

# Overview of How to Run the CFSR Round 4 Statewide Data Indicators Syntax



Calculating observed performance of Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) statewide data indicators and running data quality checks can help agencies explore and monitor performance on child safety and permanency outcomes. This document provides child welfare leaders, managers, and IT and data staff a high-level overview of how to run the SPSS syntax to calculate observed performance for an individual state on all or selected CFSR Round 4 statewide data indicators, including data quality checks. While this overview outlines key steps and reminders, it is not intended to be an in-depth guide to run the syntax. Step-by-step instructions to run the syntax and details about the indicators can be found in the [“Instructions and Tips for Running the CFSR Round 4 Statewide Data Indicators Syntax \(Instructions\).”](#)

The Children’s Bureau (CB) provides the syntax files to calculate the CFSR statewide data indicators with state Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) source files.

## Overview of How to Calculate Observed Performance

### 1. Make sure you have the correct software.

- ▶ Software requirements include:
  - IBM® SPSS® version 21.0 or higher
    - Python Essentials® for IBM SPSS® Statistics
    - SPSSINC Split Dataset and SPSSINC Process Files (using the SPSS drop down –Extensions\Extension Hub available when running SPSS)
  - Microsoft Excel 2007 or higher

### 2. Download and set up the CFSR Round 4 syntax revised zip folder and establish the subfolder and file structure.

- ▶ CB has released the syntax and supporting files in a downloadable zip file ([CFSR 4 Indicator Syntax 2022.zip](#) file). To receive the syntax zip file via email, send an email to [capacityinfo@icfi.com](mailto:capacityinfo@icfi.com) with the subject “CFSR Round 4 Syntax.”
- ▶ The zip folder includes data quality syntax files and six observed performance syntax files that produce observed performance calculations for the seven data indicators.
- ▶ See specific guidance on downloading and storing the zip file in the [Instructions](#).

### 3. Prepare the files.

- ▶ **Define the cohort of interest.** For each indicator, specify a 12-month cohort of children. Some indicators require that sufficient time has passed to observe the outcome, so the latest 12-month period differs across indicators.
- ▶ **Save the required data files.** See the [Instructions \(Exhibit 2: Cohorts and Corresponding State AFCARS & NCANDS Data Submissions\)](#) for information on files needed from AFCARS and NCANDS and related considerations. To run the syntax for all CFSR Round 4 statewide data indicators and time periods, five consecutive AFCARS submissions and two corresponding NCANDS submissions are needed.
- ▶ To replicate values reported in CB-distributed documents, use the files that were submitted to CB for that time frame.
- ▶ AFCARS and NCANDS data files used must be in .sps format. For syntax that converts ASCII (text) files to SPSS, please contact the Capacity Building Center for States at [capacity@icfi.com](mailto:capacity@icfi.com).

#### 4. Prepare and run the syntax.

- ▶ Confirm the file handle **path**.
  - If the folders and subfolders extracted from the zip folder were saved to “C:\CFSR,” then no action is needed. If they are located elsewhere, then the “Root\_FH” line must be changed to the correct path.
- ▶ Create source data files and run the data quality (DQ) syntax.
  - The “CFSR 4 Indicator Calculation Syntax” folder contains files to create properly formatted source data and run the necessary DQ tests.
  - Once you have set up the files as described in the [Instructions](#), you are ready to check your AFCARS or NCANDS data for missing or out-of-range values that could affect the calculations (see [Instructions](#), “Create Source Data Files and Run the Data Quality Syntax”)
- ▶ Run the observed performance syntax for the desired data **indicators**.
  - States can run data for one or all of the statewide data indicators for their particular state (see [Instructions](#), “Run the Observed Performance Syntax”). They can be run in any order.
  - Only CB can run the risk-standardized performance syntax, which requires child-level data from all states and calculates performance after adjusting for risk through multilevel statistical modeling.

#### 5. Use data to explore and monitor performance.

- ▶ Data and IT staff can work together with child welfare administrators, program managers, and other stakeholders to monitor and analyze statewide data indicators performance information as part of CF SR and Program Improvement Plan activities, federal and state strategic planning, and continuous quality improvement.

### For More Information

Additional resources on CF SR statewide data indicators and syntax can be found at:

- ▶ **The Capacity Building Center for States’ CF SR Statewide Data Indicator webpage**, <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/cfsr-data-syntax-toolkit>
- ▶ **CB’s Round 4 of the CF SRs webpage** “Statewide Data Indicators,” [Round 4 of the CF SRs | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](#)
- ▶ **The CF SR Information Portal “CF SR Round 4 Statewide Data Indicators” webpage**, <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources/round-4-resources/cfsr-round-4-statewide-data-indicators>

### Need Help?

If you have questions about obtaining or running the CF SR Round 4 syntax or other related issues, **contact the Capacity Building Center for States** through your [state Liaison](#) or at [capacityinfo@icfi.com](mailto:capacityinfo@icfi.com)

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