The Consolidated Services Plan (CSP) was designed to better coordinate planning requirements. Through a single multi-year planning process, social services districts respond to a series of planning and reporting requirements derived from State and federal law. Currently, the approval of the CSP provides State approval for local strategies and related funding for each of the major components of the Child Welfare and Adult Services system and other services programs. These include:

- Adoption Services
- Child Protective Services
- Foster Care Services
- Preventive Services
- Residential Placement Services for Adults
- Protective Service for Adults
- Other Adult Services
- Domestic Violence Service
- Enhanced Reimbursement for CPS Pre- and Post-

In addition, the plan serves a number of technical, legal and budgetary functions. The plan also serves as the vehicle for the district to enter into WMS data necessary for computerized client-specific eligibility determinations and authorizations for service.

As a central source of information on the districts' commitments to their county, the Plan meets the diverse needs of Fair Hearings Officers and as a mechanism for the local district, with the input of the broader community, to assess changing needs and develop appropriate strategies.

Much of the potential of the local planning process is eclipsed by the burden of creating a document. Thus, in recent years, the Division has attempted to better balance the plan's functions as both a local strategic mechanism for meeting the needs of families and documentation to the State on compliance, progress and proposed activities. The Annual Implementation Report has been restructured to focus exclusively on changes in function or structure from the three-year Plan. To eliminate duplicate efforts, the Division of Family and Children Services worked with the Division of Income Maintenance to develop child care planning requirements.

There is a strongly shared feeling at the State and local levels that significant additional improvements can be instituted. Prior to the next CSP Cycle, the Department is interested in changing the process to enhance its local utility. Over the next few months we will be convening discussions with local commissioners and others on improving State level support and guidance for local services planning.

To initiate that process, we are seeking your preliminary comments and suggestions. We are confident that your thoughtful responses to these questions will provide an important basis for our dialog and action concerning local planning requirements.

Please return the attached questionnaire at your earliest convenience to:

Suzanne Sennett
Division of Family and Children Services
Section 11-A
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, New York 12243

(Office Link Number: AW1160)