



STATE OF ILLINOIS
**OFFICE OF THE
 AUDITOR GENERAL**

Frank J. Mautino, Auditor General

SUMMARY REPORT DIGEST

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Compliance Examination
 For the Two Years Ended June 30, 2018

Release Date: August 22, 2019

FINDINGS THIS AUDIT: 23	AGING SCHEDULE OF REPEATED FINDINGS			
	Repeated Since	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
	2016		18-13, 18-18	
	2012		18-10, 18-15, 18-16, 18-17	
	2010		18-11	
	2008		18-12	
	2002		18-9	
	1998		18-4, 18-5, 18-6	
Category 1:	<u>New</u> 3	<u>Repeat</u> 0	<u>Total</u> 3	
Category 2:	8	12	20	
Category 3:	0	0	0	
TOTAL	11	12	23	
FINDINGS LAST AUDIT: 16				

INTRODUCTION

This digest covers our Compliance Examination of the Department of Children and Family Services for the two years ended June 30, 2018. A separate Financial Audit as of and for the year ended June 30, 2018 will be released under separate cover. In total, this report contains 23 findings, 3 of which were also reported in the Financial Audit.

SYNOPSIS

- (18-4) Child Welfare and Foster Care and Intact Family Case files lacked required documentation and not all case procedures were performed timely.
- (18-5) The Department made untimely determinations of whether reports of child abuse and neglect were “indicated” or “unfounded”.
- (18-6) The Department failed to timely initiate investigations for reports of child abuse and neglect.

Category 1: Findings that are **material weaknesses** in internal control and/or a **qualification** on compliance with State laws and regulations (material noncompliance).

Category 2: Findings that are **significant deficiencies** in internal control and **noncompliance** with State laws and regulations.

Category 3: Findings that have **no internal control issues but are in noncompliance** with State laws and regulations.

{Expenditures and Activity Measures are summarized on next page.}

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
COMPLIANCE EXAMINATION
For the Two Years Ended June 30, 2018**

EXPENDITURE STATISTICS	2018	2017	2016
Total Expenditures.....	\$ 1,084,822,273	\$ 1,076,271,154	\$ 1,086,914,774
OPERATIONS TOTAL.....	\$ 281,458,620	\$ 281,337,078	\$ 297,601,094
% of Total Expenditures.....	25.9%	26.1%	27.4%
Personal Services.....	213,166,309	212,518,411	201,874,895
Other Payroll Costs (FICA, Retirement)..	19,707,801	19,410,605	14,843,237
All Other Operating Expenditures.....	48,584,509	49,408,062	80,882,962
AWARDS AND GRANTS.....	\$ 803,352,534	\$ 794,922,876	\$ 789,305,030
% of Total Expenditures.....	74.1%	73.9%	72.6%
REFUNDS.....	\$ 11,120	\$ 11,200	\$ 8,650
% of Total Expenditures.....	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Receipts.....	\$ 320,182,045	\$ 386,996,435	\$ 401,444,065
Average Number of Employees (Unaudited)	2,656	2,597	2,535
SELECTED ACTIVITY MEASURES (Unaudited)	2018	2017	2016
Hotline Calls.....	276,538	252,388	245,388
Children served in:			
Regular foster care.....	3,598	3,613	3,830
Specialized foster care.....	2,357	2,313	2,338
Relative care.....	7,652	6,956	6,769
Residential placements.....	883	940	1,104
Independent living.....	507	595	597
Finalized adoptions.....	1,706	1,818	1,560
AGENCY DIRECTOR			
During Examination Period:	George H. Sheldon (through 6/14/17)		
	Lise Spacapan - Acting (6/15/17 to 6/25/17)		
	Beverly J. Walker - Acting (6/26/17 to 2/15/19)		
	Debra Dyer-Webster - Acting (2/16/19 to 4/14/19)		
	Marc D. Smith - Acting (effective 4/15/19)		
Currently:	Marc D. Smith - Acting		

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

INCOMPLETE CHILD WELFARE FILES

The Department's Child Welfare and Foster Care and Intact Family Case files lacked required documentation and not all case procedures were performed timely.

During our review of 60 case files, we noted:

- Twenty-nine (48%) Registration Case Opening Forms were not completed timely.
- Twenty-five (42%) Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) Risk Assessments were not completed timely.
- Thirty-seven (62%) Initial Service Plans were not completed timely.
- Forty-eight (80%) Integrated Assessments were not completed timely.
- One (2%) Medical & Dental Consent forms was not found in the case file.
- Nine (15%) children's fingerprints were not indicated as being taken and maintained in SACWIS or in case files.
- Twenty-nine (48%) Initial Placement Checklists were not found in files.
- Two (3%) Placement & Payment Authorization Forms were not maintained in the case files.
- Thirty-six (60%) Child Identification Forms were not maintained in the case files.

Child welfare cases lacked required and timely documentation

Required forms were not completed timely

Required documentation not found in case files

Failure to follow established Department procedures, regulation and State law concerning welfare of children could result in inadequate care, unauthorized services or misuse of State funds. (Finding 4, pages 35-37) **This finding was first reported in 1998.**

We recommended the Department continue in its efforts to develop ways to automate various recordkeeping functions and that the Department follows the procedures established concerning the welfare of children. We further recommended the fulfillment of those procedures be adequately documented.

Department agrees with auditors

Department officials agreed with the recommendation and stated they will continue to stress the importance of adequate and timely documentation for all child and family cases. *(For the previous Agency response, see Digest Footnote #1)*

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT DETERMINATIONS

The Department did not make timely determinations of whether reports of child abuse and neglect were “indicated” or “unfounded” as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (Act).

The Department did not make timely determinations within 60 days in 207 of the 80,698 (0.26%) reports and in 201 of the 75,014 (0.27%) reports of child abuse and neglect referred to the Department during fiscal years 2018 and 2017, respectively.

The Department’s Monitoring/Quality Assurance Division compiles statistics to track reports that are not determined to be either “unfounded” or “indicated” in compliance with the Act. Following is a summary of those statistics:

Untimely determinations made of child abuse and neglect

Fiscal Year	Total Reports Requiring Determinations	Determinations Not In Compliance	Percentage of Determinations Not in Compliance
2018	80,698	207	0.26%
2017	75,014	201	0.27%
2016	77,052	444	0.58%
2015	67,714	279	0.41%
2014	67,705	1,846	2.73%
2013	66,918	2,386	3.57%
2012	65,499	884	1.35%
2011	63,023	115	0.18%
2010	67,051	68	0.10%
2009	68,716	229	0.33%

Failure to make timely determinations of reports of abuse and neglect could delay the implementation of a service plan and result in further endangerment of the child and is a violation of the Act. (Finding 5, pages 38-39) **This finding was first reported in 1998.**

We recommended the Department determine reports of child abuse or neglect in compliance with the timeframe mandated by the Act.

Department agrees with auditors

Department officials agreed with the recommendation and stated they realize the importance of completing investigations and making determinations within 60 days. Additionally, the Department will continue to strive for 100% compliance. *(For the previous Agency response, see Digest Footnote #2.)*

INITIATION OF INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Department did not timely initiate investigations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report.

The Department did not timely initiate an investigation for 116 of the 81,229 (0.14%) reports and for 154 of the 75,000 (0.21%) reports of child abuse and neglect in fiscal years 2018 and 2017, respectively.

The Department’s Monitoring/Quality Assurance Division has compiled the following statistics:

Investigations not initiated timely	Fiscal Year	Total Investigations	Investigations Not In Compliance	Percentage of Investigations Not in Compliance
	2018	81,229	116	0.14%
	2017	75,000	154	0.21%
	2016	78,383	332	0.42%
	2015	67,708	144	0.21%
	2014	67,720	179	0.26%
	2013	66,891	147	0.22%
	2012	65,963	274	0.42%
	2011	63,011	116	0.18%
	2010	67,377	97	0.14%
	2009	68,732	83	0.12%

Failure could result in endangerment of child

Failure to respond to a report of abuse or neglect within 24 hours could result in further endangerment to the child and is a violation of the Child Abused and Neglected Reporting Act (Act). (Finding 6, pages 40-41) **This finding was first reported in 1998.**

We recommended the Department initiate investigations of all child abuse and neglect reports within 24 hours of receiving the report as mandated by the Act.

Department agrees with auditors

Department officials agreed with the recommendation and stated they will continue to strive to reach 100% compliance by monitoring weekly reports and addressing missed mandates via the disciplinary process. *(For the previous Agency response, see Digest Footnote #3)*

OTHER FINDINGS

The remaining findings are reportedly being given attention by the Department. We will review the Department’s progress towards the implementation of our recommendations in our next audit.

ACCOUNTANT’S OPINION

The accountants conducted a compliance examination of the Department for the two years ended June 30, 2018, as required by the Illinois State Auditing Act. The accountants qualified their report on State compliance for Findings 2018-001, 2018-002, and 2018-003. Except for the noncompliance described in these findings, the accountants stated the Department complied, in all material respects, with the requirements described in the report.

This compliance examination was conducted by Sikich, LLP.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE

JANE CLARK
Division Director

This report is transmitted in accordance with Section 3-14 of the Illinois State Auditing Act.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE

FRANK J. MAUTINO
Auditor General

FJM:APA

DIGEST FOOTNOTES

#1 – INCOMPLETE CHILD WELFARE FILES

2016: The Department accepts the recommendation and will continue to stress the importance of adequate and timely documentation for all child and family cases. The Department continually updates written procedures as changes and requirements in case practices are identified, approved and adopted. Communications to caseworkers and supervisors take place through announcement on the Department’s intranet and email, through notes to automated case recordkeeping releases, training, and written Policies, Procedures, and Administrative Procedures. All Policies, Procedures and Administrative Procedures are available through the Department’s intranet and web site.

The requirement for photos and fingerprints is for the purpose of notifying law enforcement with a recent photo, and for fingerprints in particular for missing youth. Through a policy guide and statewide, regional and local meetings with staff, supervisors, and administrative staff, the Department will emphasize the importance of maintaining records on youth in care in accordance with policy.

To address the deficiencies in the areas of Medical & Dental Consent forms, Family Assessment Factor Worksheets, Initial Placement Checklists, Permanency Planning Checklists, and Placement & Payment Authorization Forms, regional management

staff has been given the responsibility to implement monitor and review processes that will ensure that documents in case files are current. The status of this monitoring process is discussed in weekly meetings with regional management staff and during quarterly meetings with all supervisors/program managers.

DCFS has released policy guide revisions and will continue to review current guidelines to ensure that Initial Service Plans and Integrated Assessments are completed timely. The policy guides will be discussed at statewide, regional and local levels. To address the issuance of timely notices regarding administrative case reviews, the Department is reviewing the details and identifying circumstances surrounding the timing. As the review progresses, any changes to rule, procedure, or practice that may be needed will be initiated.

#2 – CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT DETERMINATIONS

2016: The Department accepts the recommendations and will continue to make all efforts to determine 100% of reports of child abuse and neglect within the timeframe mandated by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. The Department regularly analyzes data related to the causes of untimely determinations and makes a focused effort to remedy the issues found and to monitor the determination rate.

Staffing levels continue to be a challenge for the Department. As staff numbers decrease and the resulting number of caseloads rise, timely determination of cases is impacted. Over the past fiscal year, the Department has made diligent efforts to increase the pool of qualified candidates for child protection investigator positions. Those efforts include an expansion of eligible degrees, special grading sessions through Central Management Services to review applications, and heightened recruitment activities to secure qualified candidates. In addition, vacancies are reviewed monthly and filled quickly. The result of these efforts has been positive and vacant investigative positions are decreasing.

With manageable caseloads, staff can better focus on the timely determination and completion of cases as mandated by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Administration continues to monitor cases for timeliness and is addressing performance issues as they are identified. The Department recognizes the importance of meeting 100% compliance with this timeframe and remains committed to attaining this goal.

#3 – INITIATION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS

2016: The Department accepts the recommendation and continues to make all efforts to attain 100% compliance with the statute to initiate all reports of child abuse and neglect within twenty-four hours. The Department recognizes the importance of ensuring child safety and well-being and will maintain the goal to initiate all reports of child abuse and neglect within the 24 hour mandate.

Staffing levels continue to be a challenge for the division of child protection as vacancies increased while qualified candidates for child protection investigators positions decreased. As average caseloads

increased, the 100% compliance goal of initiating new reports in 24 hours also increased slightly. The Department has taken major steps over the past year to increase the pool of eligible candidates to include additional expanded degrees which will qualify, special grading sessions with Central Management Services to review applications, and enhanced recruitment activities for qualified candidates by the Division of Employee Services. Vacancies are reviewed monthly and filled quickly as candidates are identified.

The Department remains diligent in ensuring manageable child protection caseloads and focusing efforts on timely data entry, the reduction of data entry errors, and addressing performance issues as they occur.