




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

*Charlie Crist
Governor*

Robert Butterworth
Secretary

DATE: August 14, 2008

TO: Robert A. Butterworth
Secretary

FROM: Sheryl G. Steckler 
Inspector General

SUBJECT: Six-Month Status Report for OPPAGA Report No. 08-06

In accordance with Section 20.055(5)(g), Florida Statutes, enclosed is our six-month status report on OPPAGA Report No. 08-06, *"Additional Strategies Would Help Address the Barriers to Successful Adoptions."* 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.

Enclosure

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

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Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

**SIX-MONTH STATUS REPORT:
OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS &
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
REPORT #08-06**

*"Additional Strategies Would Help Address
the Barriers to Successful Adoptions"*



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

Enhancing Public Trust in Government

Report #E-05-0708-036

August 14, 2008

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 #08-06, "Additional Strategies Would Help Address the Barriers to Successful Adoptions."

**REPORT FINDINGS, COMMENTS &
STATUS**

Presented below are up-to-date corrective action comments and status for audit findings, taken from representations made by Family Safety Program office (PDFS) staff.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: *The department and lead agencies should improve access to information for potential adoptive families.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): Completed

Ron Sachs Communications, under contract with the Executive Office of the Governor, updated the Department's website. The website includes a list of all lead agencies by county and contact information. To assist the lead agencies in their monitoring of needed updates to the exchange, the DCF Family Safety Adoption Unit prepared and submitted to all lead agencies a list of children needing updates to pictures and narratives. They also provided regional trainings in May 2008 for adoption staff as well as individual adoption trainings to five lead agencies during February, March and April 2008.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: *Lead agencies should address frustrations encountered by potential adoptive parents.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): Completed

A dialogue regarding effective methods to keep waiting families informed was part of the trainings listed above.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: *Lead agencies and the department should change policies and practices to help*

find permanent homes for more children.

Status (per Family Safety staff): Completed

Beginning in March 2008, the monthly home finder call conducted by DCF was revised to include an opportunity for adoption staff to present one or more approved adoptive families. A document listing the pros and cons of adoption versus guardianship has been completed and will be disseminated and discussed at a statewide meeting with adoption staff prior to the beginning of the Statewide Dependency Summit. Design work has been completed on Florida Safe Families Network and the next release of the statewide automated system will include documentation of post adoption service cases.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4: *Lead agencies should consider creating positions to better ensure post-adoption permanency.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): Completed

A contact person for each lead agency regarding post adoption service requests has been established. A contact list was created by the DCF Family Safety adoption unit containing the name, telephone number and email address for each of the post adoption service contact persons and disseminated to all lead agencies and the Adoption Info Center.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5: *The Office of Adoption and Child Protection recently made recommendations to improve the adoption process for potential adoptive parents.*

Status (per Family Safety staff): Completed

The recommendations of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection have been provided to the lead agencies. Many areas have begun providing orientation classes. Revisions were completed to Administrative Rules 65C-13 and 65C-16 that provide clarification, flexibility and improvement in the provision of adoptive parent training. The design of a standardized home study has been completed and is incorporated in the new functionality of the Florida Safe Families Network statewide automated system.

This follow-up audit was conducted as required by 20.055(3)(g), Florida Statutes 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.

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