



# Legislative Post Audit Performance Audit Report Highlights

Highlights

## Foster Care and Adoption in Kansas: Reviewing Various Issues Related to the State's Foster Care and Adoption System, Part 2

### Report Highlights

September 2016 • R-16-010.2

#### **Summary of Legislator Concerns**

*Legislators were interested in a comprehensive review of the foster care system. Part 1 of the audit focused on safety concerns and was released in July 2016. Part 2 of the audit focuses on compliance with applicable state and federal laws governing the foster care system. Part 3 will examine foster care costs, resources and outcomes and will be released in 2017.*

#### **Background Information**

*In fiscal year 2015, the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) spent about \$205 million to serve about 6,300 children in foster care. Foster care is complex and involves many agencies and individuals, including the courts, case management contractors, and others.*

*If a child is determined to be in need of care, case management contractors and child placing agencies work together to locate a home for the child. Case management contractors are responsible for providing services and monitoring the progress of children in foster care.*

#### **QUESTION:** Does DCF Ensure That All Applicable State and Federal Laws Governing the Foster Care System in Kansas are Followed?

- DCF has to meet many state and federal requirements for the foster care program.
  - State requirements apply to such areas as licensing requirements, contractor expectations, and aspects of the foster home.
  - Federal requirements include similar specific requirements as well as requirements for the overall system.
- DCF had not followed some of the safety and living condition requirements we reviewed in Part 1 of this audit (issued in July 2016).
  - Initial background checks were completed for prospective foster parents, but not always for others in the home.
  - Not all monthly case-management visits with the foster child were completed.
  - DCF did not ensure that licensed foster homes had sufficient financial resources.
- According to the 2014 and 2015 statewide single audits, DCF materially complied with most, but not all federal requirements.
  - The contracted auditors reviewed six general areas related to foster care and identified two areas with issues in both the 2014 and 2015 statewide single audits. These involved DCF controls related to monitoring and paying the contractors.
- DCF self-reported data shows Kansas met or exceeded about half of the federal outcome requirements for fiscal year 2016, but did not meet the others.
  - As a condition of receiving federal funding, DCF must report data about children in its care—known as outcome data.
  - DCF has consistently met the requirements related to placing children with relatives and siblings, but has not consistently met those related to timeliness or stability.
- DCF must implement a program improvement plan to address issues identified by a 2015 federal review, called the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR).
  - The review found that DCF was in compliance with about one-third of the categories assessed, but not in substantial compliance with the rest.
  - DCF was required to submit a program improvement plan to address each problem area.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- This report contains no recommendations.

## **AGENCY RESPONSE**

- The agency generally concurred with the audit findings.

### **HOW DO I REQUEST AN AUDIT?**

By law, individual legislators, legislative committees, or the Governor may request an audit, but any audit work conducted by the division must be directed by the Legislative Post Audit Committee. Any legislator who would like to request an audit should contact the division directly at (785) 296-3792.

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