

LIMITED-SCOPE AUDIT PROPOSAL

Consistency Across Foster Care Service Providers

SOURCE

This audit proposal was requested by Representative Leo Delperdang.

BACKGROUND

Kansas' foster care program is administered by the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and has been privatized since 1997. The department contracts with service providers to provide foster care services across the state. The foster care program is charged with protecting children who may be physically or mentally abused or neglected. The department may provide preventive services to a family when child abuse is suspected with the goal of keeping the child in the home. However, if preventive services are not successful or if the danger to the child appears to warrant action, the department may ask the county or district attorney to petition the court to place the child in its custody.

Historically, DCF has contracted with KVC and St. Francis to provide these services. Beginning July 1, 2019 TFI Family Services, Cornerstones of Care, and Eckerd Connects will also provide case management or family preservation services. These service providers subcontract with other providers such as child placing agencies. Several other agencies throughout the state are also involved with foster care, such as the Kansas Children's Service League and the Children's Alliance of Kansas. These agencies and others provide a variety of services, including information and resources for current and prospective foster parents.

Legislators have expressed concern about consistency in the supports foster children and foster families receive from various providers and how easy it is for foster families to change from one service provider to another.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES AND TENTATIVE METHODOLOGY

The audit objectives listed below represent the questions that we would answer through our audit work. The proposed steps for each objective are intended to convey the type of work we would do, but are subject to change as we learn more about the audit issues and are able to refine our methodology.

Objective 1: What are stakeholder's opinions on whether DCF's processes to ensure service consistency and family transitions from one provider to another are adequate? Our tentative methodology would include the following:

- Work with DCF staff and review policies to develop an understanding of how DCF aims to ensure consistency of services provided across foster care service providers including child placing agencies. This includes continuity of services for the foster child, and ease of transferring information/documentation/requirements for the family.

- Work with DCF, contractors and others to identify important stakeholders involved or affected foster care services for both children and families.
- Conduct a short opinion poll or survey to gather opinions of stakeholders as to consistency of services for children across providers, whether it is easy for families to change service providers, and any suggestions for improvements in these areas.

ESTIMATED RESOURCES

We estimate this audit would require **100 staff hours** to complete.