



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

**HCBS Provider Self-Assessment Manual 2021 Edition v2.0**  
**Child Placing Agencies**  
**February 15, 2021 to March 14, 2021**

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## Welcome

This manual is a resource to help you access and complete the Child Placing Agency Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Provider Self-Assessment. Completing the Child Placing Agency Assessment will help you understand how far along your Agency and sites/settings are on the pathway to compliance with the HCBS Settings Final Rule. Results from your assessment will reveal areas where your Agency needs to make modifications (i.e., remediation) to meet CMS' requirements for the HCBS Settings Final Rule.

You are encouraged to complete the self-assessment as soon as possible. Please note that completing this assessment is just one step on your pathway to compliance. After you complete the assessment, there will be opportunities to remediate and demonstrate compliance with the HCBS Settings Final Rule. Having areas that are not compliant right now does not mean your Agency can no longer place persons served in HCBS settings. There is a remediation period for providers to make changes and bring their site(s) into compliance. The sooner you complete your assessment, the sooner you will receive the results and be able to work on remediation.

## Purpose

In January 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a requirement for states to review and evaluate current HCBS settings, including residential and non-residential sites, and to demonstrate compliance with the new Federal HCBS Settings Final Rule that went into effect on March 17, 2014. These federal guidelines were developed to ensure members receiving long-term services and supports through HCBS programs under Medicaid waiver authorities have full access to benefits of community living and the opportunity to receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate.

CMS is requiring Kansas to assess foster care settings where home and community-based services are delivered. Kansas has designed this assessment to be administered to individual Child Placing Agencies, who will then assess their current placement policies and procedures.

Child Placing Agencies will complete one assessment that covers all sites/settings where they have placed, or intend to place, children in state custody.

## Why is the Agency being asked for documentation of answers?

CMS requires self-assessments be validated in some way. Kansas has elected to do a "desk review" in which trained reviewers use documentation submitted by the Child Placing Agency to verify answers on the assessment.

## Getting Started

Please follow these steps before you start an assessment.

1. **Create your account:** If you already have an approved Community Connections account you are able to skip this step and will be able to start new assessments starting Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. **If you do not have an existing Community Connections account:** Go to <https://www.hcbs-kansas.org/> and click on Create Account. Please provide the requested contact information, indicate you are a Foster Care Provider, and click “Create new account”. After you submit your account request, an administrator will verify the information and activate your account within 48 hours or on the next business day. You will receive an email when your account has been activated. Your account will grant you access to your provider dashboard where you can complete assessments and review your progress for each site you are self-assessing. If you have technical difficulties and need assistance with setting up an account, please contact [HCBS.Team@wichita.edu](mailto:HCBS.Team@wichita.edu)
2. **Download a copy of the assessment:** Please download and print a copy of the [Child Placing Agency Assessment](#). We suggest you use the hardcopy to answer the questions prior to entering your responses online. This will be particularly helpful because you will have to gather and submit documentation to validate answers. The downloadable copy indicates which responses require documentation and includes documentation type suggestions.
3. **Collect necessary documents:** As noted previously, you will be required to provide and upload evidence to validate your answers during the assessment. Please gather the necessary documentation prior to starting the online assessment. It will be easier to upload all documents prior to starting the assessment than if you go back and try to add documents once you’ve started answering questions.

After you have completed steps 1-3 listed above, you are ready to begin taking the online self-assessment.

## Taking the Assessment

### Logging In

You need to log-in to the system to be able to access the assessment. If you have not created an account, please read the section in this manual, [Getting Started](#), and follow steps 1-3. After you create an account and receive confirmation that your account has been activated, you may log-in using your unique username and password.

### Using the Dashboard

Your home screen will have a dashboard that will update as you progress and will notify you of the number of assessments you have remaining. When you log in for the first time your dashboard

will be empty until you start adding information about the sites you own or operate (see [Accessing the Assessment](#)). Then, the dashboard will indicate the assessments that you need to complete by setting type. When you are in the middle of an assessment and want to return to your dashboard, please remember to click on “Save Draft” or “Next Section” first in order to not lose answers you have just entered. The information will be saved, and you can go back to it from your dashboard.

## Accessing the Assessment

The first time you log-in you will need to enter that you have 1 Child Placing Agency. Click on **Enter Provider Settings** and enter information in the fields. **You are required to complete one assessment for your agency.**

## Uploading Documentation

**Do not upload any document that exposes protected health information (PHI) or violates the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). You must de-identify and redact PHI before uploading a document.**

Before you start answering questions on an assessment, you will need to upload your documentation. You will be able to organize your documents into categories. There is no expectation that you upload something in every category or even that you put files into the “right” category. The categories are simply to help you organize and find the correct files.

**Do not upload your entire policy handbook or consumer handbook, rather upload only each section that pertains to the assessment question you are answering.** For example, if you are uploading a policy document related to having visitors at the setting, upload only the page(s) from the policy handbook that pertain to having visitors at the site.

If you are in the middle of an assessment and need to upload additional documents, you may do so by going back to the Section B: Upload Documents for Desk Review page. You will want to save any changes you have made before leaving the page, see [Saving the Assessment](#).

NOTE: Gathering and uploading documentation for the questions in the assessment can be time-consuming. Therefore, you are urged to gather your documentation prior to beginning the assessment.

## Navigating the Sections of the Assessment

After you have uploaded documents, you are ready to start answering questions in the assessment. The assessment is composed of 8 sections: Sections A - H. Section A is collecting data about the setting, section B is the document upload section and sections C-H are questions for the assessment. You will be directed to the relevant questions based on the setting type and/or the answers you provide.

## Saving the Assessment

As you complete every section of the assessment, you can click on Save Draft or Next Section to save your progress. You will only be able to use Next Section if all questions on that page have been answered, however Save Draft will save answers regardless of how many questions are completed. **To go back to a previous page, your dashboard, or close the webpage, please make sure you select “Save Draft,” so you do not lose any information.**

## Drafts

If you stop completing the assessment before it has been reviewed, attested, and submitted, it will appear in the drafts section of your dashboard. Clicking Save Draft or Next Section before you leave the assessment will ensure all of your progress is saved. You can access the partially completed assessment from your dashboard. You cannot delete the draft. Any drafts that are not needed can be disregarded, only submitted site assessments will be reviewed.

## Submitting the Assessment

At the end of the assessment instead of “Next Section” there will be a “Proceed to Review” button. Once you click “Proceed to Review” you will review your answers and documents (by file name) on one page, and will be able to go back and make changes as needed until you are ready to attest that the assessment is complete. You will need to check the box “I have reviewed and do attest” and then you will be able to click the large “Attest and Complete” button. Once you review, attest, and submit an assessment, you can no longer edit the assessment. A PDF of the information you reviewed will remain available for download in the “Completed Sites” section of the dashboard, where you can download it for your

## FAQ

Please review this section before you contact [HCBS.Team@Wichita.edu](mailto:HCBS.Team@Wichita.edu), there may be an answer to your question here.

### **When is the deadline to respond to the assessment?**

You are encouraged to complete the self-assessment as soon as possible in order to find out which areas you need to remediate. The assessment will be available from 12:00 a.m. on February 14, 2021 through March 14, 2021. **All assessments must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on March 14, 2021.** Once the assessment closes, access will no longer be granted.

### **Is there a risk in completing the assessment?**

No, there is no risk associated with completing the assessment. You will not lose HCBS Medicaid funding if your site is non-compliant in one or more areas. The assessment will help you understand where you are on your pathway to compliance and you will have additional time to remediate and come into compliance with the HCBS Settings Final Rule.

**How will the assessment be administered?**

The assessment will be administered online through the online system. You will need to create an account and log-in to your account to answer the questions. You are encouraged to download and print a paper copy of the assessment so that you can collect documents to upload and answer questions before entering responses online.

**How long does it take to complete the assessment?**

The survey questions themselves do not take long to complete for each site – approximately 15 – 30 minutes. Most questions only require a “yes” or “no” response. However, gathering and uploading documentation can be time-consuming and is required to validate certain responses on the assessment. Advance preparation will help cut down the time spent in the assessment itself.

**How can I navigate between pages?**

If you have completed a page and want to go back to it, you can either click on the number of the page (at the top of the screen) or use the “Previous Page” button.

**Is supporting documentation required to be sent in with the self-assessment?**

Yes, the supporting documentation is required to be uploaded with the assessment. If you cannot provide a document when one is required, you must change your response to the question. The lack of documentation will be addressed in remediation and shouldn't be a cause for undue concern.

**Why do I have to submit documentation when I've just answered the questions?**

CMS requires that all HCBS settings, including all sites/locations, be assessed and that the answers be validated in some way. Kansas has opted to administer the self-assessment and use a “desk review” as the validation method. For desk review, documents must be submitted to verify the answers to each question. For some questions, you may not be able to provide documentation. That's OK but it may require you to change your answer to the question.

**How do I upload the documents?**

If you need instructions how to upload the required documents, please refer to the section in this manual [Uploading Documentation](#).

**Can I attach more than one file per question?**

Yes, you can attach multiple files the same way you attached the first one.

**How do I label/name the documents?**

We suggest labeling your documents in a unique manner that allows you to easily identify them compared to other files, such as “QuestionLetterNumber\_ProviderSetting”. This will help you select the appropriate document when completing the assessment, and it will also help the reviewer get the results back to you in a timely manner.

**If my operational manual or handbook (which includes evidence of compliance with the HCBS Settings Rule) is too large for electronic submission, can this document be mailed?**

Do not attach your entire manual or handbook. Only upload sections that pertain to the questions you are answering. You may scan the relevant sections. Mailed documents will not be accepted.

**Can I upload a document after starting the assessment?**

You can upload a document by going back to Section B on page 3 in the assessment.

**Is the assessment HIPAA compliant?**

Do not upload any document or information that exposes someone's private health information (PHI) or violates the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). You will need to redact and de-identify PHI from any document you want to upload.

**What if I have more questions or need further assistance with the assessment?**

If you have questions about the HCBS statewide transition process, the heightened scrutiny process, or the assessment process, please contact the Community Connections team at [HCBS.Team@wichita.edu](mailto:HCBS.Team@wichita.edu) for assistance.

**How many assessments do I need to complete?**

Each Child Placement Agency is required to complete one assessment for the agency. The assessment should be answered for all sites where persons-served are placed.

**How will I learn about heightened scrutiny, remediation, expectations, strategies and timelines?**

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (**KDADS**) is organizing activities for the State transition process. Information will be updated and available at the State's HCBS website at <https://communityconnectionsks.org/>.

If you have specific questions about the HCBS statewide transition process or the assessment process, please contact the Community Connections team at [HCBS.Team@wichita.edu](mailto:HCBS.Team@wichita.edu)

**What happens after I complete the assessment?**

You will receive communication from KDADS regarding results and next steps. More detailed information will be announced as available at <https://communityconnectionsks.org/>