cases still active in 2006 were converted to CalWIN numbers, others will drop off the data base by 2011).

Cases that opened after June 2006:

Effective June 2006, dependent children receiving AFDC-FC are assigned an individual and unique foster care case number in CalWIN for each member of the family. The CalWIN number can be found in CWS/CMS on the "IDNum" tab in the client notebook, listed as "companion case."

The State ID number is always written on the front of each case file.

Duplicate case numbers (State ID)

At times, a new State ID number is mistakenly given to a case that already has a State ID number. When this is discovered, contact Centralized Child Welfare Clerical - Search Merge.

Case name

The case name corresponds to the last name of the child's mother.

Sub-filing

Sub-filing is the terminology used to describe the act of creating an additional file when the first file becomes too large. Clerical will use the following procedure to create the sub-file:

Step	Action
1	Obtain hard file.
2	Insert hard file tabs.
3	Transfer any material the SW requests. The original Birth Certificate, Social Security Card and Medical Authorization will remain filed in Volume 1.
4	Label and date new hard file. Example: Vol. II 1/08
5	Label and date previous hard file. Example: Vol. I 6/06 - 12/07

Sensitive cases

Hotline - Sensitive Referrals describes how a SW should handle a sensitive case.

Confidential information

Policies and procedures on confidential information in hard files are detailed in the Confidentiality chapter of the PM.

Removing hard files and electronic data from CWS offices

Removing case information from the office may include:

- Taking the entire hard case file
- Taking part of the case file
- Printing up information from CWS/CMS
- Transporting case information contained in electronic format (e.g. on laptop or County- issued flash drive; per [County Information Security Guidelines](#) County data may only be stored on a County-issued medium, not a personal flash drive or disk).

Original hard files may be removed from CWS offices for **only** the following reasons:

- To screen a petition with County Counsel
- For attendance at a Juvenile Court Hearing
- For State or Federal Audits
- When requested by County Counsel, Juvenile Division
- When requested by a HHS Appeals Officer for purposes of preparing for a State hearing (see Notices of Action)
- In response to a subpoena for records. (see Subpoenas). Whenever a hard file leaves a CWS office, the SW will ensure its contents remain confidential.

Per the HHS Privacy Policy *Security of Client Data and Portable Devices* (HHS Policy M-3.6) all staff are required to annually sign the “Authorization to Remove and Transport Client Data” form. This form will be re-signed with every performance evaluation. HHS policy stresses the fact that staff are independently responsible to ensure that the data they take with them (whether electronic or paper format) is safeguarded from loss, theft or misuse. “Reasonable precautions” must be exercised when taking client data into a client’s home or other external location, the client data must “remain in the employee’s direct physical possession, or within the employee’s direct line of sight.” Case files, laptops or other devices storing client data cannot be left locked in a vehicle “where a passerby can easily see them” and under no circumstances will be left in a vehicle overnight. If taking data home, it must be brought inside the residence and secured. When traveling, a hotel safe must be used when practical. The HHS privacy policy states that “violations or suspected violations of this policy will be referred to Agency Human Resources for appropriate personnel action or investigation.”

For information on filling out the Privacy Policy’s “Authorization to Remove and Transport Client Data” form see Confidentiality - General.

When County laptops are issued, the CWS/CMS Support Team requires users to sign a “Statement of Policies” to ensure the confidentiality understanding. This form is different from and in addition to the “Authorization to Remove and Transport Client Data” form.

Case closure

When a case closes, the SW will give the family the child’s original social security card and birth certificate, if available. If the child is emancipating or turning 18, the SW will give these documents directly to the youth. See Termination of Jurisdiction for other requirements of documents to be given to children aging out of CWS.

The SW will remove any reports from the paper file that are already in CWS/CMS. The signature page and attachments will be left in the hard file. If the report is **NOT** a CWS/CMS report, then it is to remain in the paper file. See Case Retention and Purges for more information.

Case closure (cont.)

The SW will ensure all handwritten information is entered into CWS/CMS before closing the case. This may mean entering the information into a contact or into case notes.

See Case Purges for more information regarding retention of case files and information on what items are purged from a closed file.

At case/referral closure, SW must ensure that their case has a [State ID](#) issued.
