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April 8, 2011

The Honorable Rick Murphy, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Carl Seel, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Senator Murphy and Representative Seel:

Our Office has recently completed an 18-month followup of the Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families—Child Protective Services—Relative Placement regarding the implementation status of the 6 audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the performance audit report released in September 2009 (Auditor General Report No. CPS-0902). As the attached grid indicates:

- 5 have been implemented, and
- 1 is in the process of being implemented.

Unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, this concludes our follow-up work on the Department's efforts to implement the recommendations from the September 2009 performance audit report.

Sincerely,

Dale Chapman, Director
Performance Audit Division

DC:sjs
Attachment

cc: Clarence Carter, Director
Department of Economic Security

**Department of Economic Security—
Division of Children, Youth and Families—
Child Protective Services—
Relative Placement
Auditor General Report No. CPS-0902
18-Month Follow-up Report**

Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

Finding 1: Changes would help staff better comply with relative placement process

1.1 The Division should revise its policy to include additional guidance for staff to consider when determining whether the adults in a prospective relative caregiver's household clear their criminal background check. Specifically, the policy should include a listing of offenses that would automatically preclude someone from clearing the criminal background check and additional factors that staff should consider if an individual requested that CPS staff reconsider its decision to deny clearance.

Implemented at 18 months

1.2 The Division should revise its assessment guidance to include common types of safety hazards that should be looked for when performing home safety assessments.

Implemented at 18 months

1.3 The Division should enforce the statutory and policy requirement that the individual be notified in writing when CPS staff make their final decision to decline the individual as a relative placement. The notification is required to include the decision, reason(s) for it, and appeals process information. Alternately, if the Division believes that verbal notification is more effective, it should seek a statutory change to allow the required information to be communicated verbally, revise its policy to reflect the statutory change, and develop a mechanism that will allow supervisors to verify that staff are providing the required information.

Implemented at 18 months

In December 2010, the Division began implementing quarterly reviews of a random sample of cases to assess staff's compliance with new policies and procedures, including the written notification requirement. The initial review found evidence of compliance, and the Division reported that it will continue these reviews to ensure widespread adherence to the requirement.

Finding 2: Staff efficiency may be improved by centralizing relative placement documentation

2.1 The Division should centralize ongoing information on staff's efforts to identify and place children with relatives, including:

a. Identifying or developing a centralized location, preferably electronic;

Implemented at 18 months

b. Modifying its policies to indicate what information staff are required to record in the centralized location; and

Implemented at 18 months

Recommendation**Status/Additional Explanation**

- c. Ensuring staff record the required information in the centralized location.

Implementation in process

In December 2010, the Division began implementing quarterly reviews of a random sample of cases to assess staff's compliance with new policies and procedures, including the requirement to document efforts to identify relative placements in a centralized location. The initial review found that staff were not always implementing the requirement. The Division reported that it will continue the quarterly reviews until consistent compliance is evident.
