



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Charlie Crist
Governor

Robert Butterworth
Secretary

DATE: September 25, 2007

TO: Robert A. Butterworth
Secretary

FROM: Sheryl G. Steckler
Inspector General

SUBJECT: Six-Month Status Report for OPPAGA Report No. 07-11

In accordance with Section 20.055(5)(g), Florida Statutes, enclosed is our six-month status report on OPPAGA Report No. #07-11, "*Improved Fiscal and Quality Oversight Is Needed for the Independent Living Program.*" The report shows OPPAGA's original recommendations and the Department's status and comments, taken from representations made by management.

If I may be of further assistance, please let me know.

Enclosures

cc: Terry Shoffstall, Staff Director, Joint Legislative Auditing Committee

**SIX-MONTH STATUS REPORT:
OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS &
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
REPORT #07-11
"IMPROVED FISCAL AND QUALITY OVERSIGHT
IS NEEDED FOR THE
Independent Living Program"**



Sheryl G. Steckler, Inspector General
Jerry Chesnutt, Director of Auditing

Enhancing Public Trust in Government

Report #E-05-0607-052

September 25, 2007

PURPOSE

This report provides a written response to the Secretary on the status of corrective actions taken six months after the Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability published Report #07-11, "Improved Fiscal and Quality Oversight Is Needed for the Independent Living Program."

REPORT FINDINGS, COMMENTS & STATUS

Presented below are summarized up-to-date corrective action comments and status for the audit findings, taken from representations made by the Family Safety staff. The full text of the update, as reported by Family Safety staff, is attached.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: *To maintain better information on the recipients and costs associated with the program, the department should implement procedures to routinely track the number of youth and young adults receiving each Independent Living service and the associated state and federal expenditures.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): *Partially Completed*

DCF tracks services and expenditures to 18- 22 year old former foster youth by reviewing the payments contained in the Interim Child Welfare Services Information System (ICWSIS).

With regard to services delivered to children age 13-17, the status remains unchanged from DCF's initial response to this recommendation. The Department intends to implement the federally mandated National Youth in Transition Database upon promulgation of the federal rule.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: *To ensure that Education and Training Voucher funds are spent in compliance with federal law, the department should develop a process to track the amount and fund sources that lead agencies use for payments made directly to young adults. For example, the department should require lead agencies to accurately record information on payments in the Integrated Child Welfare Services Information System (ICWSIS). Also, the department should require lead agencies to reconcile information on Independent Living expenditures from the information system with the invoices submitted to the department for reimbursement.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): *Complete & Ongoing*

DCF requires a reconciliation of lead agency invoices with data from ICWSIS. Data captured in ICWSIS was analyzed to provide lead agency specific feedback regarding expenditures and federal requirements. DCF plans to pull data from ICWSIS to review the rate of expenditures to determine compliance with federal requirements. DCF offers training to contract managers on a quarterly basis. The special unit concentrating on accounting for all community-based care expenditures has reconciled the lead agency actual expenditure reports and budget amendments.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: *To help ensure lead agencies follow state and federal budgetary guidelines for the Independent Living program, the department should enhance its guidance and training. For example, the department should provide ongoing training to lead agencies about federal requirements and charging Independent Living expenses to appropriate funding sources.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): *Complete & Ongoing*

DCF issued a Payment Guide and Coding Definitions document to assist CBC and Department staff in following budgetary guidelines. Fiscal training has been provided to the independent living coordinators. The Office of Family Safety position focused on independent living funding issues has been filled.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4: *To better monitor whether 13-17-year-old foster youth are receiving life skills training as required, the department should contractually require lead agencies to standardize and report data on the unduplicated number of youth receiving services and the types of services they receive.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): *Completed*

The July 2007 standard contract requires Lead agencies to submit independent living data. DCF developed and the Independent Living Services Advisory Council workgroup reviewed and revised a data collection tool, which was disseminated to CBC staff to complete on each youth and young adult by 10/15/07. A collaborative effort led by the Florida Coalition for Children resulted in the development of a secure web-based data collection application that was made available to all Lead Agencies.

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RECOMMENDATION NO. 5: *To better gauge the quality of Independent Living services, the department should require lead agencies to include outcome information in their quality assurance data collection tools, such as whether young adults who receive job training subsequently obtain employment.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): *Partially Completed*

Family Safety Quality Assurance is being redesigned in accordance with the 2007 reorganization DCF. Quality Assurance staff is reviewing and revising instruments that will be used to measure independent living services' performance. In addition, DCF has established an interagency data sharing agreement with the Department of Education and the Agency for Workforce for Innovation to obtain outcome data.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6: *To improve contract monitoring of the Independent Living program, the department should revise its contract monitoring tool to assess lead agency compliance with Independent Living statutes and rules for the 13-17 year-old population and recipients of aftercare and transition services.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): *Completed*

DCF revised the contract monitoring tool to assess lead agency compliance with Independent Living statutes and rules for the 13-17 year-old population and recipients of aftercare and transition services. It was effective April 2007.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7: The department should develop minimum standards for the program and incorporate these standards into Fiscal Year 2007-08 lead agency contracts.

Status (per Family Safety staff): *Completed*

See items 8 and 13 on the website below.

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/cbc/>

This follow-up audit was conducted as required by Florida Statute 20.055(3)(g) and section 2500.A1 of the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing as published by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Elton Jones compiled this follow-up audit from representations provided by program management. Please address inquiries regarding this report to Jerry Chesnutt, Director of Auditing, at (850) 488-8722.