

**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

**DECEMBER 2000**



**JIM PETRO**  
**AUDITOR OF STATE**  

---

**STATE OF OHIO**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
Executive Summary	
Introduction .....	i
History .....	ii
Overall Report Summary .....	vi
Overall Financial Implications .....	xxx
General Issues and Trends .....	xxxiii
Objective, Scope and Audit Methodology .....	xli
Audit Results	
1. Foster Care Licensing	
A. Background .....	1-1
B. Processes and Recommendations	
Staffing. ....	1-11
Criminal Background Checks - Administrative Rules. ....	1-15
WebCheck. ....	1-16
Inconsistency between Private and Public Agencies. ....	1-17
Certification of Foster Care Homes. ....	1-19
ODJFS Inspection of Foster Care Homes. ....	1-21
Foster Caregiver Training Resources .....	1-24
Foster Caregiver Training Accessibility. ....	1-27
C. Financial Implications Summary .....	1-29
D. Conclusion .....	1-30
2. Independent Living	
A. Background .....	2-1
B. Processes and Recommendations	
Staffing. ....	2-9
Technical Assistance and Training. ....	2-13
Rules and Regulations. ....	2-15
Monitoring. ....	2-16
H.R. 3443 Funding Distribution. ....	2-18
H.R. 3443 Housing. ....	2-19
H.R. 3443 Medicaid Eligibility. ....	2-21
H.R. 3443 Outcome Measures. ....	2-21
C. Financial Implications Summary .....	2-23
D. Conclusion .....	2-23

- 3. Child Care Services
  - A. Background . . . . . 3-1
  - B. Processes and Recommendations
    - Organizational Structure. . . . . 3-8
    - Staffing. . . . . 3-11
    - Policies and Procedures. . . . . 3-13
    - Technical Assistance . . . . . 3-15
    - Training Provided to County Departments of Job and Family Services. 3-17
    - Training for Child Care Services Personnel. . . . . 3-18
    - Monitoring. . . . . 3-22
  - C. Financial Implications Summary . . . . . 3-27
  - D. Conclusion . . . . . 3-27
  
- 4. Child Care Licensing
  - A. Background . . . . . 4-1
  - B. Processes and Recommendations
    - Staffing for Day Care Licensing Specialists . . . . . 4-7
    - Staffing for Technical Assistant Licensing Specialists . . . . . 4-11
    - Enforcement and District Office Consistency . . . . . 4-13
    - Inspections of Providers Under Enforcement Proceedings . . . . . 4-20
    - Enforcement Coordinator . . . . . 4-20
    - Training . . . . . 4-24
    - Rules and Regulations . . . . . 4-26
    - Monitoring . . . . . 4-28
  - C. Financial Implications Summary . . . . . 4-33
  - D. Conclusion . . . . . 4-34
  
- 5. Family Violence Prevention
  - A. Background . . . . . 5-1
  - B. Processes and Recommendations
    - Program Location . . . . . 5-7
    - Staffing . . . . . 5-9
    - Distribution and Award of Funds - Internal RFP Review Process . . . . 5-11
    - Distribution and Award of Funds - State FY 2000 RFP . . . . . 5-16
    - Distribution and Award of Funds - RFP Distribution Review Process . 5-20
    - Guidance for Grantees . . . . . 5-22
    - Grantee Reimbursement - Invoices . . . . . 5-23
    - Grantee Reimbursement - Reimbursement Process . . . . . 5-24
    - Monitoring - Desk Reviews and Documentation . . . . . 5-29
    - Monitoring - Site Visits . . . . . 5-31
  - C. Financial Implications Summary . . . . . 5-32

- D. Conclusion ..... 5-33
- 6. Children’s Trust Fund
  - A. Background ..... 6-1
  - B. Processes and Recommendations
    - Strategic Planning and Leadership ..... 6-7
    - House Bill 283 - Board Membership ..... 6-8
    - House Bill 283 - Distribution of Funds ..... 6-9
    - House Bill 283 - Shifts in Responsibility ..... 6-11
    - Monitoring ..... 6-12
    - Reporting Requirements and Program Evaluation ..... 6-13
  - C. Conclusion ..... 6-15
- 7. Wellness Block Grant
  - A. Background ..... 7-1
  - B. Processes and Recommendations
    - Staffing ..... 7-5
    - Monitoring ..... 7-6
    - Program Applications ..... 7-8
    - Internal Management Rules ..... 7-10
    - Linking Funding with Outcome Indicators ..... 7-11
  - C. Financial Implications Summary ..... 7-12
  - D. Conclusion ..... 7-13
- 8. Children’s Justice Act Grant
  - A. Background ..... 8-1
  - B. Processes and Recommendations
    - Grant Management - Strategic Planning ..... 8-6
    - Grant Management - Program Development ..... 8-8
    - Monitoring - Program Reporting ..... 8-10
    - Monitoring - Expenditures ..... 8-11
    - Monitoring - Performance Measures ..... 8-14
    - Staffing - Workload Analysis ..... 8-16
    - Staffing - Employee Expectations ..... 8-19
  - C. Financial Implications Summary ..... 8-20
  - D. Conclusion ..... 8-20
- 9. Adoption Services
  - A. Background ..... 9-1
  - B. Processes and Recommendations
    - Staffing ..... 9-6

	Technical Assistance .....	9-9
	Training (ODJFS & District) .....	9-11
	Monitoring - Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program .....	9-15
C.	Financial Implications Summary .....	9-17
D.	Conclusion .....	9-17
10.	Child Protection Oversight Evaluation (CPOE)	
A.	Background .....	10-1
B.	Processes and Recommendations	
	Leadership and Direction .....	10-9
	Staffing - CPOE Management .....	10-11
	Staffing - Technical Assistant Specialists .....	10-15
	Internal Training for CPOE Personnel .....	10-19
	County Self-Monitoring .....	10-21
	Needs Assessment .....	10-23
	Data Validation .....	10-25
	Outcome Indicators .....	10-28
C.	Financial Implications Summary .....	10-30
D.	Conclusion .....	10-30
11.	Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry	
A.	Background .....	11-1
B.	Processes and Recommendations	
	Staffing .....	11-4
	Purpose and Intent of Central Registry .....	11-9
	Confidentiality of Future Central Registry Database .....	11-10
	Due Process - Grievance Policy .....	11-11
	Due Process - Notification of Case Resolution or Disposition .....	11-16
	Determination and Documentation of Critical Information .....	11-17
	Barriers to Obtaining Information from Principals .....	11-19
	Expunction of Individuals' Records from Central Registry .....	11-21
C.	Financial Implications Summary .....	11-25
D.	Conclusion .....	11-25

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**





# **Executive Summary**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Providing the necessary shelter, support, and guidance to Ohio's children who are likely to become neglected or dependent if services are not provided is a critical responsibility. The government and the citizens of Ohio have entrusted the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) with ensuring the delivery of quality services for the safety and development of these children while maintaining a commitment to families. Within ODJFS, the Office for Children and Families (OCF) is responsible for administering the services provided to families, children and adults to restore, maintain or improve their capabilities for self-support and family life.

Recently, significant problems within Ohio's Child Welfare System (CWS) have been spotlighted within the media and have resulted in public demands to overhaul the existing system in place. The Governor appointed Jacqueline Romer-Sensky as the Director of the Department in March 1999, and she has placed a high priority on revamping the CWS. Her dedication is evident in the significant time and financial resource commitments made by ODJFS to the reform effort, personnel changes within the Department to meet the changing needs of child welfare, actively involving public and the Child Welfare Shareholders Group in their reform efforts, and requesting the Auditor of State's assistance in completing a thorough audit of the CWS.

As a result of the Director's request, we reviewed 11 programs within the Child Welfare System, including Foster Care Licensing, Independent Living, Child Care Services, Child Care Licensing, Family Violence Prevention, the Children's Trust Fund, the Wellness Block Grant, the Children's Justice Act, Adoption Services, the Child Protection Oversight Evaluation Quality Assurance System, and the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry. Together, these programs accounted for approximately \$750 million in funding that the Department expended during 1999.

The challenge of reforming the Child Welfare System is vast and complex and we commend ODJFS on being responsive to public concerns in this area. ODJFS is a very large organization which has nearly doubled its overall staffing size since the Ohio Department of Human Services merged with the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services in July 2000. In addition to CWS reform, many priorities will compete for financial resources and staffing in the near future.

This performance audit was conducted at a time when the Department was undergoing a major transition. As a result, we have been evaluating an evolving—not static—organization. Our recommendations and conclusions are presented with this understanding, in the hope of helping the Department move further forward.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to ODJFS’s request and work with the Department on this important endeavor to further improve the Child Welfare System in Ohio. Additionally, we gratefully acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of the management and staff from the Department, as well as the individuals and organizations that participated in the Child Welfare Shareholders Group.

## **HISTORY**

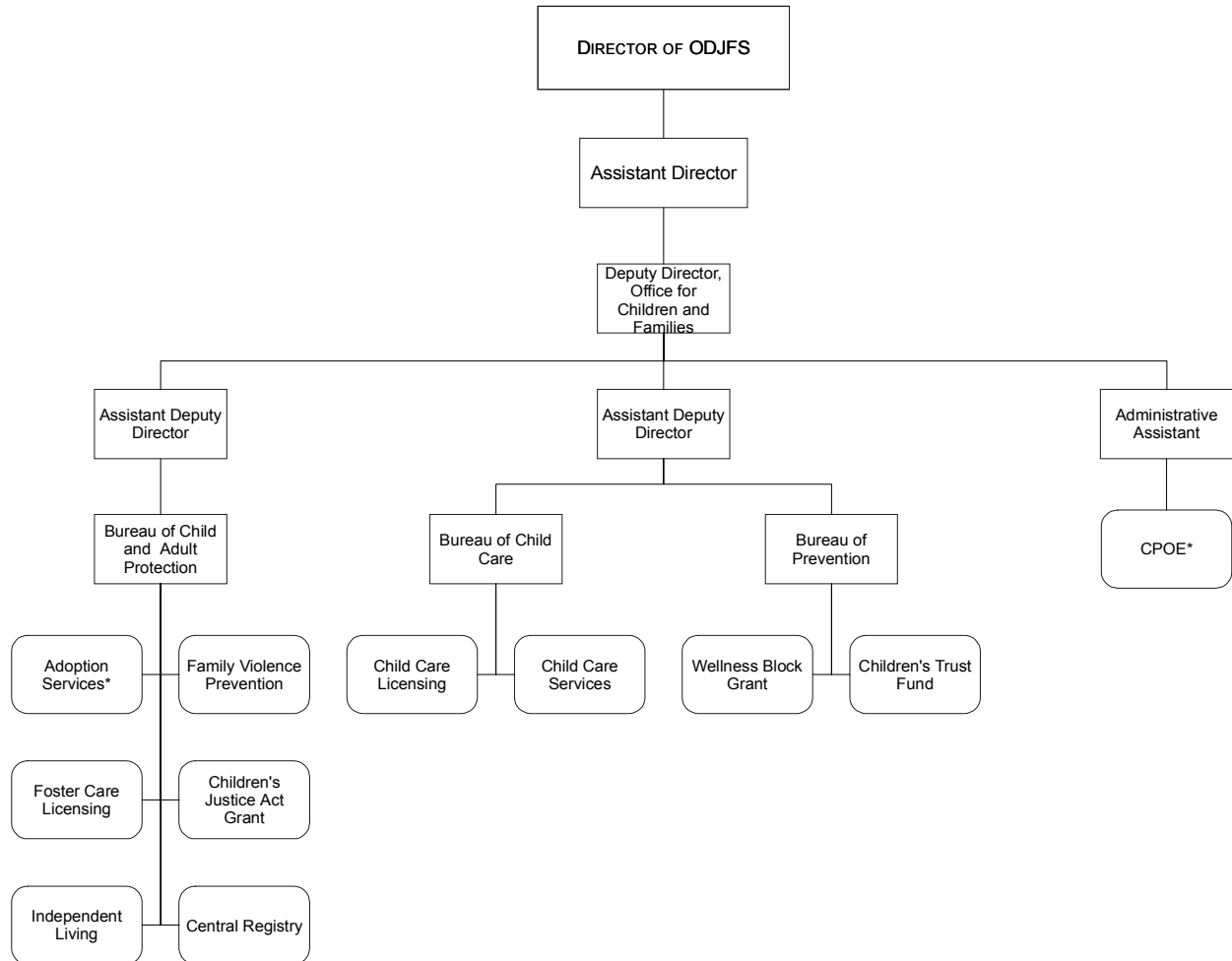
### **Background**

On April 6, 1999, Director Jacqueline Romer-Sensky of the former Ohio Department of Human Services (ODHS) requested the Auditor of State’s Office to conduct “a thorough audit of the Ohio Child Welfare System, starting with ODHS.” The Director’s request recognized the Child Welfare System was “an area in dire need of support and direction” and this effort would be designed to “greatly improve the way services are provided to children and families in Ohio.”

In response to the Director’s concerns, a letter of arrangement between the Ohio Department of Human Services and the Auditor of State was presented to ODHS detailing the objectives, scope and methodology of the engagement. This engagement was designed to be a comprehensive performance audit of the Child Welfare System to assist the Department in increasing fiscal accountability, ensuring compliance with applicable federal and state laws, and improving the quality of services provided.

### Organizational Chart

Detailed tables of organization are included within the individual sections reviewed. Below is a high-level organizational table which illustrates the areas we reviewed within the Department's framework for administering child welfare services.



\*Note: As of June 30, 2000, the Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) was primarily supported by the Office of County Operations under the guidance of OCF's Administrative Assistant. Adoption Services is currently housed within the Bureau of Kinship Care and Adoption.

## Segments Reviewed and Descriptions

Our report will focus on eleven segments of the Child Welfare System and a brief description of each segment is described below.

SEGMENTS REVIEWED	DESCRIPTIONS
<b>Foster Care Licensing</b>	Responsible for establishing standards, inspecting, licensing, and monitoring: private child placing agencies (PCPA), private non custodial agencies (PNA), and public children services agencies (PCSA) which operate children’s residential centers, group homes, independent living arrangements, and residential parenting facilities. Additionally, ODJFS is responsible for establishing standards and licensing for foster family homes, which are inspected and recommended for approval by PCSAs, PCPAs or PNAs.
<b>Independent Living</b>	Funding to PCSAs and other Independent Living providers in order to provide services for youth 16 years of age and older who are in substitute care to prepare for transition to an independent living arrangement. Independent living services include: outreach services, individual/group counseling, life-skill services; education and vocational training, preparation for the GED, job readiness services, job search assistance, placement programs, and workshops on self-esteem.
<b>Adoption Services</b>	Adoption services are offered by public and private children services agencies to secure and maintain permanent homes for children who are legally available for adoption. The comprehensive scope of these services extends to birth parents, adoptive parents, and the adopted child.
<b>Wellness Block Grant and Children’s Trust Fund</b>	The Wellness Block Grant and Children’s Trust Fund are two of the primary prevention services which are designed to get in front of problems before they occur and to prevent children, youth and families from entering Ohio’s child and family serving systems. ODJFS openly supports and advocates local ownership and responsibility as key elements in designing prevention strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of individuals, families and communities.
<b>Family Violence Prevention</b>	Provides funding to local domestic violence shelters to provide safe and temporary shelter to victims of domestic violence and their dependents. Additionally, funds are provided to assist communities in establishing programs for victims of domestic violence.
<b>Child Care Services</b>	Child care assistance is a reimbursement from the state (using both state and federal monies) provided to the County Departments of Job and Family Services for part of the cost of child care services. Families pay a portion of the cost in the form of a co-payment based on income, family size and the number of children in care.
<b>Child Care Licensing</b>	Responsible for establishing standards, inspecting, and licensing child care centers, Type A family day care homes, school child day care centers, and child day camps. Additionally, ODJFS is responsible for establishing standards for the certification of Type B family day care homes and in-home aides, which are certified by the County Departments of Job and Family Services.

<b>Children's Justice Act Grant</b>	To encourage states to enact reforms which are designed to improve: the handling of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim; the handling of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect related fatalities; and the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation. A multi-disciplinary task force was created by the Governor to make program recommendations and ODJFS develops and administers a plan of action to coincide with these recommendations.
<b>Child Protection Oversight Evaluation (CPOE)</b>	A partnership effort between ODJFS' Office for Children and Families and PCSAs which: provide regular and consistent data and information on the level and quality of child protection services via the state's Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS); conduct annual on-site case reviews; solicit feedback from key stakeholders; and provide ongoing and supportive technical assistance.
<b>Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry</b>	A state-mandated computer database designed to maintain a registry of alleged perpetrators and their victims. The information includes data on child abuse and neglect investigations and is entered by caseworkers at the County Departments of Job and Family Services. The purpose is to track persons involved in abuse and neglect and provide a history of persons involved into a current report to assist in the treatment and prevention of future maltreatment.

Sources:

- ODHS Program and Services Guide issued in May 1998.
- ODHS Transition Manual issued in April 1999.
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance federal program # 93.643 updated in June 1999.
- Obtained via ODJFS internal documentation from Section Chief of Protective Services.

## Shareholders Group and Subcommittees

In April 1999, the Department invited a comprehensive group of shareholders to participate in its child welfare reform initiative. This group was comprised of representatives from General Assembly, public and private organizations, parent organizations, courts, advocacy organizations, and county and state government. The group was formed to assist in improving the quality of services to the children and families of Ohio by recommending priorities and developing innovative strategies to enhance the safety, growth and development of children, support families and strengthen communities. To accomplish this, the Shareholders Group reviewed financial, administrative, programmatic and inter-systems issues, looking at program quality, effectiveness and accountability.

The shareholders' subcommittee groups provided a forum for identifying key issues affecting the child welfare system and determining the expectations and needs of those individuals affiliated with or affected by the program or process being analyzed. Our staff was involved in the attendance and participation in many of the monthly subcommittee meetings. We gathered information from members of the Shareholders Group and other stakeholders through interviews and surveys. The information gathered was used to assist us in gaining an understanding of the key processes within

the child welfare system, as well as to develop effective process improvement recommendations.

In June 2000, the Shareholders Group issued the Child Welfare Reform Shareholders Group Report to the Ohio Department of Human Services. This report provided the Department with 21 prioritized recommendations and financial implications to enhance the safety, growth, and development of children, support families and strengthen communities. To ensure all significant child welfare system areas were addressed and to limit duplication of efforts, ODJFS developed a continuum charting the areas being reviewed within the Auditor of State's performance audit and the Shareholders Group.

## **OVERALL REPORT SUMMARY**

### **Results in Brief**

While we commend ODJFS for its efforts to date at reforming the child welfare system, we believe that significant opportunities to improve the programs and system remain to be addressed. For the eleven areas we studied, we found issues with

- ODJFS staffing levels, roles, and responsibilities;
- program monitoring;
- development and implementation of policies and procedures;
- training;
- program administration;
- strategic planning and leadership;
- legislative issues;
- design and use of current and updated technology; and
- designation and use of proper technical assistance.

Table 1 outlines the types of issues found within each program.

**Table 1: Types of Issues found, by Program**

Type of Issue	Foster Care Licensing	Independent Living	Child Care Services	Child Care Licensing	Family Violence Prevention	Children's Trust Fund	Wellness Block Grant	Children's Justice Act Grant	Adoption Services	Child Protection Oversight Evaluation Quality Assurance System	Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry
Staffing levels, roles and responsibilities	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Monitoring		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Policies/Procedures	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X
Training	X	X	X	X					X	X	X
Program administration					X	X	X	X		X	X
Strategic planning and leadership		X	X		X	X		X		X	
Legislative issues	X	X		X		X	X				X
Technology	X		X	X						X	X
Technical assistance		X	X						X		

## Overall Findings, Recommendations and Department Actions

Throughout the course of our engagement, the Child Welfare System has been an ever-changing environment and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has continued to respond to these changes. Listed below are the condensed findings, recommendations, financial implications and Department actions which are sequentially presented from each of the areas we reviewed. The Department's responses to our recommendations are included under each comment but have not been reviewed as part of this performance audit.

### Foster Care Licensing

- The ODJFS foster care licensing staff has experienced rapidly increasing numbers of foster home and private agencies under their supervision, while the number of licensing specialists has decreased over time.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should hire ten (10) additional foster care licensing specialists, one additional enforcement coordinator, and one additional foster care licensing supervisor to address the growing need for resources in the Foster Care Licensing Section.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$584,000 for additional foster care licensing staff.**

*Department Action: As of 1/1/01, the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection has hired five additional licensing specialists and a new Section Chief.*
- Even though Ohio law mandates criminal background checks for prospective foster caregivers, it does not require follow-up background checks after certification of the foster home.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should initiate revisions of Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-5-091 to require an annual updated criminal records check for all persons responsible for a child's care in out-of-home care, including certified foster caregivers and any adult member of the foster caregiver's household.**
- Agencies typically submit applicant fingerprint and personal data by mail to the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. If incomplete or inaccurate information is submitted, background checks can take four to six weeks or longer to complete.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should allocate the necessary resources to allow public and private agencies to have access to the WebCheck technology.**

**Financial Implication: One-time implementation cost of \$707,500 to purchase WebCheck technology.**
- Currently, ODJFS is better able to regulate the private foster care placing agencies compared to the public children's services agencies. ODJFS monitors the private agencies more frequently, and is able to revoke their license in the event of non-compliance with ODJFS



rules and regulations.

**Recommendation:** ODJFS should promulgate rules and promote the necessary statutory revisions to increase the regulatory requirements of public children services agencies for the function of recommending family foster homes for certification.

**Financial Implication:** Annual cost of \$48,000 for staffing to review public agency records.

*Department Action:* As of November 2000, ODJFS has initiated the process which will establish in rule the state approval of county public children services agencies in relation to their compliance with state laws and regulations regarding foster care licensure recommendations.

5. Since private agencies will eventually benefit from the licensing of foster care homes they recommend and that are part of their network, they are not independent parties to be relied upon for documenting the prospective foster caregiver's assessment, which is a vital role in the licensing process.

**Recommendation:** ODJFS should promulgate rules and promote the necessary statutory revisions to permit only public children services agencies or ODJFS to recommend family foster homes for licensure.

**Financial Implication:** Annual cost of \$48,000 for staffing to review licensing packet.

*Department Action:* Starting February 1, 2001, regular random monitoring visits will be conducted of foster homes.

6. Even though they have primary responsibility for the safety of Ohio's foster care children, ODJFS and the public children services agencies do not perform complete and thorough foster care home inspections.

**Recommendation:** ODJFS should conduct independent on-site reviews of family foster homes.

**Financial Implication:** Annual cost of \$240,000 for foster care home inspection staffing.

*Department Action:* The Foster Care Licensing Section will conduct on-site reviews of a sample of foster homes at the time of agency re-certification beginning in February 2001.

7. ODJFS' relies on private and public agency resources to provide foster caregiver training without ODJFS defining training objectives and standards, thereby creating a risk that foster caregivers will not receive adequate or quality training to help care for Ohio's foster care children.

**Recommendation:** ODJFS should take increased ownership of the training of foster caregivers by establishing training objectives and standards, providing training sessions, and monitoring training programs of PCSAs, PNAs and PCPAs to include onsite evaluation of programs.

**Financial Implication:** Annual cost of \$1,900,000 for increased foster care training.

*Department Action:* HB 332, effective 1/2001, requires ODJFS to approve agency training

plans. ODJFS has a team developing a model foster parent training program.

8. ODJFS primarily offers foster care training in eight regional training center sites, which hinders the attendance of working foster caregivers outside those eight counties.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should seek and develop new collaborative partnerships with institutions of higher education that would provide additional foster caregiver training delivery sites.**  
**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$576,000 to provide additional foster caregiver training delivery sites.**

### Independent Living (IL)

1. ODJFS has not allocated adequate staff resources to administer the Independent Living program. We estimate that Independent Living program tasks will take about 4,750 total projected staff hours to complete per fiscal year. Currently, only one part-time employee is available to perform these tasks.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should hire three full-time employees to carry out the tasks related to the Independent Living program.**  
**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$133,000 for hiring three additional IL staff.**  
*Department Action: As of July 2000, one full time staff member is now dedicated to Independent Living and the hiring process has begun for a second.*
2. Technical assistance is critical to the effective administration of all ODJFS child welfare programs. Due to an inadequate commitment of staff resources to the Independent Living program, ODJFS does not currently provide consistent technical assistance to providers of Independent Living services.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should incorporate technical assistance, such as assessment and problem definition, policy research and advice (including sharing of standards, guidelines, and best practices), technical and management training, evaluation, planning, and emergency response within their Independent Living program.**  
*Department Action: As of July 2000, one FTE (a second to be hired) is devoted to the Independent Living program and supplying information and guidance to agencies. The Bureau developed and sponsored a statewide Independent Living conference in November 2000 and has participated in workshops at other statewide conferences to provide training and information.*
3. Training is an essential tool in improving and providing quality Independent Living services. Independent Living training at ODJFS is not currently adequate to meet the needs of the Independent Living providers or to meet the new federal guidelines.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop Independent Living training courses and make them available to Independent Living providers, staff and foster parents to meet**

**the needs of youth in Independent Living.****Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$800,000 to provide IL training courses.**

*Department Action: The statewide Independent Living Planning Workgroup has a subcommittee devoted to making recommendations related to training issues for foster parents and provider agency staff. Staff are developing a foster parent training model to be released in February 2001 that will include subjects related to the Independent Living program.*

4. Current state laws, rules, and regulations provide limited guidance for the administration of the Independent Living program.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should seek state policy and administrative changes to revise the laws and rules that govern the Independent Living program in order to comply with federal H.R. 3443, as well as to develop a structure for fiscal and programmatic accountability.**

*Department Action: The statewide Independent Living Planning Workgroup has a subcommittee developing OAC rules related to Independent Living and the expansion of services to youth 18-21 years of age. The statewide Statute and Rule Review Committee is reviewing the ORC and OAC sections affecting substitute care and making recommendations by February 2001 for any changes to Independent Living.*

5. The Independent Living program at ODJFS does not have a system in place to assure that providers of Independent Living services properly administer the funding allocated to them.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop a method of monitoring the funding, performance, and effectiveness of the Independent Living program for the various providers.**

*Department Action: The statewide Independent Living Planning Workgroup is developing performance outcome indicators and measures. As of January 2001, FACSIS/SACWIS staff designed new events and data elements now being captured related to service provision to youth who are in care or have been emancipated.*

6. ODJFS does not currently have a plan for the distribution of the increased federal funding that will be available for the Independent Living program in federal fiscal year 2001.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop a strategic plan to distribute the increased funding for Independent Living in a manner that provides the maximum benefits to Ohio's youth eligible for Independent Living services.**

*Department Action: The statewide Independent Living Workgroup is developing recommendations, to be released in Spring 2001, for the distribution of funds to allow maximum benefits.*

7. Prior to H.R. 3443, Independent Living providers were not permitted to claim room and board as expenditures for the Independent Living program.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should establish a funding structure and standards which have flexibility in providing transitional housing arrangements for IL youth. ODJFS should also track housing expenditures reimbursed by federal funding to ensure they do not exceed 30 percent of the total state allotment.**

*Department Action: The statewide Independent Living Planning Workgroup's 5-year plan subcommittee is making recommendations, to be released in Spring 2001, related to housing and support for room and board.*

8. Youth who leave foster care often have health care-related needs, such as prenatal and mental health care. Youth who have these conditions and attempt to live as self-sufficient adults need medical coverage to help support them at this critical point in their lives.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should consider providing Medicaid funding to youth between the ages of 18 and 20 who are no longer eligible for foster care in order to address their health care-related needs.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$4,443,000 to provide medicaid funding to Independent Living youth, of which a portion will be reimbursed by federal funds.**

*Department Action: This recommendation was included in the ODJFS original budget submission for the 2002-2003 biennial budget.*

9. ODJFS has not developed standards for providing services and performance outcomes for its providers.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop, promulgate and enforce standards for providing services and performance outcomes for providers of Independent Living services. ODJFS also needs to modify its current data system and intake requirements in order to compile relevant Independent Living performance outcome data from providers.**

*Department Action: Rules are now being finalized and the performance outcomes will be finalized in June 2001.*

## Child Care Services

1. Because roles among the Section's staff are not clearly defined, the Section's organizational structure does not promote efficient functioning. Also, certain support positions under the Section Chief remain unfilled, and others are not clearly defined.

**Recommendation: ODJFS management should reorganize the Child Care Services Section to establish appropriate role boundaries; it should also dedicate clerical staff to the three individual units within the Section.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$64,000 to hire two additional word processor specialists.**

*Department Action: As of December 2000, the Bureau of Child Care Services has*

*established a working organizational chart that addresses the appropriate role boundaries for sections, based on Position Descriptions.*

2. Since 1991, the responsibilities for the Child Care Services Section's Information and Analysis unit have increased, yet its staffing level has decreased from six to two staff.  
**Recommendation: The Child Care Services Section should hire three Social Science Research Analysts and one Social Science Research Specialist to address current and future needs of the unit and the Section.**  
**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$190,000 to hire three social science research analysts and one social science research specialist.**  
*Department Action: The Bureau of Child Care Services hired a Word Processor Specialist 2 in November 2000 to assist in the creation of databases and has hired an additional FTE for planning and quality initiatives.*
3. The Section documents very few of its normal operating procedures and processes. In times of high employee turnover, this lack of documentation could impair the Section's functioning due to a loss of organizational knowledge.  
**Recommendation: The Child Care Services section should document its processes and procedures to help maintain consistent practices and acclimate new employees to their duties and functions.**  
*Department Action: As of Spring 2000, the Bureau of Child Care Services has established procedures and provided them to staff. A bureau handbook has been created and is currently distributed to new employees upon hire.*
4. The Information and Analysis unit provides technical assistance to the County Departments of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) for the Child Care 3299 automated system inquiries on an as-needed basis. However, the Section's Technical Assistance unit has an ongoing historical relationship with the CDJFSs and may be able to more effectively perform this function.  
**Recommendation: Technical assistance duties arising from the Child Care 3299 System that are currently performed by the Information and Analysis unit should be transferred to the Technical Assistance unit to utilize established relationships between the technical assistants and the CDJFSs to more efficiently and effectively support the CDJFSs. Additionally, the Technical Assistance unit should document and track CDJFS technical inquiries to monitor and address common problematic issues.**  
*Department Action: The county technical support unit staff will be trained on the 3299 system in Spring 2001 enabling them to provide technical assistance to county staff.*
5. The Technical Assistance unit does not currently require that its technical assistants use a standard curriculum to address CDJFS training needs. Additionally, the Section has no documented policies regarding training the CDJFSs.

**Recommendation: The Technical Assistance unit should develop and implement a performance-based training program for CDJFSs that includes clearly stated objectives and measurable performance standards to ensure a consistently high level of quality for services the CDJFSs provide. In addition, the Child Care Services Section should continue to survey the CDJFSs on the training they receive.**

*Department Action: Beginning in October 2000, the county technical support section implemented quarterly training forums for CDJFS staff. The trainings are structured and scheduled for the entire upcoming year. Each training will ensure that counties have the necessary information and knowledge to consistently provide a high level of quality services to their clients.*

6. The Child Care Section has yet to establish a Section-wide training program that addresses all aspects of the child care services rendered by their employees. Additionally, the Child Care Services does not have any formalized training curriculum or policy for its employees. **Recommendation: The Child Care Section should establish a professional development training program for all Section personnel. Such a program could ensure that Section employees can meet the demands of their duties and have appropriate opportunities for further growth and development.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$30,000 to provide training to child care services personnel.**

*Department Action: By July 7, 2001, the Bureau of Child Care Services will establish a professional development training program for all bureau personnel.*

7. The Section currently has no way of allowing key personnel to access monitoring data in a timely fashion. Moreover, its report distribution by way of interoffice mail slows the dissemination of monitoring data and information.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should consider implementing an application to allow users responsible for oversight to access timely monitoring data. The Department should also consider remitting electronic reports to reduce printing costs and delivery delays associated with mailing.**

**Financial Implication: One-time cost of \$20,000 to implement electronic distribution of reports and train key personnel on Crystal Reports. Also, an annual cost savings of \$21,000 may result from savings associated with printing and mailing through the electronic distribution of reports.**

*Department Action: In November 2000, the Bureau of Child Care Services requested that all monthly reports be made available in electronic format.*

## Child Care Licensing

1. The current level of day care licensing specialists appears inadequate based on preferred and maximum caseload levels recommended by the National Association for the Education of

Young Children, the nation's largest organization of early-childhood care professionals.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that ODJFS maintain caseload levels at approximately 60 cases per specialist, which appears to be reasonable if ODJFS combines this limitation with a proactive program of provider child care education and training. In order to bring the level to 60, however, ODJFS needs to add 13 licensing specialists to its staff.

**Financial Implication:** Annual cost of \$625,000 to hire an additional 13 licensing specialists.

*Department Action:* Current caseloads have been reduced to 75. The Bureau of Child Care Services fills all vacant Licensing Specialist positions in a timely fashion. The automated licensing system has the potential for offsetting a proportion of additional staff needed to meet mandated inspection requirements.

2. Currently, Child Care Licensing staff do not have the time to promote education and training of licensing laws and regulations proactively, which could lessen the caseload of all licensing specialists by reducing noncompliance and subsequent follow-up inspections.

**Recommendation:** ODJFS should hire and distribute an additional 5 technical assistant licensing specialists among the districts based on individualized caseloads.

**Financial Implication:** Annual cost of \$240,000 to hire an additional five technical assistants in the district offices.

*Department Action:* In June 2000, a pilot project was initiated in the Columbus District Office with one FTE functioning as a training and technical assistance specialist.

3. The number of enforcement cases among the five district offices varies widely. The Canton and Cleveland district offices have not had an enforcement case in the past three years, and the Cincinnati district office has had only one. There is no clear reason why provider noncompliance should be different in those districts as it is in the Columbus district office. Inconsistent enforcement of child care rules and regulations among the five districts may indicate the safety of children in child care settings is not adequately ensured.

**Recommendation:** ODJFS should develop a policy on the initiation and use of child care licensing enforcement, including clear guidelines on which licensing personnel can exercise sound judgement, that will be consistently applied throughout the district offices.

*Department Action:* Beginning in January 2001, the Bureau will conduct an internal review of current policy and procedures related to enforcement activities.

4. Licensing staff inspect licensed providers in enforcement proceedings less frequently than providers not in enforcement proceedings, which results in a lack of ongoing oversight for the activities of these at-risk providers. This concern is compounded by the enforcement process' excessive length of time.

**Recommendation:** During the enforcement process, ODJFS should increase its

**monitoring procedures to ensure that a safe environment continues to exist for children at possible risk during Chapter 119, Revised Code revocation proceedings.**

*Department Action: Currently, at a minimum, all child care centers receive two visits a year (one scheduled and one unscheduled). Additional oversight of those in revocation will be reviewed.*

5. The timeliness of the enforcement process appears to have declined over the past decade. Compared to the first half of the 1990's, the enforcement process currently takes an average of 40 days longer to complete both periods 2 and 3. This delay appears to be due to a reduction in central office staffing—in particular, the enforcement coordinator.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should place priority on filling the vacant Enforcement Coordinator position. Once done, ODJFS should assign responsibility for the monitoring of enforcement adjudication timeliness to the Enforcement Coordinator. Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$54,000 to fill the vacant enforcement coordinator position.**

*Department Action: The position of the Enforcement Coordinator has been filled since July 2000 and the duties of review of enforcement recommendations and drafting of the 119 Notice have been assumed.*

6. The Child Care Licensing section does not have an established section-wide training program that addresses the section's functions. ODJFS contracts with the Institute for Human Services to provide training regionally. A review of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program's most recent training curriculum revealed no courses which address issues related to child care licensing.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop an ongoing training program for day care licensing specialists and their supervisors, which is based on input gathered from the section's identified stakeholders, including day care licensing staff.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$28,000 to develop and deliver the training curriculum.**

*Department Action: The Bureau of Child Care Services has developed action steps to improve consistency, skill level and knowledge. By June 2001, a streamlined orientation curriculum program will be developed.*

7. The Ohio Administrative Code Chapters 5101:2-12 and 5101:2-13 were implemented in September, 1986; as minimum standards that govern child care centers and homes, these rules and regulations could be outdated. In March 1997, Ohio Revised Code Section 119.032 was implemented requiring all state agencies to perform a comprehensive review of their rules and regulations every five years.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the rules and regulations governing child care licensing, as required by Revised Code Section 119.032, which requires ODJFS to review the current rules and regulations by March**



**2002. Additionally, an ongoing process should be put in place to periodically update rules and regulations more timely.**

*Department Action: As of January 2001, the Child Care Licensing regulations for Child Care Centers and School-age programs have undergone an extensive review and rewrite process. The draft rules are being prepared to start clearance and the public hearing process in February 2001.*

8. While ODJFS maintains many types of child care licensing information in its computer databases and produces many useful reports, its system does not enable its users responsible for oversight to create specialized reports. Without this ability, users are obliged to manually prepare data or initiate a lengthy information request process if they wish to customize the data for their particular needs. Additionally, the method of hard copy report distribution to the Central and District Offices is not time or cost efficient.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should consider implementing an application to allow users responsible for oversight to access data for timely monitoring of child care information. Additionally, the Department should consider remitting reports in an electronic format to reduce printing costs and time delays associated with mailing.**

**Financial Implication: One-time cost of \$22,500 to implement electronic distribution of reports and train key personnel on Crystal Reports. Also, an annual cost savings of \$10,500 may result from savings associated with printing and mailing via electronic distribution of reports.**

*Department Action: Regular weekly meetings between the Bureau of Child Care and MIS are being held for the purpose of prioritizing data system needs of Child Care Licensing. MIS is currently working to automate and standardize the periodic reports.*

### Family Violence Prevention (FVP)

1. Even though ODJFS recently moved the Family Violence Prevention program to the department's Bureau of Prevention, the future of the program within ODJFS is uncertain.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should determine if it wants to keep the Family Violence Prevention program within the department or consult with the Governor's Office to move it to another state agency.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost savings of \$147,000 if the program is moved to another state agency.**

*Department Action: The Department has proposed and begun the process to transfer the program to the Office of Criminal Justice Services, to be effective July 1, 2001.*

2. Family Violence Prevention staff currently number two, which seems substantially understaffed given the ratio of grantees to program staff at Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) and the Attorney General's Office. The lack of sufficient staff has hindered ODJFS' ability to perform monitoring as well as efficiently distribute funding to their

grantees.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should consider increasing its Family Violence Prevention staff by two full-time employees, which would reduce the ratio of grantees to program staff to approximately 27:1—more in line with the ratios at OCJS.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$107,000 to hire two program developers.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*

3. When a grant period start date is delayed, ODJFS does not offer retroactive reimbursements to its grantees. As a result, the delays negatively impact the grantees' ability to provide family violence prevention services and programs.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should continue to take steps to ensure RFPs are released in a timely manner to avoid shortened grant periods.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*

4. The state FY 2000 RFP does not require applicants to set forth goals, objectives and program outcomes, but instead requires excessive documentation, such as copies of administrative policies and procedures, that do not directly communicate the grantee's goals and objectives for the program.

**Recommendation: The Family Violence Prevention RFP should place increased emphasis on program outcomes and goals. Rather than including proposal format guidelines in the RFP, ODJFS should consider providing the applicants with a standardized application which would promote format consistency and increase proposal review efficiency.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*

5. The Family Violence Prevention RFPs are reviewed by personnel outside the section, which promotes a lack of consistency in reviewing the RFPs. This also prevents the knowledgeable personnel from adding value to the process by assessing prior grantee performance in awarding future funding.

**Recommendation: The Family Violence Prevention staff should review and evaluate the proposals to determine which deliverables ODJFS should fund.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*

6. After the grant awards are distributed, ODJFS does not offer grantees any post-award orientation to explain and discuss what is expected of them, how to complete invoices for reimbursement, or how to report on performance.

**Recommendation: At the beginning of the grant period, ODJFS should hold a mandatory post-award orientation session with all the grantees to answer any questions and to explain expectations and compliance requirements.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*

7. When ODJFS recognized that vendors had problems preparing invoices correctly, it changed to a standard invoicing form. Even though this standardized form has helped ODJFS process invoices more efficiently, ODJFS no longer receives supporting documentation to substantiate the invoice.

**Recommendation: During the recommended site visits to grantees, ODJFS should review payroll records and documentation to verify the accuracy of invoices.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*
8. Family Violence Prevention personnel have estimated that an invoice will take five to eight weeks after it has been received by ODJFS to be processed with a warrant issued to the grantee. When payments are not made timely, the grantee cannot adequately provide domestic violence services to victims in their community.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should establish internal benchmarks and a self-monitoring procedure to improve the timeliness of the Family Violence Prevention grantee reimbursement process.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*
9. Due to an insufficient number of staff, ODJFS is not monitoring grantee activities and does not plan its monitoring activities or schedule site visits.

**Recommendation: At the beginning of the grant period, ODJFS should determine what types of monitoring will be done to ensure that grantees are properly administering their grant agreements and contracts.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*
10. Currently, ODJFS relies on desk reviews of documentation and on reports to monitor grantee activities and compliance. However, Family Violence Prevention staff are not currently completing these reviews due in part to a lack of staff and planning.

**Recommendation: Family Violence Prevention staff should review grantee performance reports to verify their accuracy and monitor grantee progress and program effectiveness.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*
11. As of March 2000, ODJFS had not conducted any site visits for state FY 2000 due to a lack of staff.

**Recommendation: Site visits should be conducted by ODJFS staff or an independent consultant specializing in grants administration.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*
12. After each site visit, the coalitions prepared a report documenting their observations. These reports did not contain any of the agency's weaknesses or recommendations for improvement. We question the objectivity of the reports due to the professional relationship

between the coalitions and the domestic shelters.

**Recommendation: Following the site visit, the ODJFS staff person or independent consultant conducting the review should prepare a written report containing their findings and recommendations.**

*Department Action: To be determined by CJS.*

### Children's Trust Fund (CTF)

1. The current Children's Trust Fund program suffers from a lack of leadership and direction from the state board and the Bureau of Prevention.

**Recommendation: The Children's Trust Fund staff and the state board should collaborate on the development of a formal long-term strategic plan to guide the operation and activities of the Children's Trust Fund.**

2. A majority of the state board's 13 members must currently approve the Children's Trust Fund state plan. Once the requirements for H.B. 283 come into effect, however, only 5 members—only one-third of the new 15 member board—will be required to approve the plan.

**Recommendation: It should be required that the state plan be approved by a majority of Children's Trust Fund state board members.**

3. The draft biennial state plan for state FYs 2002 to 2003 still indicates that the Children's Trust Fund will establish the criteria to be used in selecting grant recipients through the state plan, even though H.B. 283 has changed that requirement.

**Recommendation: Children's Trust Fund staff should revise the state plan to reflect all revisions to Sections 3109.13 to 3109.18, Revised Code. The plan should also clearly distinguish the responsibilities of the Local Advisory Boards (LABs), the Children's Trust Fund board, and the Children's Trust Fund staff.**

*Department Action: In November 2000, the Bureau of Prevention drafted additions to the State Plan which reflect the changes and distinguishes responsibilities, for implementation in January 2001.*

4. Prior to the passage of H.B. 283, the Children's Trust Fund staff did not assess the LABs' ability to determine whether or not they had the resources and knowledge necessary to successfully administer and manage the Children's Trust Fund block grants.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should conduct a needs assessment for the LABs to identify technical assistance and training needs to prepare the counties for the transition to block granting.**

*Department Action: In the last quarter of CY 2000, the Bureau of Prevention distributed a training and technical assistance needs assessment to the Local Advisory Boards and the local Family and Children First Councils.*

5. There is no evidence that grantees met with their LABs for the purpose of monitoring grantee activities for the current state FY 2000-2001 biennial CTF period.  
**Recommendation: The CTF staff should be monitoring the LABs and grantees to ensure the CTF awards are being used for authorized purposes in compliance with the grant agreements.**
6. The Children's Trust Fund state board has not yet determined how it will monitor Children's Trust Fund expenditures or the programs it finances, or what role the LABs will play in future monitoring activities.  
**Recommendation: The CTF board should determine how it is going to monitor the children's trust fund expenditures and the programs financed by the fund.**  
*Department Action: ODJFS is recommending the consolidation of programs and funding under the OCTF Board to better assure program operation and oversight, to be effective July 1, 2001.*
7. CTF staff do not currently review the required annual reports they receive from grantees to identify successful programs and practices.  
**Recommendation: Children's Trust Fund staff should review the annual LAB reports and any grantee annual reports produced to identify effective programs and prevention practices as well as any areas of concern.**
8. Rather than requiring a report that includes information about performance and outcomes, the revised Section 3109.17(B)(10), Revised Code, requires that the board report only on expenditures.  
**Recommendation: In addition to preparing the required expenditure report each biennium, the CTF should complete and submit to ODJFS management an annual internal evaluation focusing on the functions, responsibilities, and performance of the board in relation to its state plan.**  
*Department Action: This recommendation will be submitted to the Ohio Children's Trust Fund Board at their February 2001 board meeting.*

### Wellness Block Grant

1. Since 1997, a consultant on loan from the Ohio Department of Education has been performing the program's essential administrative duties, such as coordinating the work of the county councils and reviewing program applications.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should consider paying for the services of the Wellness Block Grant Coordinator, currently on loan from the Department of Education, by hiring a permanent Coordinator to replace her.**  
**Financial Implication: Annual cost savings of \$82,000 to hire a full-time grant coordinator.**

*Department Action: In September 2000, the Wellness Block Grant coordinator returned to the Department of Education. Fiscal responsibilities have been transferred to the Prevention Bureau fiscal specialist. The Bureau Chief is providing program oversight.*

2. Under the block grant method of funding programs, ODJFS has determined that formalized monitoring of Wellness Block Grant recipients would be contrary to program vision. The department believes that the block grant approach to funding allows recipients to determine the best uses for program funds, with minimal interference coming from state regulatory agencies.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should establish formal monitoring procedures for grant funding, including site visits and reviews of program records by department personnel. The monitoring should include, at a minimum, reviews of supporting documentation for reports submitted and expenditures incurred. ODJFS monitoring results should be reported using a standardized review instrument.**

*Department Action: The Bureau of Prevention is reviewing and coordinating the monitoring process and developing standardized protocols with the Family and Children First Regional coordinators, to be completed by June 2001.*

3. ODJFS requires each county council to submit separate applications for each of the two indicators, even though questions for both are identical based on requirements established by the FCF Cabinet Council and the Children's Trust Fund Board.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should streamline its application process for the two indicators by requiring the use of one form with separate indicator response sections.**

*Department Action: The Bureau of Prevention is streamlining the application, to be completed by March 2001.*

4. Because current regulations effectively delegate daily program authority from the ODJFS to local agencies, these regulations must be updated frequently to ensure that state and local agencies fulfill the General Assembly's intent in creating the program.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should review OAC Section 5101-6-42 to determine whether all current provisions govern program administration as intended. If regulations are not up-to-date, ODJFS should add or delete provisions accordingly and recommend their adoption by the Legislative Service Commission. During this process, ODJFS should determine whether the provisions' designation as internal management rules is warranted, and ODJFS should work with the Legislative Service Commission to effect appropriate changes as necessary.**

*Department Action: ODJFS 2002-2003 biennial budget proposal clarifies program intent and outcome.*

5. Program regulations allow ODJFS to impose penalties or funding reductions on county councils when outcome indicators do not improve over a specified period of time and they

allow ODJFS to establish and reward incentives to county councils who achieve results beyond specified targets. However, ODJFS has not established parameters and criteria by which outstanding or deficient program performance may be measured.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should establish performance measures which county councils must achieve in order to maintain current funding levels. Where appropriate, ODJFS should modify OAC Section 5101-6-42 to include additional language relating to the suspension or reduction of funding if a council fails to significantly improve its outcome indicators or to provide incentives for county councils that achieve program success.**

*Department Action: The Bureau Chief of Prevention is meeting with the Family & Children 1st CORE team in late January 2001 to discuss this recommendation.*

### Children's Justice Act Grant (CJA)

1. ODJFS has not created a strategic plan for the Children's Justice Act program that would describe how, in collaboration with other state agencies and vendors, goals and objectives would be achieved.

**Recommendation: ODJFS, in collaboration with the Governor's Task Force, should develop a written strategic plan for the CJA program that includes objectives, definitions of desired outcomes, and realistic time lines for implementation.**

*Department Action: The most recent Task Force was appointed in September 2000, is involved in the early goal setting stages, and will consider the establishment of a written strategic plan.*

2. The current workload for administering and coordinating the Children's Justice Act program cannot be effectively managed by one part-time project coordinator.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should implement value-added procedures within its administrative role for the Children's Justice Act program. If ODJFS is unable to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the CJA program, it should consider transferring the program to another state or judicial agency.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost savings of \$53,000 if the program is moved to another state agency.**

*Department Action: ODJFS is considering the feasibility of transferring this program to the Judicial branch.*

3. The Children's Justice Act program has no formal procedures in place requiring staff to report periodically on the status and activity of the program, nor is there a procedure in place to require external parties involved in the program to report their status to ODJFS. This lack of reporting increases the likelihood that ODJFS could be unaware of the activities, status, and significant issues of the grant, hindering its ability to act on these issues.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should adopt a standard reporting process for the**

**Children's Justice Act program that involves current data from all components depicting the existing state of the project.**

4. Children's Justice Act funds are not always used in a timely manner. ODJFS has consistently filed extensions with the federal government because it cannot accomplish all it needs to do in a grant period of only two years. This increases the risk that federal funding could be forfeited without ODJFS having an opportunity to make use of these funds.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should establish a mechanism that monitors program activities and compares Children's Justice Act program plan expenditures with actual expenditures.**
5. There is no evidence that ODJFS has a performance measurement system in place for the Children's Justice Act program activities and expenditures. Moreover, ODJFS does not require external parties, such as project service providers, to report on the progress of their work. Currently, information on program status is shared only informally among the service providers, Project Coordinator, Task Force, and ODJFS management.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop performance measures for the Children's Justice Act program in order to establish a method for evaluating and improving its operations.**
6. The current workload for the Program Coordinator is too great for one employee. Based on our recommendations, the number of hours a Program Coordinator would have to devote to the program would increase to more than a full-time position.  
**Recommendation: To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the Children's Justice Act grant program, ODJFS should perform a critical work analysis and develop an updated staffing plan to determine whether additional staff might be necessary.**  
**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$28,000 to hire a part-time employee to provide administrative assistance to the Program Coordinator.**
7. Departmental management has not established its expectations for the CJA Project Coordinator position.  
**Recommendation: Management should establish and communicate formal written employee expectations for the Project Coordinator position, making sure they are linked to the Children's Justice Act grant program's strategic plan.**  
*Department Action: An updated position description is in progress and will be completed by March 1, 2001.*

**Adoption Services**

1. A number of positions within the Adoption Section have become vacant in the past two



years, and several have been outsourced. These staff vacancies, combined with an already-existing shortage, have significantly hindered the section's ability to perform its functions effectively.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should fill the vacancies for the eleven Human Services Developer positions and the two Unit Manager positions within the Adoption Section.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$583,000 to hire eleven human service developers.**

**Also, an annual cost of \$120,000 would result from the hiring of two unit managers.**

*Department Action: Two unit supervisor positions have been filled and eleven human services developer positions were filled between July 2000 and November 2000.*

2. ODJFS has not delivered efficient technical assistance services in relation to its adoption programs.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should streamline their technical assistance process to ensure that timely and effective technical guidance is provided to the public and private adoptive agencies.**

*Department Action: Bureau of Adoption and Kinship staff have had on-going meetings with the District Office managers to define the roles of the two offices.*

3. Training on new adoption laws, policies, and regulations for ODJFS and county employees who work with adoption has been developed and provided by self-taught ODJFS adoption section employees with no outside guidance or support.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should provide timely, consistent adoption training to ODJFS and county employees who work with adoption that includes specific job guidance, information on new federal and state regulations, and departmental policy updates.**

**Financial Implication: Annual costs of \$65,300 and one-time costs of \$101,800 would result from costs associated with training adoption personnel and county employees.**

*Department Action: Staff sponsored a mandatory AdoptOHIO meeting in September 2000, an Adoption and Foster Care Manager's meeting in October 2000, and a statewide Adoption and Foster Care conference in November 2000, in which training on rule changes was incorporated. Newly hired staff (see 9-1) are now able to provide ongoing job guidance to public agencies regarding PASSS and other subsidy programs.*

4. Spending for the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy program has exceeded budget, which has resulted in funding interruptions to counties and reduced services provided to special needs adopted children and their families.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should add a monitoring and tracking function to their current Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy program expenditures process.**

*Department Action: Effective July 2000, staff have been hired to monitor, track and analyze the PASSS program.*

### Child Protection Oversight Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CPOE)

1. The lack of consistent leadership and financial commitment are key factors which have inhibited CPOE from becoming an integral part of the child welfare system.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should take a leadership role in developing and implementing the CPOE process into all aspects of the child welfare system.**

*Department Action: OCF is planning a re-alignment of job functions to better utilize CPOE data to assure quality across child welfare services, to be effective February 2001.*

2. ODJFS has not employed a full-time CPOE Coordinator, and until recently, ODJFS had not taken the initiative to immediately replace the Coordinator position, which was vacant for six months.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should hire a full time CPOE Bureau Chief (a CPOE Coordinator) and a full time CPOE Assistant Coordinator to properly administer the CPOE process.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$91,000 to hire a Bureau Chief of CPOE (CPOE Coordinator). Also, an annual cost of \$85,000 would result from the hiring of a CPOE Assistant Coordinator.**

*Department Action: A CPOE Coordinator was hired on 7/00 and further staffing resources will be made available due to the planned job function re-alignment.*

3. There has been a steady decline in the staffing levels of child welfare system Technical Assistance Specialist (TAS) positions—those responsible for CPOE duties—without corresponding replacements.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should maintain adequate TAS staffing levels in order to complete county CPOE reviews within the required 18 month period of review. To accomplish this, ODJFS should hire an additional six child welfare TASs to improve the quality and timeliness of county CPOE reviews. ODJFS should also implement a process to analyze and monitor the timeliness of review procedures to improve the efficiency of county reviews.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$390,000 to hire an additional six technical assistance specialists.**

*Department Action: The above referenced re-alignment will take into account the roles of Central Office and District Office staff in augmenting the CPOE process.*

4. Many of the CPOE weaknesses reported by the Court-Appointed Expert Panel (Roe vs. Staples court decree) appear to result from issues which can be corrected with an effective training program and proper organizational structure.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should provide a professional development training program for personnel involved with the CPOE process to ensure that they meet the**

**demands of their job duties and have opportunities for further growth and development.**

**Financial Implication: \$20,000 annually to provide training for CPOE personnel.**

5. The counties want more involvement and control over CPOE-related data and reporting.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should provide the counties with read-only access rights to CPOE information. Also, ODJFS should increase the training provided to county personnel on the capabilities of the CPOE system to enable the counties to perform ongoing self-monitoring.**

*Department Action: The SACWIS project has provided the MicroFACSYS counties in March 2000 with a Relational Database Exchange application that permits the extraction of data from their local MicroFACSYS database for greater flexibility and manipulation with reporting and analysis. The enhanced version was released in September 2000.*

6. The Panel determined “ODJFS is out of compliance with respect to the needs assessment, specifically with respect to the requirement associated with identifying unmet need.”  
**Recommendation: ODJFS must develop a comprehensive permanent plan with measurable time frames and outcomes that incorporates the statewide needs assessment into the CPOE framework. Additionally, ODJFS should provide counties with increased technical assistance and review to empower counties to independently develop individual county needs assessment plans.**

*Department Action: CPOE Coordinator has developed a concept paper on how to conduct the needs assessment which was submitted to the Roe v. Staples Panel on 1/10/01.*

7. During the Panel’s review of several onsite county reports, the Panel concluded that serious problems existed with the validation of data in most jurisdictions. Additionally, the Host to Micro-FACSYS validation process was not considered viable.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS must take special action, giving high priority to addressing and correcting the current problem associated with data accuracy.**

*Department Action: Work began in March 2000 to match data between Host and MicroFACSYS back-ups located on the WAN. Over half of the Micros have been matched and work continues to match the remaining.*

8. The opinions expressed by the counties suggest a lack of reliance on CPOE as a monitoring tool and further indicate that CPOE is unlikely to be used by the counties to change practices or processes to improve outcomes for children and families.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should perform an extensive review of the current CPOE outcome indicators to assess whether the measures are meeting their intended purposes and the needs of the users.**

*Department Action: Staff are in the process of aligning indicators with DHHS recommended indicators.*

### Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry

1. The Central Registry currently suffers a shortage of staff needed to fulfill all required duties. This shortage has increased the risk that verification delays may occur, specifically in the processing of international adoptions through the U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should fill the vacant Human Services Specialist position so Central Registry verification requests and other assigned duties can be completed in an effective and timely manner. ODJFS should also fill the vacant Developer position to help reduce the backlog at that position and to allow the Section Chief, Program Administrator, and current Developer to focus on their own assigned duties.**

**Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$97,000 to hire one additional specialist and one additional developer.**

*Department Action: A Human Services Specialist position and the Human Services Developer were filled in August and September 2000.*

2. Ohio Revised Code Section 1347.08, which requires the release of Central Registry information in certain instances, is not consistent with the purpose and intent of the Central Registry as described in Revised Code Section 2151.421(H) and Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-20.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should review and determine the legislative intent regarding the establishment of the Central Registry and adopt policies and practices in accordance with that intent.**

*Department Action: Written procedures for processing of verification requests were developed in May 2000. The procedures outline how the verification requests are prioritized as well as the method for tracking the requests. Rules were revised to ensure compliance in September 2000.*

3. ODJFS is in the process of updating FACSIS and a SACWIS-equivalent system; however, no decision has been made with regard to the confidentiality of the statewide database.

**Recommendation: When designing FACSIS 4.0 and SACWIS, ODJFS should create the necessary access controls to ensure that confidential Central Registry information is only accessible to authorized users.**

*Department Action: Confidentiality and access to data by only authorized personnel is being discussed in the Business Partners Committee of the SACWIS Executive Leadership Committee.*

4. ODJFS currently has no centralized formal grievance policy for appeals at the local or state level. Moreover, PCSA policies are not consistent regarding the investigation or assessment process.

**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop a centralized grievance policy that outlines**

**the basic procedures for appeals at both the local and state levels. In addition, ODJFS should ensure the PCSAs develop and implement formal written grievance procedures. Financial Implication: Annual cost of \$48,000 to hire an additional hearing officer.**

5. Not all alleged perpetrators involved in incidents of child abuse or neglect consistently receive notification about the resolution or disposition of an investigation or assessment.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should require the PCSAs to document the notification to the alleged perpetrators of the case resolution or disposition within the county mainframe using the “218 event,” as stipulated in the ODJFS FACSIS Manual.**  
*Department Action: OAC 5101:2-33-05 requires the data entry and transmission of information into FACSIS. Upgrades will be made in March 2001 to Host FACSIS and transmission program to include “event 218”.*
6. Caseworkers do not always realize the importance of properly documenting information within case files and the Central Registry. When the ODJFS Program Developer must investigate and inquire about a large number of individuals because information is missing, the backlog in processing verification requests increases.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop centralized policies on documenting and entering Central Registry information needed to effectively and efficiently track alleged child victims and perpetrators. ODJFS should incorporate the necessary information into available fields within FACSIS.**
7. Some Central Registry information obtained at the county level is incomplete or inaccurate.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should require and provide advanced levels of training to caseworkers regarding interviewing principals and entering sufficient information into FACSIS.**  
**Financial Implication: \$292,000 annually to provide advanced interviewing training.**  
*Department Action: ODJFS discussed this recommendation in January 2001 with PCSAO to see if this is actually a training need.*
8. ODJFS has not developed specific criteria to address the expunction of information on individuals from the Central Registry per case resolution. FACSIS is currently programmed only to expunge individuals based on the unsubstantiated, indicated, or substantiated report disposition designations and time frames required by OAC 5101:2-35-19. As a result, those individuals who continue to be involved with familial or in-home cases will not be expunged from the Central Registry.  
**Recommendation: ODJFS should develop criteria to ensure timely expunction of all individuals according to the Ohio Administrative Code Section.**  
*Department Action: Rules requiring counties to include a disposition on both in-home/familial cases and out-of-home cases have been drafted which address this issue slated to take effect March 2001.*

## OVERALL FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Below are the overall financial implications which are presented in sequential order from each of the segments we reviewed:

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Implementation Costs</b>	<b>One Time Implementation Costs</b>	<b>Annual Cost Savings</b>
<b>Foster Care Licensing</b>			
1-1: Foster Care Licensing Staffing Increases	\$584,000		
1-3: Purchase WebCheck technology		\$707,500	
1-4: Staffing to review public agency records and licensing	48,000		
1-5: Staffing for ODJFS reviewing licensing packet	48,000		
1-6: Foster Care Home Inspection Staffing	240,000		
1-7: Increase Foster Care Training	1,900,000		
1-8: Establish Collaborative Partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education	576,000		
<b>Independent Living</b>			
2-1: Hiring an IL Administrator	49,000		
2-1: Hiring an IL Developer	44,000		
2-1: Hiring an IL Specialist	40,000		
2-3: Provide IL training courses	800,000		
2-8: Provide Medicaid funding to IL youth	4,443,000		
<b>Child Care Services</b>			
3-1: Hiring two additional Word Processor Specialists	64,000		
3-2: Hiring three Social Science Research Analysts and one Social Science Research Specialist	190,000		
3-6: Providing Training to Child Care Services Personnel	30,000		
3-7: Implement electronic distribution of reports and train key personnel on Crystal Reports		20,000	

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Implementation Costs</b>	<b>One Time Implementation Costs</b>	<b>Annual Cost Savings</b>
<b>Child Care Services (continued)</b>			
3-7: Savings associated with printing and mailing via electronic distribution of reports			\$21,000
<b>Child Care Licensing</b>			
4-1: Hiring an additional 13 licensing specialists	\$625,000		
4-2: Hiring an additional employee to provide technical assistance per district office	240,000		
4-4: Fill the vacant enforcement coordinator position	54,000		
4-6: Develop and deliver training curriculum	28,000		
4-8: Implement electronic distribution of reports and train key personnel on Crystal Reports.		\$22,500	
4-8: Savings associated with printing and mailing via electronic distribution of reports			10,500
<b>Family Violence Prevention</b>			
5-1: Move the FVP Program to another state agency			147,000
5-2: Increase FVP staff by two program developers	107,000		
<b>Children's Trust Fund - No financial implications noted</b>			
<b>Wellness Block Grant</b>			
7-1: Hiring a Full-Time Grant Coordinator	82,000		
<b>Children's Justice Act Grant</b>			
8-2: Annual savings if ODJFS transfers program to another agency			53,000
8-6: Hire a part-time employee to provide administrative assistance to the Program Coordinator	28,000		
<b>Adoption Services</b>			
9-1: Estimated staffing increases to hire eleven human services developers	583,000		
9-1: Estimated staffing increases to hire two unit managers	120,000		

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Implementation Costs</b>	<b>One Time Implementation Costs</b>	<b>Annual Cost Savings</b>
<b>Adoption Services (continued)</b>			
9-3: Annual training costs associated with adoption personnel and county employees	\$65,300		
9-3: One-time training costs associated with adoption personnel and county employees		\$101,800	
<b>Child Protection Oversight Evaluation</b>			
10-2: Hiring a Bureau Chief of CPOE (CPOE Coordinator)	91,000		
10-2: Hiring a CPOE Assistant Coordinator	85,000		
10-3: Hiring an additional six technical assistance specialists	390,000		
10-4: Annual training for CPOE personnel	20,000		
<b>Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry</b>			
11-1: Increase CPS staff by one specialist and one developer	\$97,000		
11-4: Additional Hearing Officer	\$48,000		
11-7: Advanced Interviewing Training	\$292,000		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$12,011,300</b>	<b>\$851,800</b>	<b>\$231,500</b>



## GENERAL ISSUES AND TRENDS

While performing our audit of eleven programs contained within the Office for Children and Families (OCF), we noted seven issues that were not limited to a particular program. As such, these concerns are more pervasive in nature and should be addressed by both OCF and ODJFS leadership. This section, entitled “General Issues and Trends”, will discuss those issues and our recommendations for improvement for the following

- Leadership and Strategic Planning
- Information for Analysis and Decision Making
- Availability of Written Policies and Procedures
- Tools for Management, including
  - Outcome Indicators
  - Monitoring and Grants Management
- Lack of Comprehensive Utilization of State Quality Program
- Staffing

### *Leadership and Strategic Planning*

***Finding 1: ODJFS’ Office for Children and Families has not developed or implemented a strategic plan that aligns the strategic objectives of the child welfare system with its work systems, action plans, and human resources management.***

During the early stages of the transition from the prior administration, OCF was challenged to respond to the perception of certain legislators and the public at large that the child welfare system was “broken”, as well as to Auditor of State audits that identified significant gaps in monitoring and oversight of the foster care program. These challenges placed OCF in a crisis management mode. It does not appear that OCF had the capacity to address these issues and develop and implement a strategic plan concurrently. As a result, a critical need for a strategic plan still exists.

***Recommendation 1: The Office for Children and Families should gather the relevant customer and stakeholder information necessary to develop and implement a strategic plan for Ohio’s child welfare system.***

*The strategic plan for the child welfare system must be aligned with the overall strategic plan for ODJFS and should be communicated throughout OCF as well as to their customers and stakeholders. In addition, OCF's strategic plan, as well as its affiliated objectives, work systems, action plans, and human resources management, should be created in a manner that maximizes the value OCF provides its customers and stakeholders.*

### ***Information for Analysis and Decision Making***

***Finding 2: The Office for Children and Families does not have access to readily available information to measure fiscal and operational performance and facilitate analysis and decision making. Historical fiscal and operational data could not be efficiently compiled for evaluation and inclusion in this report.***

The Office for Children and Families is dependent on various resources such as the Office of Fiscal Services and Office of Management Information Systems (MIS) for financial information. Prior to July 1999, the Office organization included the Bureau of Resource Management, which would provide and explain fiscal information to Office leadership. After the reorganization, this bureau was dissolved and one employee, the financial analyst with several other duties, was relied upon to provide fiscal information when requested. The financial analyst is now dividing his time between OCF and the Office of Medicaid.

During the course of our audit, we requested fiscal information in order to understand the OCF programs as well as provide financial information in this report. We received a great deal of cooperation with our requests; however, due to the manner that financial information is maintained, our requests often took several weeks to secure.

Operating a governmental division with no direct knowledge of specific programmatic receipts and expenditures increases the risk of overspending or not providing available funding to needy children and families. Relying on one employee to provide any needed financial information could cause valuable knowledge and information to be lost if the employee were to leave the Office.

***Recommendation 2: The Office for Children and Families should collaborate with the Office of Fiscal and the Office of Management Information Systems to develop a mechanism to directly access pertinent program financial data.***

*OCF should form a committee of OCF management and staff personnel to determine what specific data would assist OCF staff with their job duties. OCF should then meet with Fiscal and MIS to determine how OCF personnel can obtain this program data effectively and efficiently, primarily using OCF personnel's desk computers. This data could be used to assess performance and to develop specific program outcome indicators. Finally, fiscal knowledge and duties utilized by the current financial analyst should be clearly documented so that fiscal procedures could be followed in the event of resignation or reassignment.*

### ***Availability of Written Policies and Procedures***

***Finding 3: The Office for Children and Families does not maintain or distribute the Child Welfare Manual in its entirety to their own Office personnel or to the public children services agencies.***

Prior to OCF's reorganization in July 1999, the Office contained a work section under one assistant deputy director entitled "Program Initiatives". This section was responsible for policy coordination and training with a staff of six people. Based on ODJFS' desire to centralize their training function, the majority of these staff were moved to the county training section of the Office of Professional Development and Quality Services. However, the function of policy coordination was no longer specifically retained within OCF.

We were unable to observe a comprehensive copy of the Child Welfare Manual when performing the audit. Key OCF personnel were uncertain as to whether a comprehensive manual was still maintained. Concerns were brought to us that such a document contained many memorandums revising policy, with no comprehensive changes being integrated throughout the manual; as such, the burden to maintain a complete manual was on the individual employee, not OCF or ODJFS as a whole. There were also concerns regarding the ability to render correct and current technical assistance according to the policy when such a manual was not specifically provided.

***Recommendation 3: ODJFS should establish a committee consisting of personnel from the Office for Children and Families and the Offices of Legal Services, Legislation, Fiscal Services, Professional Development and Quality Services, and Communications to revise the current Child Welfare Manual. The committee should also recommend how the manual should be disseminated throughout the department and to the public children services agencies, how it will be maintained and how often it will be revised.***

*The committee should also determine who is responsible for maintaining and revising the child welfare manual and who should drive the process so that the manual is thoroughly revised and distributed on a regular, such as annual, basis. The committee should also consider putting the manual on the department's InnerWeb or Internet pages so that the manual can be updated and distributed efficiently.*

## ***Tools for Management***

### *Outcome Indicators*

***Finding 4: Outcome indicators for the child welfare system at the Office for Children and Families have been limited to those created for the purpose of satisfying the Roe vs. Staples court decree.***

The development of appropriate and valuable outcome indicators for child welfare systems has been increasing in importance in the past decade. State and local governments have realized their responsibility for assessing and improving the services provided to the children and families who receive child welfare services. Outcome indicators are also helpful for a state government to assess their performance in the oversight, planning, budgeting, training, and reporting of the programs for which it is responsible.

As a result of a court decree for Roe vs. Staples (see section 10 on the Child Protection Oversight Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CPOE)), ODJFS was required to develop outcome indicators for certain aspects of child welfare. These outcome indicators, however, are limited to six core and ten secondary indicators for child protective services, foster care and adoption. ODJFS has not developed outcome indicators for their prevention programs, child care programs, licensing functions, Children's Justice Act grant or Independent Living program. It is also possible that the current outcome indicators may not be sufficient or agreed upon by those who provide the services.

***Recommendation 4: The Office for Children and Families, in collaboration with the public children services agencies and private agencies that provide child welfare services, should identify and develop comprehensive and measurable outcome indicators for all programs and services for which it is responsible.***

*Before outcome indicators can be developed, the Office for Children and Families and ODJFS have to lead the effort to finalize the strategic plan, goals, and objectives for the child welfare system. Outcome indicators should be linked with those goals and objectives, as well as targeted to the needs of the communities served. Collaboration with county and private agencies, as well as the communities themselves, will be a vital part of the development process.*

*Even though each state and local child welfare agency should develop their own unique set of outcome indicators, OCF should consider observing outcome indicators developed at other states such as Minnesota, California, and Colorado when deciding upon outcome indicators for Ohio's child welfare system.*

*Once the outcome indicators are identified and agreed upon, OCF and ODJFS should determine how the data for the indicators will be captured, calculated and reported. This should be performed concurrently with the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) upgrade. The outcome indicators calculated from SACWIS may be integrated in the CPOE review process. Other OCF programs, such as prevention and child care, may not be able to be captured on SACWIS.*

*Whichever outcome indicators are decided upon, it is important that they are clear and understandable, meaningful to Ohio's child welfare shareholders, accurate, and timely.*

#### *Monitoring and Grants Management*

***Finding 5: Within the Office for Children and Families, ODJFS has not properly designed a system which monitors program funding and grantee performance in a timely and effective manner.***

ODJFS is responsible for administering many grants and programs within the Office for Children and Families. A crucial component in administering grants is the development of an effective system

of monitoring to ensure programs are providing effective outcomes, monies are spent in accordance with grant provisions, and program expenditures are properly supported and reported.

Within this report, nearly all of the sections we reviewed contained comments involving the OCF's inadequate or nonexistent system for monitoring programs or grants. This pervasive lack of monitoring suggests the need for OCF to overhaul its current monitoring system with a redesigned process which can be utilized throughout all areas of child welfare.

***Recommendation 5: ODJFS' Office for Children and Families should develop and implement a structured process for monitoring all grants and programs.***

*A centralized system should be in place which allows OCF personnel to monitor financial activity and performance results for all programs and grants (see further discussion in the Information and Analysis for Decision Making comment). Within this system, ODJFS may also be able to determine and share best practices among their grantees.*

*When developing its monitoring process, OCF should have a structure that includes a monitoring cycle and a timetable to track its monitoring activities. OCF should also provide a template to its grantees for them to report pertinent data to OCF on a regular basis. Based on the program to be monitored, OCF may utilize additional monitoring methods, such as desk reviews and site visits, when assuring that program funds are used resourcefully and according to the grant agreement. The monitoring system should be designed to allow for flexibility when determining which method of monitoring is most appropriate in the individual circumstances.*

*ODJFS should consider implementing a risk-based approach with its grantees, based on criteria OCF determines to be pertinent, such as monies allocated, number of children served, grantee's past performance in complying with monitoring requirements, and automated data results.*

### ***Lack of Comprehensive Utilization of State Quality Program***

***Finding 6: ODJFS' Office for Children and Families has not adequately utilized Ohio's quality program to address work process inefficiencies and customer service issues.***

The State of Ohio has had a quality program entitled “Quality Services Through Partnership” (QStP) available for state agencies to utilize since 1994. Even though ODJFS and OCF leadership have sent employees to quality training and encouraged employees to get involved in quality teams, there was no significant action at OCF in regards to the quality teams during the period of our audit fieldwork.

Having employees participate in problem solving to help make job tasks more efficient and improve customer service is practicing sound business judgement. A win-win situation is thus created when employees can solve the problem or issue, increase the satisfaction of personnel at other agencies or the general public who are affected by the process, positively contribute to the quality of their own job lives, and save taxpayer dollars. This also takes the burden off of leadership to solve all the issues that arise with the child welfare system.

***Recommendation 6: Leadership at ODJFS and the Office for Children and Families should initiate and sponsor quality teams when recognizing child welfare concerns that can be resolved through the quality improvement process.***

*When addressing child welfare issues in their weekly meetings, OCF leadership needs to commit to the quality process by suggesting an issue be resolved through QStP. ODJFS leadership can also be a role model by suggesting QStP as a method of problem solving and increasing customer service at the department level.*

*In returning to the QStP program for problem solving, OCF should start by setting up one or two quality teams as pilots for smaller, less urgent issues or processes. Once the results of these teams are measured, OCF can determine how many other quality teams to sponsor.*

*If they have not already done so, ODJFS and OCF leadership, such as the director, assistant directors, deputy directors, assistant deputy directors and bureau chiefs should attend or attend again the three-day basic quality training. This training is free of charge and can do much to aid in understanding of the benefits of utilizing the quality framework.*

### **Staffing**

***Finding 7: Staffing within most divisions of ODJFS’ Office for Children and Families appears to be inadequate to effectively carry out its administrative, monitoring, technical assistance, and training responsibilities.***

It is essential that the Office for Children and Families maintain adequate staffing levels in order to achieve desired program results. In 10 of 11 OCF sections reviewed, we identified weaknesses related to the adequacy and appropriateness of staffing levels. Also, during the course of our audit we identified several critical positions within OCF which were either vacated without being replaced or not replaced in a timely manner.

While the requirements and responsibilities have increased within most divisions of OCF, staffing levels have decreased as opposed to increasing proportionately. As a result, many functions within the Office for Children and Families are only being marginally performed, if at all, which increases the risk that customer satisfaction, service, and employee morale may deteriorate.

***Recommendation 7: ODJFS should develop and implement an ongoing process to continuously monitor the staffing levels for adequacy, specifically for the Office for Children and Families. Also, ODJFS should strive to replace employee vacancies in an expedient manner to avoid critical program functions from being suspended.***

*Currently, no uniform structure exists that provides ODJFS and OCF with the ability to evaluate the job responsibilities and the amount of time required to perform particular job tasks. The enhanced process should include a mechanism to track employee time on job tasks so that OCF leadership is aware of what duties are being performed and how long it takes to perform those duties. Employee time and progress reports prepared on a bi-weekly basis can assist with this effort to monitor the process. Knowledge of time required for employee tasks can also assist with prioritizing duties when other pressing matters or unexpected employee absences occur.*

*ODJFS should also consider updating the employee position description forms since these were often found to be outdated and not properly aligned with the employees' actual job duties.*

*Additional staffing alone cannot resolve all of the issues identified within ODJFS' Office for Children and Families. As mentioned earlier, visionary leadership and a detailed strategic plan must be implemented first to enable resources to be appropriated tailored to OCF's most critical needs.*



## **OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Objective**

The purpose of the project was to identify the issues in the child welfare system that are preventing effective and efficient delivery of high quality services to children and families, and recommend methods of improving the Department's processes, in collaboration with the Department and related stakeholders. This report will provide the following:

- Our assessment and analysis of each process studied;
- Improvement recommendations for each process analyzed; and
- Financial implications.

In addition to the recommendations for improvement, we will help the Department develop methods for monitoring future performance for the processes analyzed.

### **Scope**

The scope of our performance audit was limited to the Child Welfare System functions at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and the segments we reviewed were denoted within our letter of arrangement. We focused our review on issues within ODJFS's direct oversight and control in contrast to other Auditor of State engagements which have been concentrated on Child Welfare System issues at the county and provider levels.

After selecting the primary areas to be reviewed, we identified the significant issues within each segment. The identification of these key issues resulted from our involvement and interaction with shareholder groups, ODJFS management and staff, public forums, and discussions with other individuals impacted by the Child Welfare System. We combined the information gathered from these sources with the results of our research data to evaluate the key issues.

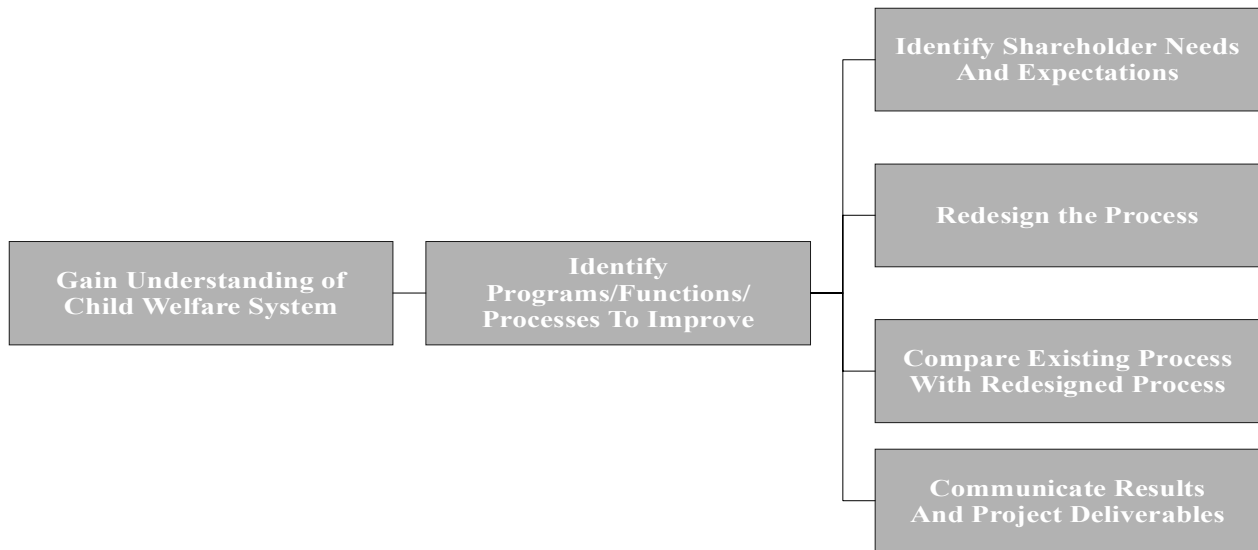
### **Audit Methodology**

Before any detailed analysis began, we researched the overall Child Welfare System, gained ODJFS agreement on our CWS representation, and prioritized the functions/programs for our review.

Each of the CWS functions selected were analyzed utilizing the following four objectives:

1. Determine the expectations and needs of those individuals affiliated with or affected by the program, process, or function being analyzed (shareholders).
2. Determine how selected program, process or function should be operating, and redesign the process.
3. Compare the current CWS process with the redesigned process; identify the gaps that exist, as well as the causes of those gaps.
4. Develop and communicate possible solutions and recommendations to close the gaps between the current process and redesigned process.

The performance audit methodology used to address each area can be summarized in the chart below.



## **Structure of the Report**

For each area reviewed, the report is organized into the following components.

- **Background** is an introduction explaining the purpose of the area being reviewed including information such as: overview/history of the program; organizational chart; organizational function; governing rules and regulations; staffing; and additional sections such as financial data and relevant definitions/terminology.
- **Processes and Recommendations** include key issues identified during our review which are discussed in detail and all of the related variables and subsequent recommendations are included. The recommendations will also include supporting details as well as any financial implications.
- **Financial Implications Summary** will provide a tabular format which compiles all of the financial implications from the various recommendations within the segment being reviewed.
- **Conclusion** section provides an overall perspective on the area being reviewed.

Recommendations are generated when the condition identified does not meet the criteria which is often supported by best practice or other benchmark data. Our recommendations are designed to change the condition so that it meets the criteria. Additionally, we have included steps taken towards improvement by ODJFS, when appropriate.



## **FOSTER CARE LICENSING**



# Foster Care Licensing

---

## Background

### *Overview*

The federal government ultimately holds the states, not counties, responsible and accountable for compliance and for the provision of foster care services designed to achieve the shared goal of providing for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. This state responsibility is seen in the following HHS policy interpretation regarding federal reimbursement to states for foster care-related functions:

Under Title IV-E, to be eligible for Federal Financial Participation (FFP), section 472 (a) (2) of the Act requires that the responsibility for placement and care of the child is with the state agency administering the plan approved under 471, or any other public agency with whom the state agency administering or supervising the administration of the state plan approved under section 471 has made an agreement which is in effect.

In addition, recent HHS interpretations regarding the new foster care state plan requirements set forth in 45 CFR Part 1355, further reinforce Ohio’s responsibilities as specified in the following excerpt:

States, not counties, are ultimately responsible and held accountable for compliance with state plan requirements. The statewide assessment is designed to be completed by the state, not individual counties, and responses should reflect official state policies and most typical state practice, while noting where outstanding exceptions exist.

The regulatory function of foster care licensing in Ohio is dictated by Section 5103.03, Revised Code (ORC) which states, “No person shall receive children or receive or solicit money on behalf of such an institution or association not so certified or whose certificate has been revoked.” Governing roles and duties are further specified in the Chapter 5103, Chapter 5153 and Chapter 119 of the ORC, as well as more detailed governing provisions outlined in Chapter 5101 of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC).

Licensed functions are regulated and governed through the police power of a government body. In Ohio, Section 5103.03 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) delegates this regulatory function and related police power to ODJFS. *Black’s Law Dictionary’s* definition of the concept of “police power” reaffirms ODJFS’ necessary leadership role in this area as follows:

The power of the state to place restraints on the personal freedom and property rights of persons for the protection of the public safety, health, and morals or the promotion of the public convenience and general prosperity. The police power is subject to limitations of the federal and state constitutions, and especially to the requirement of due process. Police power is the exercise of the sovereign right of a government to promote order, safety, security, health, morals and general welfare within constitutional limits and is an essential attribute of government.

It is the combination of the responsibilities delegated to ODJFS by federal and state statutes and the essence of the regulatory function of licensing itself which guides and shapes its duties to Ohio's foster care children. As a result, ODJFS currently exercises a central oversight role in its efforts to ensure statewide program consistency and compliance. These responsibilities play a key role in current decision-making and also need to be considered and emphasized as ODJFS identifies new priorities and strategies for improving the foster care licensing component of the Child Welfare System.

Ohio's foster care licensing services, a key component of its Child Welfare System, is designed to ensure safe, twenty-four hour care for foster care children. Foster child placements are made to family foster homes, group homes, children's residential homes and independent living arrangements; however, the majority of Ohio's foster child placements occur in family foster home settings. According to Family and Children's Services Information System (FACSIS) compiled on January 1, 2000, the licensed family foster home population consisted of the following:

**6,135 Family Foster Homes Recommended for Licensure by Public Agencies**  
**5,216 Family Foster Homes Recommended for Licensure by Private Agencies**  
**11,351 Family Foster Homes Licensed Statewide**

### *Program Funding*

Foster care licensing is one component of the foster care system and the funding history for foster care services is contained in Table 1-1. ODJFS was unable to compile financial information in state fiscal year 1997 due to a lack of data availability stemming from a change in accounting systems. ODJFS' accounting systems were not designed to capture certain federal, state and local revenues and expenditures in a detailed format; therefore, most financial data associated with placement costs were presented in an aggregate format within Table 1-1.



**Table 1-1: Foster Care Services Funding History**

REVENUE	State Fiscal Years		
	1997	1998	1999
Federal * (County Level Direct Services and Title IV-E Placement Costs)	data unavailable	\$184,316,000	\$195,665,000
State *(County Level Direct Services)	data unavailable	30,811,000	31,522,000
Local (Titles IV-E, IV-B, and XX )	data unavailable	28,697,000	38,608,000
Placement Costs (Federal, State & Local revenues unable to be specifically assigned)	data unavailable	230,382,000	260,126,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>data unavailable</b>	<b>\$474,206,000</b>	<b>\$525,921,000</b>
EXPENDITURES	1997	1998	1999
County Level Direct Services	data unavailable	\$140,629,000	\$151,587,000
Placement Costs (Title IV-E FFP)	data unavailable	103,195,000	114,208,000
Placement Costs (Federal, State & Local costs unable to be specifically assigned)	data unavailable	230,382,000	260,126,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>data unavailable</b>	<b>\$474,206,000</b>	<b>\$525,921,000</b>

Source: ODJFS fiscal analyst, various internal and external reports

\* - Revenues include direct services provided to counties and foster care amounts are imputed based on the ratio of foster care caseload to the total foster care and adoption caseload.

### *Licensing Organization*

ODJFS is responsible for ensuring programmatic and financial accountability of foster care services throughout Ohio. Foster care licensing in Ohio is organized into a state-supervised and county-administered system. While family foster home licenses are directly issued by ODJFS, the functions of individual family foster home recruitment, retention, monitoring and inspection are delegated to the recommending public and private foster care agencies. As a result, ODJFS' primary focus is on the oversight of the public and private agencies themselves.

Each of the 88 counties is required by statute to designate an agency within the county with the responsibility for child welfare. This designated public agency is recognized by ODJFS as a public children services agency (PCSA). Section 5153.16 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) identifies functions required of each PCSA. Some of these functions include the following:

- Accept the custody of a child.
- Investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, or dependency.
- Accept the responsibility of finding a family foster home for the care of children.
- Provide other services in matters relating to child welfare.

PCSAs are not required to obtain a license to perform the above duties and responsibilities, but are required to obtain a license from ODJFS to operate a group home or residential facility, which is granted for a two-year period.

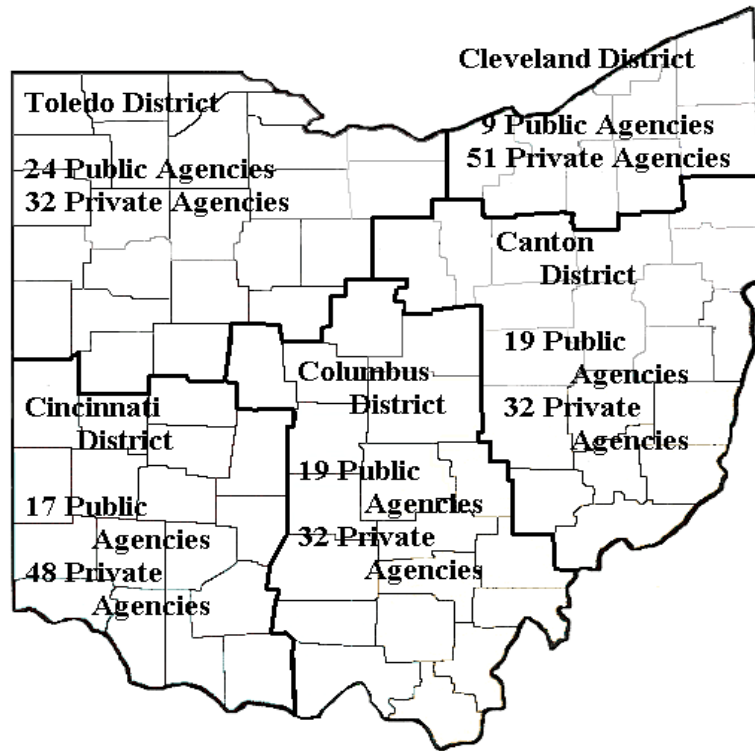
In addition to the 88 PCSAs, as of March 3, 2000 there were approximately 195 private agencies that also provide foster care services throughout the State, of which 108 recommend family foster homes for licensure. These agencies are divided into two categories: private child placing agencies (PCPAs) and private non-custodial agencies (PNAs). Both types of agencies are licensed by ODJFS to provide various foster care services, although they are licensed for different functions. PCPAs and PNAs are licensed for a two-year period to perform the following functions:

- Operate children's residential centers.
- Operate group homes.
- Operate or provide independent living arrangements.
- Operate residential parenting facilities.
- Act as a representative of ODJFS in recommending family foster homes for certification.

While a PCPA can actually place children in foster care or adoption, the PNA can only recommend the placement of a child in foster care or adoption. Additionally, PCPAs are licensed to accept temporary, permanent, or legal custody of children.

**Map 1-1** provides a geographic representation of the location and numbers of public and private agencies currently operating across five recognized districts. **Map 1-1** represents all agencies operating in the State on March 3, 2000; however, only 195 (87 public and 108 private) of these 283 agencies currently recommend family foster homes for licensure. The remainder of these agencies are licensed by ODJFS for various other functions including, but not limited to, the operation of children's residential centers and the placement of children for adoption. Champaign County, the only Ohio public agency that does not recommend family foster homes for licensure, contracts with a PCPA for these services.

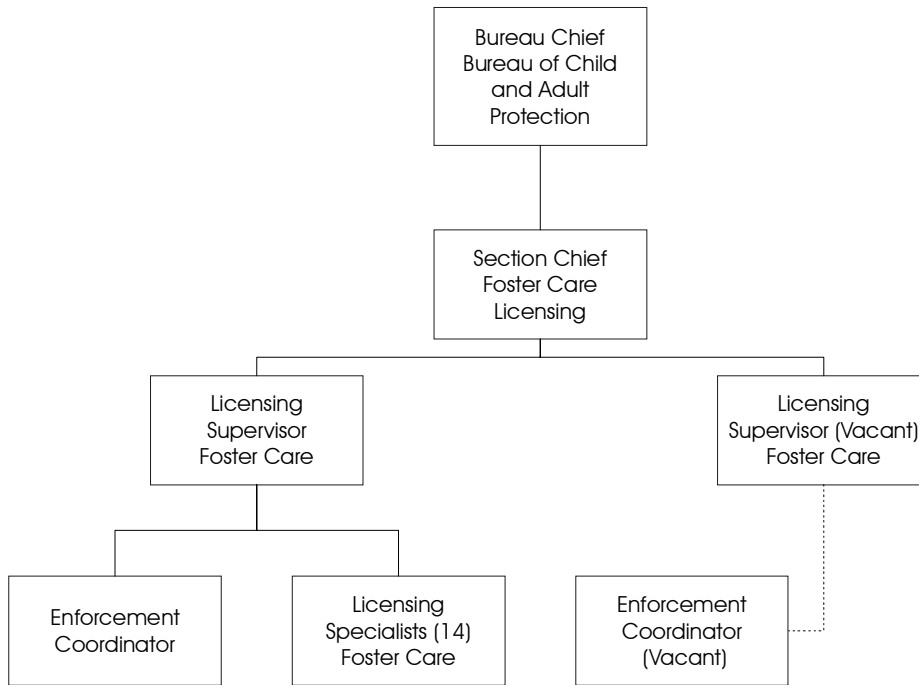
**Map 1-1  
Public and Private Agencies by District**



Source: ODJFS data, March 3, 2000; 88 public agencies, 195 private agencies.

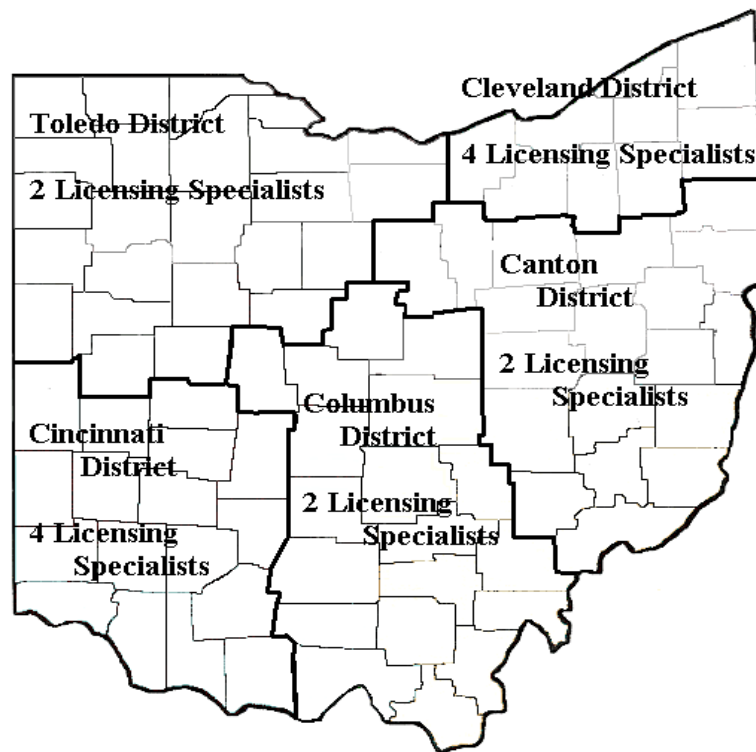
ODJFS organizational Chart 1-1 provides an overview of the Office for Children and Families, Bureau of Child and Adult Protection’s Foster Care Licensing Section.

**Chart 1-1: Foster Care Licensing Organizational Chart**



Source: ODJFS, Office for Children and Families, Bureau of Child and Adult Protection, March 23, 2000.

**Map 1-2  
Field Licensing Specialists by District**



Source: ODJFS, Office for Children and Families, Bureau of Child and Adult Protection, March 23, 2000.

### *Staffing*

Each foster care licensing specialist is responsible for several public and private agencies within their district. All licensing specialists report directly to the foster care licensing supervisor located at the central office in Columbus. The distribution of foster care licensing specialists is based upon the number and size of the public and private agencies located within each district as previously shown in **Map 1-1**.

Field licensing specialists devote the majority of their time to the certification and recertification of private agencies and residential facilities, recommendations for license revocation, and the investigation of complaints. They also monitor compliance, provide technical assistance to agencies, develop corrective action plans, and testify at hearings.

Currently, the central office for foster care licensing section is staffed by one supervisor and one enforcement coordinator. The supervisor's duties consist of the direct monitoring of the licensing specialists and enforcement coordinator, development of rules, review of pertinent legislation, design of various forms utilized by ODJFS, and training of staff. The enforcement coordinator spends the majority of their time gathering data for licensing enforcement, attending hearings, preparing requests for legal discovery, and preparing information requests from the media and general public. The coordinator is also responsible for the finalization of case closures. ODJFS plans to fill the vacant, existing supervisor position and vacant, recently created enforcement coordinator position.

The Foster Care Licensing Section has encountered organizational challenges since late 1996 when the section was first disbanded and personnel were distributed to other areas of the Department. Besides experiencing three organizational changes in three years, the section also lost a significant number of skilled licensing specialists during that time period. ODJFS has recently attempted to return licensing specialist staffing to historic levels and hired an outside consultant to conduct a functional analysis for the foster care licensing section.

## *Laws and Regulations*

### *Recently Adopted Federal Regulations*

To help improve foster care nationwide, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) enacted the final rule for 45 CFR Parts 1355, 1356 and 1357, Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews and Child and Family Services State Plan Reviews on January 25, 2000. This rule holds states accountable for improving the results of state child welfare efforts by assessing the quality of services provided and the way at-risk children exit the system.

These new regulations—effective March 25, 2000—represent a significant departure from the previous system of monitoring the accuracy of files and data. HHS has designed new reviews by federal and state authorities; in Ohio, these reviews will ensure that ODJFS conducts a statewide assessment prior to an on-site review. If HHS finds ODJFS in noncompliance with safety, permanency, and child and family well-being outcome indicators or with any of the seven systemic factors that determine the state's capacity to deliver services leading to improved outcomes, it will require the state to develop a program improvement plan (similar in concept to a corrective action plan). Systemic factors involve

- C the state-wide information system,
- C the case review system,
- C the quality assurance system,
- C staff and provider training,
- C service array,
- C agency responsiveness to the community, and
- C foster and adoptive parent licensing.

Failure by the state to adequately address the program improvement plan can result in financial penalties against the state.

The new regulations also require criminal records checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents. States may not approve or license any prospective foster or adoptive parent who has been convicted of a felony involving child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, other crimes against children, rape, sexual assault or homicide; or physical assault, battery or drug-related offense within the past five years.

The federal legislation focused national—and Ohio—attention on foster care. Through the introduction of state legislation, Ohio’s public interest in foster care—including foster care licensing—has become a major issue among those interested in child welfare.

### *Ohio Foster Care Laws and Regulations*

#### ***Current Laws and Regulations***

Ohio’s foster care system is primarily governed by three chapters of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC):

- C **Chapter 5103.** This chapter includes definitions of the various types of foster homes, requirements regarding the licensing of public and private agencies, and the ability for ODJFS to delegate duties to public and private agencies through the adoption of rules.
- C **Chapter 5153.** Addresses the duties and responsibilities of Public Children Services Agencies.
- C **Chapter 119.** Addresses applicable foster-care provisions into three categories: promulgating rules for foster care licensing; issuing letters to allow agencies to continue to operate when ODJFS delays recertification; and taking responsibility for revoking an agency or foster home license.

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules governing foster care include

- C **Chapter 5101:2-5:** The licensing of private agencies and family foster homes
- C **Chapter 5101:2-7:** Rules governing foster caregivers

C **Chapter 5101:2-9:** Rules governing children's residential centers, group homes, and residential parenting facilities

Section 5101:2-5-33 of the OAC allows public and private foster care agencies reimbursement for annual ongoing training. While current rules do not allow ODJFS to reimburse foster care agencies in order to reimburse foster care providers for initial training costs, ODJFS may pay a public agency up to \$25 for each foster care giver per training episode of two hours or more, up to a maximum of six training episodes; these episodes can contribute to the minimum 12 hours of training required for recertification. Private agencies can only receive a maximum of \$20 per foster caregiver for each training episode of two hours or more, up to a maximum of six training episodes. Reimbursements cannot exceed more than what was actually paid for the training.

***Recently Enacted Legislation***

The Ohio General Assembly has recognized the growing statewide need to ensure the existence of safe environments for children placed in out-of-home care. In the past year, the Ohio House of Representatives has acted on two separate bills to improve Ohio's foster care system, which Governor Taft signed into law on July 6, 2000 and will be effective by January 1, 2001.

- C Sub. House Bill 332, introduced by Representative Jack Ford, primarily addresses the topic of foster parent training, including increasing the minimum number of required training hours, availability and quality of training, and ODJFS payments toward foster parent training;
- C The Foster Care Subcommittee of the House Committee on Children and Family Services created Sub. House Bill 448, which incorporates the key provisions of House Bills 424 and 448, since both shared the goals of foster care reform and increased accountability within the Child Welfare System. Key issues affecting ODJFS and foster care licensing include
- a requirement for ODJFS to adopt internal management rules on Title IV-E financial and administrative requirements for public and private agencies;
  - establishing penalties and corrective action plans for agencies failing to follow ODJFS' Title IV-E policies;
  - requirement of criminal records checks of potential foster caregivers prior to recommending foster home for certification;
  - requiring criminal records checks for all household members in foster homes over 18 years old;
  - requiring foster caregiver to notify recommending placing agency if person in the home over 12 years but under 18 years of age has been convicted or pleaded guilty to certain offenses, upon which ODJFS must revoke foster home's certification; and
  - requirement for private placing agencies to provide evidence of an independent audit every two years when seeking renewal of its certification.



## Processes and Recommendations

This section includes four key topics:

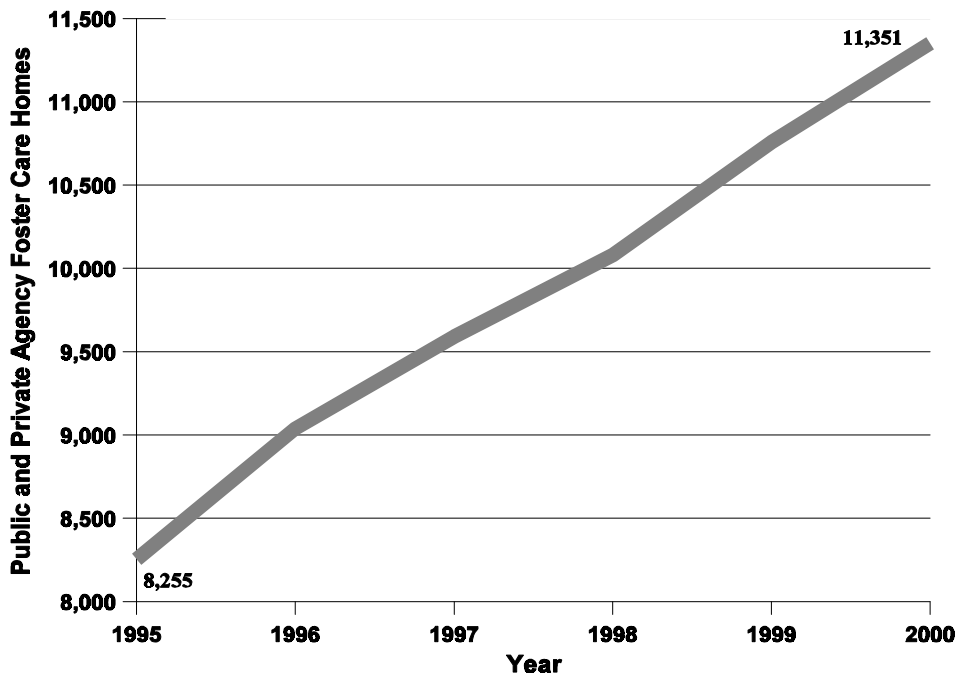
- C Staffing,
- C Criminal background checks, including
  - C Administrative rules
  - C WebCheck
- C Consistency and monitoring of standards, including
  - C Inconsistency between Private and Public Agencies
  - C Certification of Foster Care Homes, and
  - C ODJFS Inspection of Foster Care Homes
- C Foster caregiver training, including
  - C Training Resources
  - C Training Accessibility.

### *Staffing*

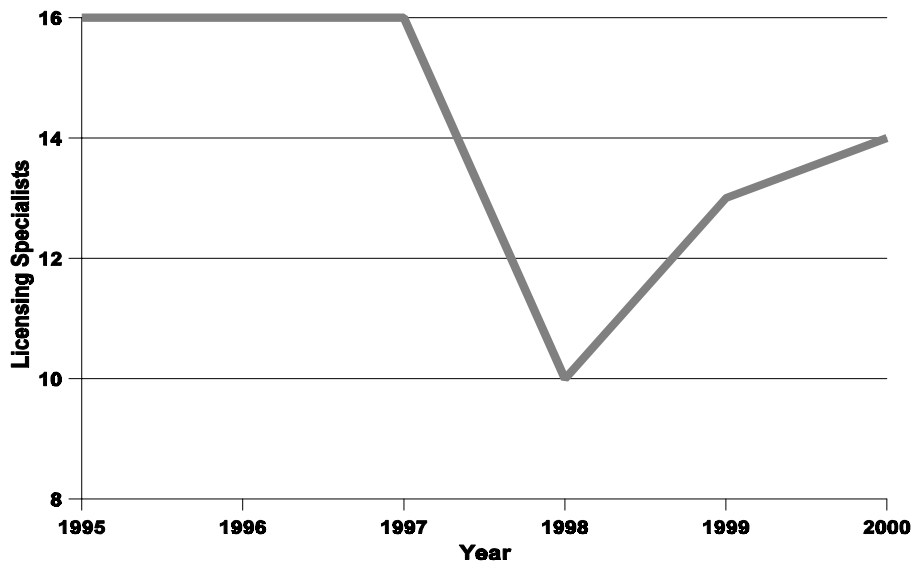
***Finding 1-1: The ODJFS foster care licensing staff has experienced rapidly increasing numbers of foster homes and private agencies under their supervision, while the number of licensing specialists has decreased over time.***

As shown in chart 1-2, the number of family foster homes recommended for licensure by both public and private agencies has grown about 38 percent since 1995.

**Chart 1-2: Number of Foster Homes Has Increased Over Time**



**Chart 1-3: Number of Foster Care Licensing Specialists Has Not Grown Relative to the Number of Foster Care Homes**



Sources: ODJFS, Foster Care Licensing Section, January 2000 FACSIS data

Note: Number of Foster Care Licensing Specialists in 2000 was as of March, 2000

As Chart 1-3 shows, staffing levels for foster care licensing specialists have not kept up with increases in family foster homes.

Some of the foster care licensing specialist's most significant duties is licensing, monitoring, and inspection of foster care agencies. However, as the number of agencies has increased, the number of licensing staff has not kept pace (see Table 1-2).

**Table 1-2: Analysis of Agencies and Foster Care Licensing Specialists**

Year <sup>1</sup>	1993	1996	1998	2000
Total Agencies <sup>2</sup>	210	264	272	285
Licensing Specialists <sup>3</sup>	14	16	10	14
Average Number of Agencies Per Specialist	15	16	27	20

Source: ODJFS Foster Care Licensing Staff

<sup>1</sup>Annual numbers shown above reflect the following dates—January 6, 1993; April 15, 1996; September 30, 1998; and March 3, 2000. Data for years between 1993 and 2000 not shown was unavailable.

<sup>2</sup>Includes private agencies and 88 public agencies

<sup>3</sup>Foster care licensing specialists for 2000 are as of March, 2000.

ODJFS has tried repeatedly to determine the optimum level for licensing specialist staffing. During its most recent attempt in March 1998, its Office of Workforce Development completed a functional program review of foster care licensing which identified major functions performed by foster care licensing staff, as well as inputs for each function, major tasks associated with each function, the estimated number of hours it took to complete each function per staff member, and the estimated frequency of each task per year.

In its final report, the Office produced a detailed estimate of all typical duties for the average specialist in a given year. The review concluded that ODJFS needed approximately 24 full-time equivalent foster care licensing specialists to perform all duties required. As Table 1-2 indicates, ODJFS employed only 10 foster care licensing specialists during 1998; to meet the recommendations set out by the Office of Workforce Development report, it would have had to hire 14 additional foster care licensing specialists. Current staffing levels (14 foster care licensing specialists) would require the hiring of at least 10 additional foster care licensing specialists. The current staff are supervised by one foster care licensing supervisor and supported by one enforcement coordinator. Should ODJFS attempt to meet the report's staffing requirements, it would nearly double its current staffing level; this would necessitate the hiring of one additional licensing supervisor and one additional enforcement coordinator.

This report represents the only data available to determine appropriate staffing workload ratios in the field of foster care licensing. Given that foster care licensing duties and responsibilities vary by state, reliable benchmarks for foster care staffing ratios are not as readily available as they are for child care and social work, which contain more uniform standards across states. As a result, leading child welfare organizations such as the National Association for Regulatory Agencies and the Child Welfare League of America have not been able to promote readily adaptable ratios, though the National Association for Regulatory Agencies does promote a licensing workload assessment module for determining work force requirements. This module appears to be based on methodology similar to that used by the ODJFS Office of Workforce development in its 1998 review.

***Recommendation 1-1: ODJFS should hire ten (10) additional foster care licensing specialists, one additional enforcement coordinator, and one additional foster care licensing supervisor to address the growing need for resources in the Foster Care Licensing Section.***

*ODJFS commissioned a private consultant to perform a task analysis and time study for ODJFS' licensing and certification functions for foster home agencies in an effort to establish a baseline for these functions. We reviewed this study, which was performed from January 1, 2000 through April 30, 2000, and it also recommended that staffing levels for foster care licensing specialists, as well as supervisory levels, be increased to meet the demands of their job duties.*

*Financial Implication: The estimated cost of implementing this recommendation, as well as for one additional foster care licensing Supervisor and Enforcement Coordinator, is approximately \$584,000 (see Table 1-3).*

**Table 1-3: Estimated Financial Implications of Staffing Increases**

Title <sup>1</sup>	Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup>	Annual Cost	Additional Employees	Total Annual Cost
Foster Care Licensing Specialists	\$36,962	30%	\$48,051	10	\$481,000
Supervisor	\$41,517	30%	\$53,972	1	\$54,000
Enforcement Coordinator	\$37,690	30%	\$48,997	1	\$49,000
				<b>Total</b>	<b>\$584,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>ODJFS Personnel Department for related Department of Administrative Services (DAS) classifications Facilities Standards Representative 2, Human Services Program Administrator 2 and Rules Enforcement Coordinator.

<sup>2</sup>DAS Position Classification Number (PCN) Roster Analysis, March 2000.

## Criminal Background Checks

### Administrative Rules

***Finding 1-2: Even though Ohio law mandates criminal background checks for prospective foster caregivers, it does not require follow-up background checks after certification of the foster home.***

The safety of the children who enter the foster care system is of paramount importance. At the state level, the rules pertaining to criminal background checks are found in Section 5101:2-5-091 of the OAC. Section 5101:2-5-091(A) of the OAC states in part that “an agency shall request the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) to conduct a criminal records check with respect to

1. Any prospective employee who has applied to the agency for appointment or employment; or
2. Any person seeking certification as a foster caregiver and, at the agency’s discretion, any adult member of the person’s household.”

The rules, however, do not specify or require background checks following certification. As a result, ODJFS does not continually monitor subsequent arrests and convictions of a licensed foster caregiver or other adults in the foster home; the agency’s notification of such occurrences is largely dependent on self-reporting by the caregiver.

At the federal level, although federal statute does not currently require additional levels of background checks, recent HHS comments published in the Federal Register in response to questions about rules set forth in 45 CFR 1356 state the following:

...We do...encourage states to be thorough in their safety assessments of foster homes and to utilize the information sources available to them to the fullest extent possible to assure the safety of children in out-of-home placements...and we encourage states to routinely include checks of state registries to assist in determining whether a potential foster family home is safe.

***Recommendation 1-2: ODJFS should initiate revisions of Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-5-091 to require an annual updated criminal records check for all persons responsible for a child's care in out-of-home care, including certified foster caregivers and any adult member of the foster caregiver's household.***

*As the safety of the child should be of the highest concern to the state and a key component by which the federal government holds the state responsible, ODJFS should aggressively pursue annually updated criminal records checks for all persons responsible for Ohio's children in out-of-home care.*

### **WebCheck**

***Finding 1-3: Agencies typically submit applicant fingerprint and personal data by mail to the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. If incomplete or inaccurate information is submitted, background checks can take four to six weeks or longer to complete.***

The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation has developed new civilian background check technology which strengthens the ability of ODJFS to implement our recommendation 1-2. This new technology, called WebCheck—a component of BCII's Automated Fingerprint Identification System—has been available to agencies since 1999. Use of WebCheck by school districts, hospitals, and other public institutions, such as Franklin County Children Services, is growing rapidly.

WebCheck's primary advantage is its speed and accuracy, as it allows agencies to submit background checks electronically through the World Wide Web. With WebCheck technology, agencies can receive background check request results within a time frame of 15 minutes to two days. Using WebCheck, if a background check reveals a clean criminal history, an agency can print an immediate BCII verification record; however, if the WebCheck reveals a criminal history, the program forwards supporting documentation to the agency by mail.

***Recommendation 1-3: ODJFS should allocate the necessary resources to allow public and private agencies to have access to the WebCheck technology.***

*ODJFS should take the lead in efforts to ensure consistent statewide access to criminal background checks through the use of WebCheck. An agency's ability to quickly and accurately obtain critical background checks on prospective foster caregivers and other adult members of a foster caregiver's household would further enhance Ohio's efforts to safeguard its foster care children.*

*To obtain the WebCheck program, an agency*

- C must have an account with BCII;*
- C must sign and submit a memorandum of understanding regarding financial responsibility as well as responsibility for proper use of criminal history information; and*
- C acquire certain technical components, including a computer, a single digit fingerprint scanner, a driver's license magnetic strip reader, software programming, and internet access.*

*Financial Implication: The estimated cost of a WebCheck system at one location is \$2,500. The total cost of installing WebCheck hardware and software to all 88 public agencies and 195 private agencies would result in a one-time cost of approximately \$707,500 according to current BCII cost estimates.*

*The cost to perform each background check is the same as the current manual system; \$15 per check and \$8 for updates performed within one year of the original check.*

## *Consistency and Monitoring of Standards*

### **Inconsistency between Private and Public Agencies**

***Finding 1-4: Currently, ODJFS is better able to regulate the private foster care placing agencies compared to the public children's services agencies. ODJFS monitors the private agencies more frequently, and is able to revoke their license in the event of non-compliance with ODJFS rules and regulations.***

New federal regulations have toughened standards for on-site visits to state agencies, the requirement for state plans, and state oversight of program improvement plans in instances of noncompliance. The federal government has also increased regulations covering state accountability by asserting that

“States, not counties, are ultimately responsible and held accountable for compliance with state plan requirements. The statewide assessment is designed to be completed by the state, not individual counties, and responses should reflect official state policies and most typical state practice, while noting where outstanding exceptions exist.”

The Adoption and Foster Care Subcommittee of the Ohio Child Welfare Shareholders Group succinctly captured the concerns confronting ODJFS as it assesses and redefines its oversight role in foster care:

. . . In Ohio, [foster care] functions are all performed by the same entity, either a public children services board or private child placing agency. This scheme lacks a certain degree of checks and balances that would assure that the system operates efficiently, and presents opportunities for gaming the system. For the public agency, there is a great need to have a cadre of homes available to place the number of children for whom placement is a necessity. The public agencies would prefer to have “agency owned” homes as this enables them to control placement activities and contain costs, or at least have a more predictable cost horizon. For the private agency, an approved or licensed foster home represents a revenue producing asset. For both, there is a temptation, without sufficient checks and balances, to recommend for approval homes and families, which meet only the most liberal construction of the most minimum standards.

At the present time, ODJFS licenses only private agencies to recommend family foster homes for licensure; public agencies are not required to have a license to perform this function. And while public agencies are subject to one review of their records every two years, private agencies are subjected to three reviews every two years. As a result, ODJFS has far greater authority over private agencies in this area than with public agencies, since it can revoke a private agency’s license or require the development of a corrective action plan for noncompliance with licensing rules.

The only enforcement action ODJFS regularly takes against a public agency for such noncompliance is to require a corrective action plan be developed, which the public agency may or may not follow. Although the option exists to withhold funds from public agencies that are in continuous noncompliance, this form of sanction is not invoked and is impractical, due to the negative impact such a sanction would have on the children over whom the agency has jurisdiction.

Because of these systemic inconsistencies in monitoring foster care agencies, ODJFS and the public cannot be assured that licensing rules are being applied and enforced uniformly across the State. Although the public agency is subject to more potential checks and balances on the services it delivers due to the higher level of public and media scrutiny inherent in the current system, the system is far from ideal.



***Recommendation 1-4: ODJFS should promulgate rules and promote the necessary statutory revisions to increase the regulatory requirements of public children services agencies for the function of recommending family foster homes for certification.***

*These rules should include, but not be limited to, three reviews of public agency records every two years, and the possible establishment of an incentive funding pool to increase or reduce funding based on achieving compliance and/or special program goals.*

*While the dedicated professionals associated with public agency family foster home placements, recruitment, and retention typically perform their duties without incident, ODJFS oversight, combined with heightened awareness and focus, would be enhanced by the immediate implementation of additional and reasonable preventative measures for public agencies that would supplement current checks and balances.*

*Financial Implication:*

*It is estimated to take an average of 16 hours to perform a PCSA review, which when performed once every two years translates to 704 hours per year that ODJFS currently dedicates to reviewing PCSAs. If ODJFS were to perform three times as many reviews of PCSAs to be consistent with private agency reviews, it would need to dedicate 1,408 additional hours per year, or approximately one additional employee, to perform the reviews. The estimated cost for one foster care licensing specialist is \$48,000 (see table 1-5 on page 1-23 for calculation of estimated cost).*

**Certification of Foster Care Homes**

***Finding 1-5: Since private agencies will eventually benefit from the licensing of foster care homes they recommend and that are part of their network, there is a risk they may not be independent and objective parties to be relied on for assessing the prospective foster caregiver's suitability, which is a vital role in the licensing process.***

Currently, ODJFS receives recommendations for the certification of foster care homes from PCPAs and PNAs, as well as PCSAs. These recommending agencies assess each applicant by determining their compliance with Chapter 5101:2-7, Administrative Code, and by documenting their assessment of each applicant by completing ODJFS form 1349, "Family Foster Home Study". ODJFS bases its approval or denial of the foster care home certification on the recommending agencies' recommendations for certification or denial of certification. However, since the private agencies will eventually benefit financially from the licensing of the recommended foster care home, ODJFS should recognize the risk they may not be sufficiently independent and objective to perform this function.

***Recommendation 1-5: ODJFS should promulgate rules and promote the necessary statutory revisions to permit only public children services agencies or ODJFS to recommend family foster homes for licensure.***

*There are three options to this recommendation. First, the PCPAs and PNAs could recruit potential foster care homes and refer them to PCSAs. A PCSA would then determine the prospective foster home's compliance with Chapter 5101:2-7, Administrative Code, complete the ODJFS form 1349 "Family Foster Home Study," then provide its own recommendation or denial of certification to ODJFS.*

*The second option is for the PCPA or PNA to determine compliance, complete the home study, and provide that information to the PCSA. The PCSA would then provide its recommendation for certification or denial to ODJFS.*

*The third option is for the PCPA or PNA to determine compliance, complete the home study, and provide that information to ODJFS. ODJFS would then determine whether the prospective foster care home's application would be certified or denied.*

*In any case, the PCPA or PNA would be able to obtain the recruited foster care home for its network after certification.*

*If ODJFS directs efforts and resources toward increased reviews at the application stage of the foster care home process, it could relieve the burden placed on it in having to revoke a family foster home license in the future, given the time-consuming due process rights associated with the license.*

*Financial Implication:*

*If ODJFS chose the third option, it would need additional resources to perform the additional task of verifying the licensing packet, which includes ODJFS form 1349 and the foster home application.*

*In the past five years, there has been an average of 425 foster care homes certified each year for the private agencies. If 425 were multiplied by 4 hours, the estimated time to complete the review and approval of the licensing packet, ODJFS would require additional resources of 1700 hours, or one additional employee. The estimated cost for one foster care licensing specialist is \$48,000 (see table 1-5 for calculation of estimated cost).*

**ODJFS Inspection of Foster Care Homes**

***Finding 1-6: Even though they have primary responsibility for the safety of Ohio's foster care children, ODJFS and the public children services agencies do not perform complete and thorough foster care home inspections.***

Currently, a recommending agency performs on-site inspections of family foster homes; PCSA social workers do not inspect a home for total rule compliance, but only investigate a home's environment as it relates to a child's placement in the home. ODJFS licensing specialists do not make on-site visits to family foster homes; instead, they perform a desk review of files during their inspections of public and private agencies. With no direct relationship with or monitoring of family foster homes, ODJFS cannot be assured these homes are providing adequate care for Ohio's children.

Increased comfort with and assurance of quality could result from additional oversight and monitoring resulting from independent ODJFS on-site reviews. The need for these additional checks and balances is supported by new federal regulations, which further substantiate the state's ultimate responsibility for the foster care system's operation. These new regulations now require on-site reviews of certain safety, permanency, and child and family well-being outcomes, as well as systemic factors (foster care parent licensing, recruitment and retention) that assess a state's capacity to deliver services that lead to improved outcomes.

According to HHS interpretations of 45 CFR Part 1355, on-site sampling methods must be strengthened to include not only traditional reviews of quantitative factors, but also qualitative outcome factors involving in-depth analyses derived through interviews.

We learned that we cannot make accurate decisions in a results-focused review by only reviewing documentation in records . . . Basically we learned that we cannot apply traditional checklist-type reviews of documentation to determine the quality of decision-making and service delivery. (HHS' comments)

We are not suggesting that ODJFS implement a whole-scale effort to monitor all homes on-site; such an undertaking would not be plausible, even with additional staff. Rather, ODJFS may select a statistically valid sampling of family foster homes for periodic on-site review.

In Table 1-4, we have outlined anticipated results from implementing on-site inspection procedures—procedures that build upon and supplement the existing desk reviews ODJFS currently uses during the recertification phase for a private agency. By applying the statistical sampling method ODJFS currently uses for desk reviews, the table shows the distribution of the 11,351 family foster homes by recommending agency as of January 1, 2000.

**Table 1-4: Distribution of Family Foster Homes by Agency**

Number of Family Foster Homes	Total Public and Private Agencies	Total Family Foster Homes	Sample Range <sup>1</sup>
Up to 25	95	1,035	1 to 19
26-50	41	1,461	20 to 31
51-75	20	1,182	31 to 39
76-100	11	974	39 to 45
101-200	17	2,288	45 to 57
201-500	7	2,786	57 to 69
500+	2	1,625	69 to 75 <sup>2</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	193	11,351	N/A

**Source:** FACSIS data, January 1, 2000.

<sup>1</sup> Represents the number of family foster homes that would be inspected based upon the lowest and highest number of family foster homes in that range according to the statistical sampling currently used by ODJFS.

<sup>2</sup> Sample size of 75 is for Cuyahoga County Children's Services, which represents the highest number of family foster homes in the State.

This distribution shows that the majority of agencies (70 percent) would require approximately 31 or fewer on-site inspections.

***Recommendation 1-6: ODJFS' should conduct independent on-site reviews of family foster homes.***

*ODJFS has initiated action to promulgate rules to enable it to inspect family foster care homes, since current rules do not specify such inspections by ODJFS employees.*

*ODJFS' reviews of family foster homes should be conducted either as a supplement to the existing monitoring framework performed during the recertification review of recommending agencies, or through a separate review system of individual family foster homes at the application or recertification phases. ODJFS' inspections of family foster homes should be performed regardless of the home's affiliation with a public or private agency.*

*An on-site sample could either mirror the records ODJFS examines during its desk reviews or include a different statistically valid sample drawn from those records. This procedure, if implemented, would ideally serve the dual purpose of not only satisfying the need for on-site visits, but also serve as an additional check for, and validation of, current desk review sampling techniques and results.*

*Based on the sampling methodology outlined above, we calculated that ODJFS would inspect about 3,300 foster care homes each year; each home would thus be inspected once every three to four years. If a licensing specialist were able to inspect between three and four foster care homes per day, we estimate that ODJFS would need to hire approximately five (5) additional licensing specialists to successfully carry out its inspection of foster care homes.*

*Financial Implications: The staffing cost of implementing the recommendation for ODJFS to inspect family foster care homes is estimated to be \$240,000.*

**Table 1-5: Estimated Costs of ODJFS Inspecting Foster Care Homes**

<b>Title<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Beginning Annual Rate<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Benefits<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>Additional Employees</b>	<b>Total Annual Cost</b>
<b>Foster Care Licensing Specialists</b>	\$36,962	30%	\$48,051	5	<b>\$240,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>ODJFS Personnel Department for related Department of Administrative Services (DAS) classification Facilities Standards Representative 2.

<sup>2</sup>DAS Position Classification Number (PCN) Roster Analysis, March 2000.

## Foster Caregiver Training

### Training Resources

***Finding 1-7: ODJFS relies on private and public agency resources to provide foster caregiver training without ODJFS defining training objectives and standards, thereby creating a risk that foster caregivers will not receive adequate or quality training to help care for Ohio's foster care children.***

Currently, foster caregivers receive both pre-service and annual in-service training from their affiliated agencies. As a result, significant responsibility falls upon the public or private agency to provide the necessary training that not only fulfills the statutory hour requirements but also meets the individual needs of the foster caregiver.

Foster caregiver training requirement rules, contained in Section 5101:2-5-33 of the Ohio Administrative Code, currently require 12 hours of initial orientation training and 12 hours of ongoing annual training for all foster caregivers. Governor Taft recently signed into law Sub H.B. 332, which addressed foster caregiver training issues, such as the following:

- Prohibiting ODJFS from issuing an initial family foster home license unless the foster caregiver has completed 12 hours of preplacement training; for a specialized foster home license, the requirement is 36 hours.
- Requiring the foster caregiver to obtain 12 additional hours of preplacement training after being licensed, prior to the placement of a foster child.
- Requiring a foster caregiver to complete 20 hours of training annually in order to renew a family foster home license; however, a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA may waive up to four hours of the continuing training requirement.
- Requiring a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA that operates an approved preplacement or continuing training program to make the program available to all foster caregivers without charge, regardless of their recommending agency.
- Requiring a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA to work with a foster caregiver to develop and implement a written needs assessment and continuing education plan to guide ongoing training activities.
- Requiring ODJFS to pay a per diem to certified, active foster caregivers for attending training courses and reimburse a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA for the cost to the agency of providing the training to a foster caregiver.
- Requiring ODJFS to develop a model design of a preplacement training program in consultation with other state agencies.

Successful statewide implementation and compliance with this new law should help ODJFS with future federal on-site reviews. Since these reviews should help ODJFS determine how far Ohio's

foster care programs can go toward delivering improved outcomes, ODJFS should include foster caregiver training initiatives in its strategic planning.

ODJFS has made an initial effort toward improving foster caregiver training by including a foster parent training deliverable in its Ohio Child Welfare Training Program contracts; ODJFS offers this training at eight regional training centers across the state. The current ODJFS training funding levels, however, appear to not be sufficient in order to provide the needed training hours for all foster caregivers, regardless of whether they are associated with public or private agencies. While the majority of public and private agencies provide quality individual services and competency-based training to caregivers, the current framework lacks a state-wide strategic plan and does not provide ODJFS with the proper assurances of quality care.

Some agencies have taken it upon themselves to provide a consistent training curriculum, such as the Cleveland West Side Foster Parent Coalition, a cooperative group of public and private agencies. The Coalition has partnered on a regional basis to help fill this training and service delivery gap through a system that shares member skills, competencies, and resources. Each of its member agencies is required to contribute and conduct at least two annual in-service training programs each year. The Coalition also recruits a nationally known speaker each year to discuss issues and trends in the foster care industry; all foster parents affiliated with the member agencies are welcome to attend. In addition to helping contain costs while improving the quality and diversity of training, the Coalition also allows foster caregivers to meet and exchange information with one another, essentially creating a mentoring, supporting network. This collaborative effort allows foster caregivers to take advantage of each other's expertise on particular topics and reduces the monotony of training that often occurs in other agencies across the state.

***Recommendation 1-7: ODJFS should take increased ownership of the training of foster caregivers by establishing training objectives and standards, providing training sessions, and monitoring training programs of PCSAs, PNAs and PCPAs to include onsite evaluation of programs.***

*ODJFS could build upon and expand current initiatives such as the limited foster caregiver training available through the Cleveland West Side Foster Parent Coalition regional training sites. Also, ODJFS should encourage the statewide duplication of local and regional innovative approaches that address the training and service delivery gap through more effective and efficient systems, such as the Coalition delivery model discussed above, which shares members' skills, competencies and resources.*

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-5-33 (B)(4) delineates specific areas that may be covered during annual training. The topics should be based upon the needs of the individual foster caregiver; they may include, but may not be limited to:

- the physical and psychological development of children;
- parenting skills;
- discipline techniques that emphasize encouragement along with natural and logical consequences of actions;
- permanency planning procedures;
- attachment and separation trauma, including skills to handle relevant problems;
- physical and sexual abuse, clues and behavioral signs of abuse, and ways to respond to children in placement who have been abused or neglected;
- proper methods and use of physical restraint of children;
- proper methods of treatment and precautions to be taken with children with communicable or sexually transmitted diseases; and
- substance abuse and dependency.

*Financial Implication:* The financial implication associated with providing training courses to foster caregivers as a part of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program is estimated to be \$1.9 million. Calculation is as follows:

Total budget amount for regional training centers and state training coordinator	\$4,263,355
Divided by number of total participant hours	<u>÷ 21,636</u>
Equals cost of providing training per hour	\$ 197
Divided by number of participants per workshop	<u>÷ 25</u>
Equals cost of training per contact hour	\$ 8
Multiplied by number of annual hours required by Sub. H.B. 332	<u>x 20</u>
Equals cost per participant per year	\$ 160
Multiplied by estimated number of foster caregivers	<u>x 12,000</u>
Equals total estimated cost of annual training to foster caregivers	<u><u>\$1,900,000</u></u>

**Source: ODJFS Ohio Child Welfare Training Program**

As stated in Sub. H.B 332, Title IV-E funding should be requested to partially finance this training.



**Training Accessibility**

***Finding 1-8: ODJFS primarily offers foster care training in eight regional training center sites, which hinders the attendance of working foster caregivers outside those eight counties.***

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) provides guidance regarding accessibility for foster parent in-service training:

The family foster care agency should provide accessible, quality, competency-based in-service training for foster parents . . . Family foster care agencies should require foster mothers and foster fathers to participate in training that meets their mutually assessed training needs, without presenting a hardship to foster parents in time, travel, or child expenses . . . In-service training should be organized so that how the training is delivered, when, where, to whom and by whom are decided as part of a master training plan, with foster parents participating in the creation of this plan to ensure that they are both willing and able to participate.

The availability, flexibility, appropriateness, and accessibility of foster caregiver training were common themes echoed by participants in the Community Forums sponsored by ODJFS and the Ohio Child Welfare Shareholders Group at five sites around Ohio during the fall of 1999. In ODJFS' November 1999 Focus newsletter, one comment crystalizes these concerns: "Recommendations should include increasing the availability of foster parent training. Training is sometimes restricted to regular office hours, which is prohibitive to working foster parents."

In order to address these concerns, ODJFS should look beyond the existing infrastructure of its public and private agency partners. One option would be to explore the development of collaborative partnerships with other state taxpayer-supported agencies sharing similar public and community missions, visions, and values. One obvious agency is the Ohio Board of Regents, the state body charged with the oversight and coordination of Ohio's public institutions of higher education. Evidence of a shared mission can be found in the following excerpt from the Board of Regents 1996 Master Plan for Higher Education:

Ohio calls upon its colleges and universities to provide a spectrum of high quality learning experiences that are accessible to all Ohioans, research that creates productive partnerships with Ohio business and industry, education and training that fosters leadership and citizenship in its students and strengthens Ohio's workforce, and services that address not only the state's needs, but the needs of its diverse communities and regions, as well.

The Board of Regents provides a system with a preexisting infrastructure of accessible two- and four-year institutions that stretch across the state; these resources could help supplement regional training center efforts and those of other public and private agencies. This existing infrastructure of higher education consists of

- C 23 two-year public university branch campuses,
- 24 two-year public community and technical colleges, and
- 13 four-year universities.

ODJFS should also reach out to the 54 private institutions of higher education in Ohio who share similar missions to serve Ohio's educational, social, and cultural needs. The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities represents the majority of Ohio's private institutions; the association has already expressed an interest in working with ODJFS to create a system that provides accessible, flexible, appropriate, and available training for Ohio's foster caregivers.

Training foster caregivers to care for Ohio's most needy citizens—children in out-of-home care—is a goal that lies at the heart of the mission for Ohio's state-assisted colleges and universities. Ohio's public institutions of higher education also contain a wealth of knowledge in their faculty, who could not only aid in the training of foster caregivers but also in conducting research that could benefit the foster care system as a whole.

***Recommendation 1-8: ODJFS should seek and develop new collaborative partnerships with institutions of higher education that would provide additional foster caregiver training delivery sites.***

*The number of educational locations and their geographic dispersion represents an opportunity for ODJFS to enhance or improve the quality of training to caregivers and services to children. This could also lay the groundwork for new collaborative partnerships with institutions of higher education in curriculum development, training for child welfare professionals and foster caregivers, and research activities.*

*Financial Implication: The costs associated with establishing collaborative partnerships with institutions of education is estimated to be \$576,000. Calculation is as follows:*

<i>Estimated number of training participants</i>	12,000
<i>Multiplied by number of training days (20 hours)</i>	<u>x     3</u>
<i>Equals total number of participant training days</i>	36,000
<i>Divided by number of participants per workshop</i>	<u>÷     25</u>
<i>Equals number of sessions needed</i>	1,440
<i>Multiplied by estimated cost per facility</i>	<u>x   \$ 400</u>
<i>Equals estimated cost for training facilities per year</i>	<u>\$ 576,000</u>

*As stated in Sub. H.B 332, Title IV-E funding should be requested to partially finance this training.*

## Financial Implications Summary

The following table represents a summary of the implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purpose of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

**Table 1-6: Summary of Financial Implications for Foster Care Licensing**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Implementation Cost</b>	<b>One-Time Implementation Cost</b>
1-1: Foster Care Licensing Staffing Increases	\$584,000	
1-3: Purchase WebCheck technology		\$707,500
1-4: Staffing for reviews of public agency records and licensing	48,000	
1-5: Staffing for ODJFS reviewing licensing packet	48,000	
1-6: Foster Care Home Inspection Staffing	240,000	
1-7: Increase Foster Care Training	1,900,000	
1-8: Establish Collaborative Partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education	576,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,495,000</b>	<b>\$707,500</b>

## **Conclusion Statement**

ODJFS should direct considerable effort and resources to addressing their staffing shortages. The number of foster care licensing specialists is slightly lower than five years ago, yet the number of foster care homes has increased 38 percent since 1995. With such a lack of specialists, it is unrealistic to expect an increasing level of quality and service for Ohio's citizens when keeping current with every day tasks is a challenge.

Checking on the backgrounds of those who interact with foster care children is an important step in protecting the safety of Ohio's out-of-home children. ODJFS needs to require annual updated criminal records checks for all prospective recommending agency employees, certified foster caregivers, and any adult member of a foster caregiver's household. In order to perform background checks more efficiently, ODJFS should ensure that public and private agencies have access to WebCheck technology, which would further enhance established checks and balances to safeguard Ohio's most vulnerable children.

The federal government plans to tighten their controls over state agency compliance. As such, ODJFS should tighten their controls over public agencies by promulgating rules and recommending statutory revisions in order for ODJFS to monitor public children services agencies as they do private foster care agencies, for the purpose of recommending family foster homes for licensure. The rules should include additional reviews of the public agency records, as well as the establishment of an incentive funding pool to increase or reduce the public agencies' Title IV-E funding based on achieving compliance and/or special program goals.

ODJFS is permitting private foster care placing agencies to have a key role in the foster care licensing process upon which the agencies also have a business interest. Such a practice increases the risk that unsuitable foster parents will enter the child welfare system. As such, ODJFS needs to enhance the process of recommending family foster homes for licensure by implementing one of the three recommended changes: require PCSAs to perform the home study and recommend the potential family foster home for licensure; have private agency continue to do home study, with PCSA verifying the information and making the recommendation for licensure, or; have private agency continue to do home study, then ODJFS would verify the information and determine whether application is certified or denied.

In today's environment, ODJFS needs to implement a licensing system that provides them with the highest level of assurance of a family foster home's suitability. The current practice of having private placing agencies perform the on-site inspections of family foster homes of which the private agencies have a business interest reduces the likelihood of identifying problem situations before they escalate. ODJFS performing the on-site inspections would also help to enhance services to foster care's most important customers— children in out-of-home care. This important task would necessitate the hiring of even more foster care licensing specialists.

Foster caregiver training has been emphasized nationally and statewide as an important component of quality foster care services. The main responsibility for Ohio's foster care training lies with ODJFS; as such, it should take on the task of improving the training standards and programs available to Ohio's foster caregivers. This will involve the preparation of improved deliverables, as well as improving accessibility of the training sessions to working foster caregivers, since they are located all over Ohio and not just in the eight counties where the regional training centers are located. Training can truly assist those caregivers whom we entrust Ohio's out-of-home children, which can improve the entire system.

ODJFS needs to exert a stronger leadership role in the oversight of state-wide foster care licensing and in its role as the key change agent and caretaker of the strategic vision, mission and values of the foster care licensing function. The recommendations discussed in this report represent a necessary and basic foundation for ODJFS changes currently under way; ODJFS should coordinate these changes with other recommendations developed by other committees and public interest groups.



## **INDEPENDENT LIVING**





# Independent Living

---

## Background

### *Overview*

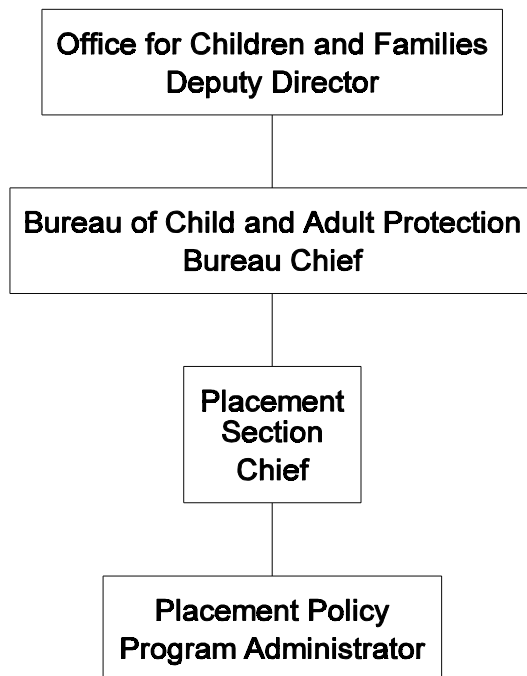
The purpose of the state’s Independent Living (IL) program is to provide assistance to youths who have been in foster care and who do not have the necessary life skills to complete basic education, find and maintain employment, or otherwise live self-sufficiently after leaving the state’s foster care system. These youths often experience such problems as educational deficiencies, homelessness, lack of employment stability, incarceration, and complications due to a lack of meaningful and supportive relationships with family members, foster families, and the community.

### *Organizational Chart*

Under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is designated the sole agency responsible for administering the IL program in Ohio. As part of a state-supervised, county-administered system, ODJFS is responsible for establishing program objectives and guidelines, determining funding distribution for IL recipients, and providing training, oversight and monitoring of program objectives. Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) administer the IL program in their respective counties; this provides them with the flexibility to determine IL needs while complying with ODJFS and federal guidelines.

The ODJFS Independent Living program resides within the Office for Children and Families; the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection administers the program.

## Chart 2-1: Reporting Structure for Independent Living Program



### *Governing Laws, Rules, and Regulations*

Those Ohio youth in substitute care who have reached the age of 16 are eligible to receive IL program services. IL programs may be continued for an individual over 18 years of age in instances when a juvenile court has retained jurisdiction and continued a dispositional order to enable the IL youth to graduate from high school or vocational school.

Under current federal rules, the following IL grant award terms and conditions apply:

- States must expend (obligate and liquidate) grant funds over two federal fiscal years.
- States must submit an annual program report.
- Within a two-year expenditure period, states must submit one annual and two semiannual financial status reports.
- States must carry out their grant obligations in accordance with Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, Section 477.
- States must match federal funds received above the basic amount, dollar for dollar.

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-42-19 is the only current state regulation in place that governs the county administration of Independent Living programs. This section focuses on requirements for independent living arrangements and contains the following:

- Each PCSA or Private Child Placing Agency (PCPA) shall conduct or obtain a life skills assessment for each child who is in substitute care and has reached the age of sixteen.
- Each PCSA or PCPA shall provide or obtain life skills services commensurate with the child's need and level of understanding.
- Placement of a child in an independent living arrangement shall only be made after the PCSA or PCPA is satisfied that general site and safety requirements have been met.
- An independent living environment shall not have more than five children residing in the home unless it is licensed as a group home.

This section of the Administrative Code does not contain administrative requirements for the program, such as requirements for fiscal accountability or training of providers.

#### *Federal Legislation*

President Clinton signed House Rule (H.R.) 3443, "The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999", into law as Public Law 106-169 on December 14, 1999. H.R. 3443, effective in federal fiscal year 2001, will provide additional support to youth leaving foster care ("emancipated youth"); the law includes several stipulations that will dramatically affect Ohio's IL program. H.R. 3443 doubles the Title IV-E Independent Living program funding available for all states, from \$70 million to \$140 million. Additionally, states are encouraged to extend Medicaid coverage to emancipated youth between the ages of 18 and 20 years old.

In conjunction with their application for federal IL funds, states must prepare a five-year plan and make several specific certifications. In developing a five-year plan, the state must consult with public and private organizations and give all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan. Among the eight specific certifications mentioned in the Rule, the more significant dictate that

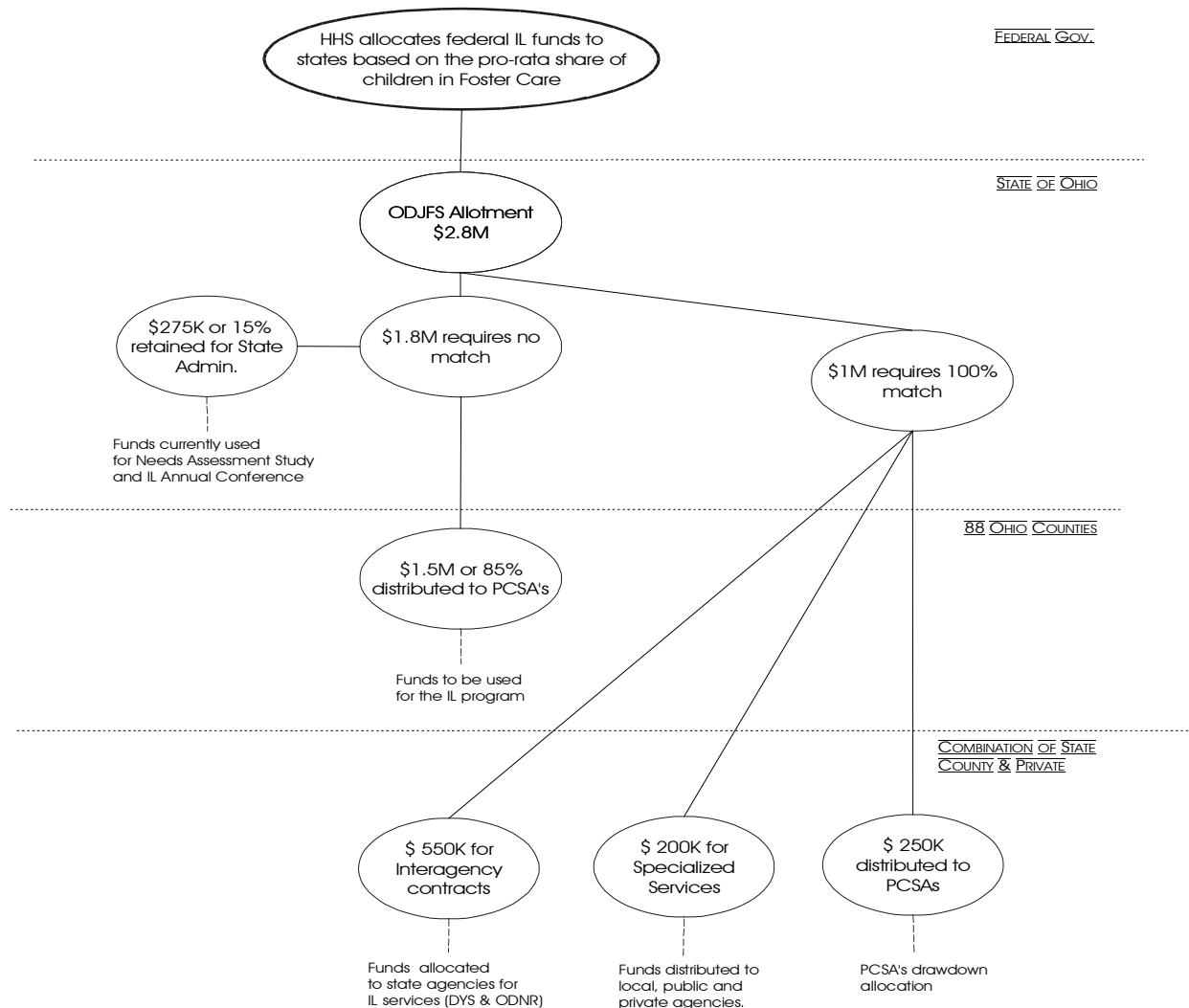
- States will now provide assistance and services to children who have left foster care between 18 and 21 years of age, as opposed to the previous 16 to 18 years of age.
- Room and board expenditures not to exceed 30 percent of IL funds are now available for children who have left foster care between the ages of 18 and 21 years.
- States are required to certify that they will use training funds provided under "Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance" to provide training for foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers to help them understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living. Currently, there is no federal requirement for IL training.

States will also be responsible for collecting data on IL program recipients beginning in federal fiscal year 2002 based on outcome measures to be developed by HHS. The rule mentions tracking such characteristics as educational level attained, attainment of high school diploma, employment status, and the child's avoidance of dependency and homelessness, nonmarital childbirth, incarceration, and high-risk behaviors as some of the outcomes to be measured in assessing a state's performance in operating the IL program. The effects of H.R. 3443 on Ohio will be explored later in this report section.

### *Funding*

To address IL needs, HHS created an annual entitlement that states can use to establish and implement services to help youths transition from foster care to independent adult living. Since 1991, ODJFS has received an annual federal award of approximately \$2.8 million in IL funds to provide a variety of services to youth, including counseling, education and vocational training, parenting classes, and health and nutritional services. In federal FY 1999, Ohio received a federal IL allocation of approximately \$1.8 million, known as the "basic amount", which was distributed to PCSAs with an administrative portion maintained at ODJFS. Also in federal FY 1999, HHS allocated Ohio an additional \$1 million, which the state distributed to other state, public, and private agencies for various IL services. Federal funding for the IL program could double for states in federal fiscal year 2001 with the implementation of the new federal House Rule 3443. This legislation significantly increases the financial resources available to service the IL program and represents an opportunity to reform the IL program's current structure and direction.

ODJFS has not historically provided state dollars for the Independent Living program. PCSAs provided a total of \$2,298,851 from their own funding to provide IL services in their counties in federal FY 1999. Such state agencies as the Ohio Department of Youth Services and the Department of Natural Resources also provided \$742,903 of their own funding, and private and public agencies receiving approximately \$200,000 through an RFP process provided an additional \$289,923 of their own funding. Currently, ODJFS disburses its IL grant award on a reimbursement basis to PCSAs, other state agencies (via interagency agreements), and public and private IL providers (via contracts), though the department retains a portion for state administrative costs. Chart 2-2 illustrates how Ohio uses its IL funding.

**Chart 2-2: Current Funding Distribution for FFY 1999 Federal IL Funds**

Approximately 85 percent of the initial \$1.8 million was distributed to PCSAs for the administration of IL services and up to 15 percent was retained by ODJFS for administrative activities, which during 1999 included the coordination and implementation of the annual IL conference and a needs assessment contract performed by the Institute of Applied Research. The state allocated the additional \$1 million (which required a 100 percent match from participants) to interagency contracts and the state's Request for Proposals, and reallocated the rest to the PCSAs for expenditures.

In 1999, ODJFS awarded the Department of Natural Resources approximately \$550,000, with Natural Resources providing a 100 percent match. ODJFS currently contracts with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to provide an employment program to youth between the ages of 18 and 21. This program provides youth with structured employment, training, and other benefits in the area of conservation and natural resources. Youth who do not have a high school diploma or GED must attend GED classes in order to remain in good standing within the program.

In 1999, ODJFS also awarded approximately \$200,000 to 25 public and private agencies through the RFP process. As with the interagency agreement, public and private IL providers must provide a 100 percent match of their ODJFS awards; as a result, they need to spend at least \$400,000 toward IL program costs in order to receive the full reimbursement of \$200,000.

Chart 2-3 on page 2-7 is an estimated funding model based on language contained within H.R. 3443 and discussions with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the cognizant agency. The estimated funding within the chart was based on 1998 data; ODJFS is responsible for providing accurate data in order for HHS to appropriately calculate Ohio's distribution amount.

The federal FY 2001 H.R. 3443 amended allocation formula to states will be based on the ratio of state to national foster care children (as opposed to the current allocation formula, which is based on the number of Ohio youth receiving foster care maintenance payments). The total federal IL allocation available for states will be \$140 million, less 1.5 percent for HHS administrative and program expenses—\$137.9 million. We estimate ODJFS' federal FY 2001 allocation amount at \$4.8 million, according to the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Ohio's Foster Care Children (18,111)}^1}{\text{National Foster Care Children (520,000)}^2} \times \$137.9 \text{ million} = \$4.8 \text{ million}$$

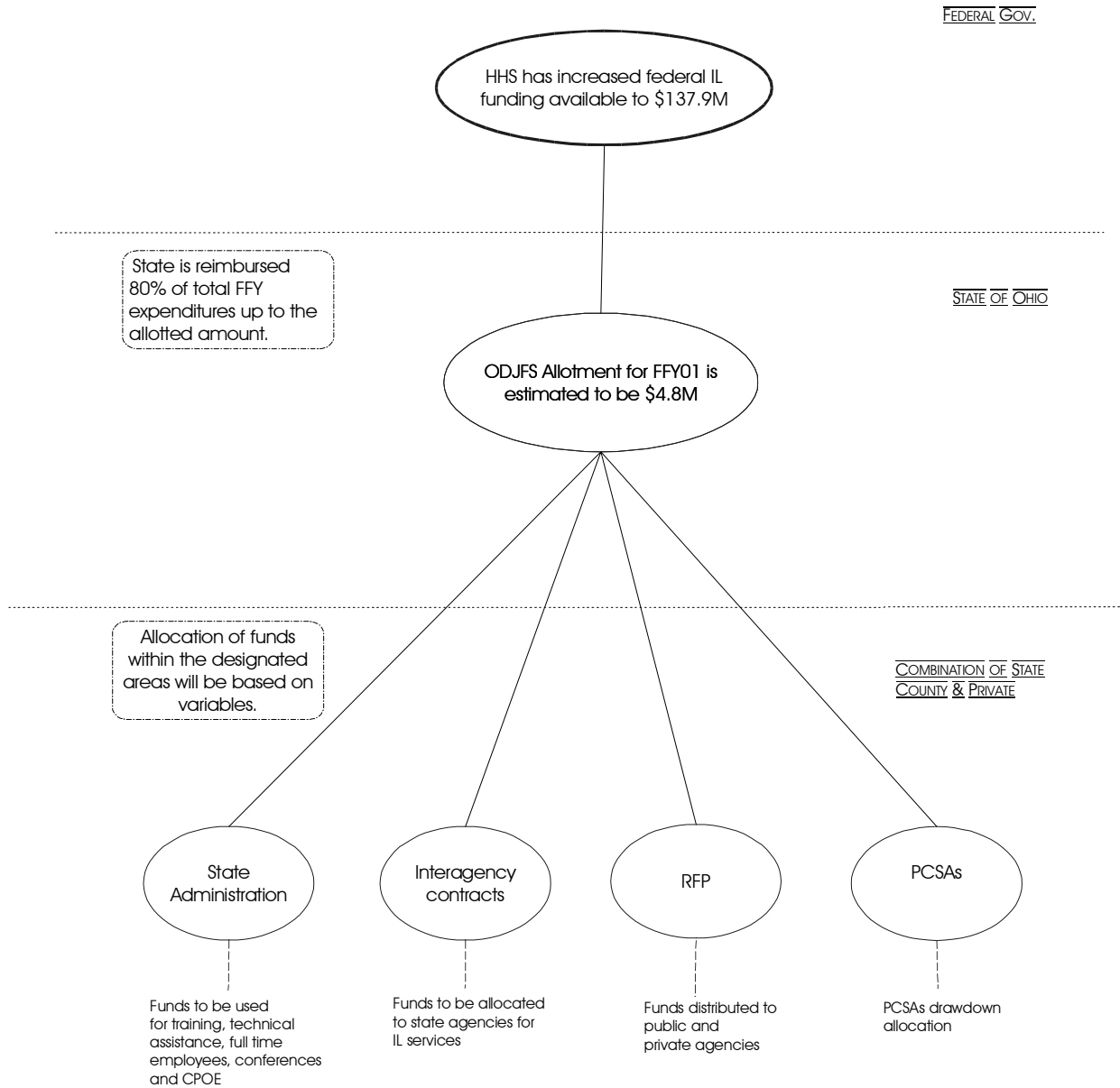
Additionally, to receive the maximum allotment, states would have to spend 20 percent more than their total allotment. For example, if Ohio's allotment were \$4.8 million, the total IL expenditures (including ODJFS, other state agencies, PCSAs and public/private IL providers) would have to exceed \$6 million to receive the full reimbursement (\$6,000,000 x 80% reimbursement = \$4,800,000). The excess \$1.2 million would come from either state, local or private funding sources, or a combination of those, depending on how ODJFS devises their IL state plan.

---

<sup>1</sup> Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS) data contained within the Ohio Child and Family Services Plan, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Child Welfare League of America data contained within Children 2000: Faces of the Future, 1998.

**Chart 2-3: Estimated Independent Living Funding Distribution for FFY 2001**



The state would define in their annual written plan to the federal government, which is subject to federal approval, what amount they estimate would be needed for administrative costs and what portion of the 20 percent would be local and/or state funded. There are no specific restrictions on the amount of administrative costs in the new law.

### *Independent Living Needs Assessment*

ODJFS contracted with the Institute of Applied Research to conduct an evaluation of the state's IL program. The goal of this assessment was to identify and describe the policies, program training, and services provided by PCSAs and private nonprofit agencies to prepare and support adolescents in their transition to independent living.

The agreement between the state and the Institute asked that the Institute perform a needs assessment of youth currently or formerly in substitute care between the ages of 16 and 21, including pregnant teens, teen parents, youth unemployed after leaving substitute care, and youth requiring services through the adult services systems. The agreement also requested the Institute perform a detailed program and fiscal analysis and program outcome evaluation of current IL services provided in Ohio's 88 counties. The outcome evaluation focused on the types of services provided to youth ages 16 and older who are in the custody of PCSAs. The Institute completed its final report and delivered it to ODJFS in March 2000.

Due to the diversity of services and profiles among Ohio's 88 counties, the Institute's evaluation should allow ODJFS to chart what specific services, practices and strategies will be most effective in using its IL funds, as well as to determine the technical assistance it will need to assure that quality IL services are provided in a consistent manner statewide.

## **Processes and Recommendations**

We reviewed the following areas of Ohio's IL program:

- C Program Administration, including
  - C Staffing
  - C Technical Assistance and Training
- C Grant Management, including
  - C Rules and Regulations
  - C Monitoring
- C Effects of H.R. 3443, including
  - C Funding Distribution
  - C Housing
  - C Medicaid Eligibility
  - C Outcome Measures



---

*Program Administration**Staffing*

***Finding 2-1: ODJFS had not allocated adequate staff resources to administer the Independent Living program. We estimate that Independent Living program tasks take about 4,750 total projected staff hours to complete per fiscal year. Currently, only one part-time employee is available to perform these tasks.***

The ODJFS Placement Section's Placement Policy Program Administrator currently administers the IL program. The Program Administrator also supervises two staff (who do not work on the IL program) and plans and administers other programs within the unit. The Placement Policy unit is responsible for six programs, including

- C Substitute Care
- C Title IV-E
- C the Multiethnic Placement Act / Inter-Ethnic Placement Act
- C Adoption and Safe Families Act Implementation / H.B. 484
- C the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), and
- C the Independent Living Program

Due to the number and magnitude of responsibilities placed on the Placement Policy Program Administrator, as well as the number of functions and tasks related to carrying out the IL program alone, the administrator has no opportunity to accomplish all of the required IL program tasks. Moreover, H.R. 3443's implementation will require states to perform additional—and more intensive—program functions. Table 2-1 outlines the major current tasks the IL program demands from the Program Administrator, the hours currently devoted to completing those tasks, the projected tasks the program will require and the estimated hours to complete each of the projected tasks.

As shown in Table 2-1, most of the current hours devoted to the IL program relate to grant administration and reporting. However, the estimated hours required to complete tasks, including those required by H.R. 3443, mostly involve developing programs and policy, monitoring, technical assistance, training, and communication. To estimate staffing for the program, we divided the estimated 4,750 hours to complete current tasks by the standard number of full-time equivalent hours—1,600—and found that the position requires full-time employment for three (2.96) employees. If the three additional employees are hired to help with these tasks, the current Program Administrator's time would be better spent supervising and guiding the three employees in addition to carrying out the duties she currently performs for non-IL programs.

**Table 2-1: Hours Necessary to Fulfill Current and Projected Program Tasks**

Major Tasks for Administering IL Program	Current Hours Devoted to Tasks	Estimated Hours for Projected Tasks
<i>Program and Policy Development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpret federal and state legislation for the purpose of developing and reviewing rules</li> <li>Write, update and promulgate rules</li> <li>Revise and interpret rules</li> </ul>	-0- -0- -0-	700 * 650 * 300
<i>Program Monitoring</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-site visits to PCSAs and other IL providers to monitor fiscal accountability and program performance</li> <li>Develop/analyze performance outcomes for public and private IL providers; monitor, evaluate and review program activities</li> <li>Interface with other state agencies; develop and monitor interstate collaborations</li> </ul>	-0- -0- -0-	800 800 400
<i>Grant Administration</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop program and fiscal requirements; review status reports</li> <li>Oversee total funding distribution and evaluate program effectiveness; monitor housing and medicaid expenditures</li> <li>Manage, prepare, review and release the RFP; review grant proposals and award funds</li> <li>Plan and prepare for the grantees conference</li> </ul>	(Total) 500	500 300 320 80
<i>Technical Assistance and Training</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide technical assistance to public and private agencies</li> <li>Identify and help develop necessary Ohio Child Welfare Training Program curriculum relevant to IL</li> <li>Respond to community inquiries, constituents letters, data requests/national surveys, media requests</li> </ul>	(Total) 60	400 300 100
<i>Reporting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare quarterly fiscal and program reports for HHS; develop and submit grant application to HHS for funding</li> </ul>	175	225
<i>Communications</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop/update an IL website, FAQs, and policy updates for PCSAs, private, and not-for-profit agencies</li> </ul>	-0-	225
<b>Total Annual Hours Required for IL Tasks</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>4750</b>

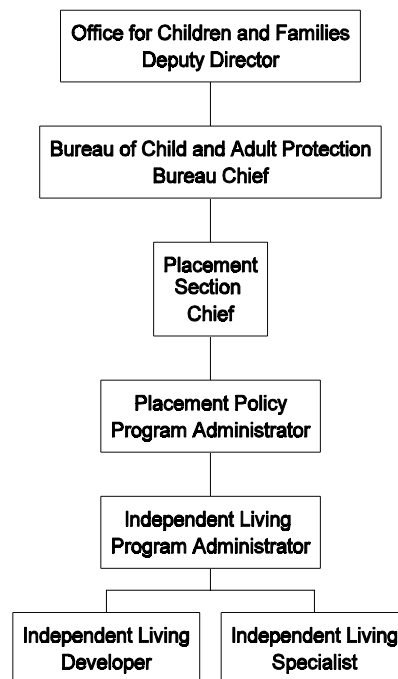
Source: Interview with ODJFS Program Administrator

\* Not included in annual total since this represents a periodic, not annual, use of time

**Recommendation 2-1: ODJFS should hire three full-time employees to carry out the tasks related to the Independent Living program.**

Thus, the IL staffing structure would include the Placement Policy Program Administrator as a part-time manager for the IL program, (since she has duties to perform related to other programs, as outlined above), one IL Program Administrator, and two full-time Independent Living staff consisting of one Human Services Program Developer and one Human Services Program Specialist.

### Chart 2-5: Proposed Organizational Structure for the IL Program



Currently, the Placement Policy Program Administrator's salary is charged to the General Revenue Fund instead of the IL grant. If ODJFS hires additional staff whose time is solely devoted to the IL program, personnel expenses could be tracked and charged to the grant. ODJFS does not have a mechanism in place for monitoring time use by employees; implementation of a monitoring system would be an important step in determining whether IL uses current resources effectively. Such a system would require the involvement of ODJFS' Office of Management Information Systems.

*By having employee time use data available, ODJFS would have a clearer picture of the time employees spent performing various tasks and functions, which would assist them in defining staffing requirements. This information could be further analyzed to identify significant concentrations of employee time; develop staffing comparisons or ratios with similar programs; evaluate the adequacy and benefits derived from activities such as training; and help ODJFS make more effective use of employee activity.*

*Financial Implications: The overall financial implications associated with hiring three additional IL employees is \$133,400, which are detailed in Table 2-2.*

**Table 2-2: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring an Additional 3 IL employees**

Human Service Program Administrator 1

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$37,689	30%	\$49,000
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		1
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$49,000</b>

Human Service Developer 1

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$33,862	30%	\$44,000
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		1
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$44,000</b>

Human Services Specialist 1

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$31,034	30%	\$40,000
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		1
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$40,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

---

*Technical Assistance and Training**Technical Assistance*

***Finding 2-2: Technical assistance is critical to the effective administration of all ODJFS child welfare programs. Due to an inadequate commitment of staff resources to the Independent Living program, ODJFS does not currently provide consistent technical assistance to providers of Independent Living services.***

Generally, technical assistance at ODJFS is available in the form of web sites, conferences, and publications. The department provides staffing for technical assistance for some child welfare programs to ensure that those programs operate as effectively as time and resources will allow. Within the IL program, technical assistance at the state level would help those charged with administering the program. Such technical assistance may involve revised processes (when federal or state policies are changed or implemented) or ongoing efforts, with resources dedicated to assisting those outside the department in carrying out program services.

Technical assistance is one of IL's most valuable tools for exerting a positive influence on a locally managed program. The work of a technical assistant would provide an opportunity to identify and share best practices. An example of this is the State of Minnesota's *Minnesota Year 2000 Best Practices Handbook*, which was distributed to all Minnesota county human services agency directors and to private providers by the state's Department of Human Services. According to Linda Ady, the Human Services Director of Information Policy and Special Projects, Minnesota "...found the best practices handbook to be one of the most useful tools we've seen, and we thought that we could help a lot of counties by providing copies of the handbook to them. For a medium or small county without a lot of sophisticated in-house technical staff, even a quick review will give them a good perspective."

***Recommendation 2-2: ODJFS should incorporate technical assistance, such as assessment and problem definition, policy research and advice (including sharing of standards, guidelines, and best practices), technical and management training, evaluation, planning, and emergency response within their Independent Living program.***

*The lack of attention to technical assistance for IL at ODJFS has made it difficult for public and private agencies to obtain information and resources on these activities. With the implementation of new federal legislation and program objectives, technical assistance will become even more vital for the department in the near future.*

*Financial Implication:*

*See Recommendation 2-1 for staffing implications, which includes an estimated 800 hours of staff time for providing training and technical assistance.*

*Training*

***Finding 2-3: Training is an essential tool in improving and providing quality Independent Living services. Independent Living training at ODJFS is not currently adequate to meet the needs of the Independent Living providers or to meet the new federal guidelines.***

H.R. 3443 requires states to use federal program training funds (Title IV-E) to train foster parents, adoptive parents, group home workers, and other professionals to address issues confronting youth leaving foster care. ODJFS' Ohio Child Welfare Training Program provides training to child welfare workers, supervisors and foster parents. A review of the Welfare Training Program's most recent training curriculum revealed only one course available which even indirectly addressed issues related to IL services.

In 1995, the Public Children Services Association of Ohio produced a document, "Effective Practice Standards," which included recommendations for IL services. This document stated that "[PCSA] out-of-home caregivers and staff should receive six hours orientation and training on the agency's IL and self-sufficiency services within their first year of service."

***Recommendation 2-3: ODJFS should develop Independent Living training courses and make them available to Independent Living providers, staff and foster parents to meet the needs of youth in Independent Living.***

*The curriculum should provide information to those individuals who work with youth in substitute care to help them understand issues confronting those preparing for independent living. This information should be coordinated with the IL training program conducted for adolescents.*

*Although the Public Children Services Association of Ohio's standards were developed for training conducted by county agencies, the state should collaborate with the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program in implementing the Association's standards at a state level, or in developing new standards for training those who work with IL youth.*

Conclusions from the needs assessment report prepared by the Institute of Applied Research should be analyzed to determine and prioritize long-term issues facing foster care youth. IL-specific courses could be included within the core curriculum for child welfare workers and foster parents, which would provide increased flexibility in training by PCSAs. Additionally, public and private IL providers should be required to take IL courses to help promote quality and consistency of care among agencies providing IL services.

*Financial Implication:*

The financial implication associated with providing IL training courses to child welfare workers and foster parents as a part of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program is estimated to be \$800,000. Calculation is as follows:

Total budget amount for regional training centers and state training coordinator	\$4,263,355
Divided by number of total participant hours	<u>÷ 21,636</u>
Equals cost of providing training per hour	\$ 197
Divided by number of participants per workshop	<u>÷ 25</u>
Equals cost of training per contact hour	\$ 8
 Multiplied by number of hours recommended per provider per year	 <u>x 6</u>
Equals cost per participant per year	\$ 48
Multiplied by estimated number of providers	<u>x 16,500</u>
Equals total estimated cost of training to IL providers	<u><u>\$ 800,000</u></u>

Source: ODJFS Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

As provided in H.R. 3443, Title IV-E funding may be utilized to partially or totally finance this training.

## Grant Management

### Rules and Regulations

***Finding 2-4: Current state laws, rules, and regulations provide limited guidance for the administration of the Independent Living program.***

Currently, there are two Ohio Administrative Code rules (OAC 5101-6-35 and 5101:2-42-19) which are primarily responsible for regulating Independent Living. OAC Rule 5101-6-35 briefly describes

the state's fund allocation methodology and allowable expenditures and OAC Rule 5101:2-42-19 outlines the state's requirements for providing life skills services, as well as IL placement and scope of services.

***Recommendation 2-4: ODJFS should seek state policy and administrative changes to revise the laws and rules that govern the Independent Living program in order to comply with H.R. 3443, as well as to develop a structure for fiscal and programmatic accountability.***

*We recommend that ODJFS policies on IL include regular inspections of youth living arrangements and periodic monitoring of adolescents to ensure they are benefitting from the program. Policies and procedures should promote structure and consistency among the service providers as to what services are actually allowable, and should be logically linked to program outcomes. Defining services allowed will result in counties and private providers becoming more efficient and accountable for types of services provided. Written guidance and technical updates should help the state reduce the number of general program inquiries, thereby making more time available at ODJFS for higher level technical assistance.*

*Since the federal government has enacted H.R. 3443 with many new IL requirements, state legislation should be enacted to include training requirements for adolescents and those who work with them, as well as accountability and tracking of program expenditures and monitoring performance outcome data on IL youth.*

### *Monitoring*

***Finding 2-5: The Independent Living program at ODJFS does not have a system in place to assure that providers of Independent Living services properly administer the funding allocated to them.***

ODJFS is responsible for monitoring provider activities to ensure the IL program funds are only used for authorized purposes in compliance with the federal program laws, regulations, and grant agreements. Monitoring can also help to determine program effectiveness through a variety of methods.

Currently, ODJFS relies primarily on desk reviews of documentation and reports, such as the Monthly 2820 Expenditure Report, to monitor provider activities and compliance. However, the current expenditure report does not provide any historical or outcome data to indicate whether adequate



progress is being made towards achieving program goals and objectives. Additionally, ODJFS has not conducted any site visits to monitor the IL program.

***Recommendation 2-5: ODJFS should develop a method of monitoring the funding, performance, and effectiveness of the Independent Living program for the various providers.***

*In order to better monitor provider progress and program effectiveness, ODJFS should revise its monthly expenditure report. In addition to providing statistics on the number of youth in care, services provided, and length of care, the report should outline the provider's progress toward achieving its program goals and objectives. The report should include a comparison of actual accomplishments to the goals and objectives established for the grant period; reasons why the goals were or were not met; an overview of the grantee's financial status, including information on the entity's total expenditures and program income; and other pertinent information, as determined by ODJFS.*

*Performing site visits is an effective way for ODJFS to monitor compliance with program regulations, review program service provisions, and provide technical assistance. Prior to site visits, ODJFS should plan and develop program-specific site visit policies, including a monitoring cycle, timetable, and checklists. Using the checklists, the reviewers could perform more efficient visits; limit reviews to relevant administrative, financial, and compliance areas; and apply uniform monitoring procedures to all the providers.*

*During site visits, ODJFS should ensure the provider is compliant with program regulations, interview staff and program beneficiaries, review documents and records related to the program, and provide any necessary training or technical assistance to help the provider expand or increase its services or improve performance. After the visit, ODJFS should share their initial findings and recommendations with the provider in a written report. This report should address each area ODJFS reviewed as part of the monitoring visit and include the provider's strengths and weaknesses. Later on, ODJFS should send a follow-up letter to the provider which discloses any monitoring findings and any recommendations to correct the findings, offers technical assistance, and, if necessary, requests a corrective action plan. To ensure the provider corrects the problem, ODJFS could schedule additional site visits or request reports or documentation verifying the problem has been corrected.*

*Financial Implication: See recommendation 2-1 for financial implications for increased staffing, which includes an estimated 1,200 hours of staff time for conducting on-site visits and interstate collaboration.*

*Effects of House Rule 3443**Funding Distribution*

***Finding 2-6: ODJFS does not currently have a plan for the distribution of the increased federal funding that will be available for the Independent Living program in federal fiscal year 2001.***

The U.S. Congress, realizing the need to expand IL services and recognizing the lack of funding available to address those needs, passed H.R. 3443, which both doubled the former federally authorized allocation from \$70 million to \$140 million and changed how federal funding is to be utilized.

On page 2-6 of this section we estimated that ODJFS would receive approximately \$4.8 million per year in federal IL funding in the future—an increase of \$2 million over the current federal allotment of \$2.8 million. Certain factors and assumptions may significantly change the estimated funding model, including ODJFS' accuracy in reporting the number of Ohio foster care children to HHS, and the accuracy of the numbers of children reported by other states.

For a full discussion of program funding and history, see the introduction, *Funding*, in the background portion of this section.

It was reported in the media in early July 2000 that ODJFS would not be receiving any additional IL funding for federal FY 2001 over the previous year's amount of \$2.8 million due to the state providing incomplete and outdated information to the federal government about Ohio's foster children. In communicating with ODJFS regarding this media notice, they indicated that it was not clear why the Ohio FACSIS data was deemed not usable by the federal government. ODJFS is currently in the process of requesting more information from the federal government regarding this issue.

***Recommendation 2-6: ODJFS should develop a strategic plan to distribute the increased funding for Independent Living in a manner that provides the maximum benefits to Ohio's youth eligible for Independent Living services.***

*ODJFS should carefully consider its near-term objectives for the IL program and bring these objectives into alignment with the needs assessment study, as appropriate. With increased federal funding and guidelines, ODJFS must assess the performance of its current funding structure, as well as how well it serves youth in the program. ODJFS should evaluate each*

*of the three current funding streams (through the PCSA, interagency contracts, and private specific-service contracts) as to the number of youth served, programming benefits, and dollars spent.*

*Currently, ODJFS does not provide any matching state dollars for the IL program. After ODJFS sets its strategic direction for the program, it should also implement a tracking mechanism for retrieving information on IL expenditures that will indicate how much money the agency (state, private, or PCSA) spends out of its own budget to pay for IL programs. This information will allow ODJFS to assess how agencies use federal funds and whether the state needs to help fund the program.*

### *Housing*

***Finding 2-7: Prior to H.R. 3443, Independent Living providers were not permitted to claim room and board as expenditures for the Independent Living program.***

Effective October 1, 2000, H.R. 3443 will permit states to spend up to 30 percent of the IL funding paid to the state for room and board of youth ages 18 up to 21. Based on national studies, interviews with state officials, and public and private IL providers, the number of transitional living arrangements is limited for IL youth. The barriers to providing transitional housing include funding, liability to custodial agencies, reluctant landlords, and lack of a structured support system available to youth while living in a transitional housing situation.

Some PCSAs currently use county funds to provide housing assistance to youth, but they do not report these funds to ODJFS as IL program expenditures. Since H.R. 3443 allows a state to spend up to 30 percent of its total allotment for room and board, these costs would now be considered eligible IL expenditures.

***Recommendation 2-7: ODJFS should establish a funding structure and standards which have flexibility in providing transitional housing arrangements for IL youth. ODJFS should also track housing expenditures reimbursed by federal funding to ensure they do not exceed 30 percent of the total state allotment.***

*If ODJFS increases allotments to PCSAs and permits them to use a portion of these funds for housing, each PCSA would have the option of using these funds according to need. Interviews conducted with public and private IL providers have indicated that the number of housing assistance programs varies from county to county; some rural counties have less*

*of a need for housing funds, but have other pressing issues, such as vocational and employment training, in providing IL services to youth.*

*If counties are reimbursed for housing, ODJFS should specify a percentage of the PCSA allotment to be used for room and board and track expenditures through the monthly 2820 reports to ensure housing disbursements do not exceed 30 percent of the total state allotment. With proper monitoring, ODJFS can reallocate housing assistance from counties that have a low need for it to those with a high need, provided they do not exceed the 30 percent limit.*

*ODJFS should develop standards for housing assistance that are linked directly to the PCSA's reimbursement for room and board expenditures. These standards may include*

- locating safe and affordable housing;*
- providing housing in close proximity to transportation, employment, and shopping;*
- defining how long a youth should be involved in an IL arrangement prior to discharge from the IL program;*
- implementing a contingency plan for youth who may experience a setback during their IL arrangement;*
- linking youth to as many resources in the community as possible;*
- determining an appropriate number of contacts (face-to-face or otherwise) based on an assessment of the youth's strengths and weaknesses; and*
- requiring staff to be on call when placing youth in a highly unsupervised living arrangement.*

*Furthermore, ODJFS should define and develop a continuum of housing assistance arrangements. ODJFS could link the length of time and type of housing arrangements to reimbursement to ensure that youth are receiving the types of skills and preparation necessary to ensure a successful start prior to being discharged from state care. These arrangements could include*

- Host Homes,*
- Semi-Supervised Apartment programs,*
- Residential Treatment Centers,*
- Shared Housing, and*
- Supervised Apartment programs.*

*Lastly, ODJFS should document its IL policy decisions for housing and other areas impacted by H.R. 3443 in its strategic plan.*

*Medicaid Eligibility*

***Finding 2-8: Youth who leave foster care often have health care-related needs, such as prenatal and mental health care. Youth who have these conditions and who attempt to live as self-sufficient adults need medical coverage to help support them at this critical point in their lives.***

H.R. 3443 allows for independent foster care adolescents to be eligible for Medicaid when they are under the age 21 and were still in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and who have assets, resources, and income that do not exceed levels established by the state.

Ohio's needs assessment study conducted by the Institute of Applied Research<sup>3</sup> attested that greater than one in every five youths who had exited IL care indicated that they could not get health care when they needed it because of the expense involved and their loss of Medicaid.

***Recommendation 2-8: ODJFS should consider providing Medicaid funding to youth between the ages of 18 and 20 who are no longer eligible for foster care in order to address their health care-related needs.***

*Financial Implication:*

*The medicaid expenditure per 18 year-old, per month, obtained from ODJFS' Office of Medicaid, is \$165, with an average of 9 months of eligibility, which totals an annual expenditure per person of \$1,481. The average number of children terminating from foster care at age 18, also obtained from the Office of Medicaid, is 1,007. A conservative estimate of 3,000 eligible children at ages 18 through 20 can be calculated from this amount. By multiplying \$1,481 by 3,000, we estimate that implementing this recommendation will increase ODJFS' annual Medicaid expenditures by \$ 4,443,000.*

*Outcome Measures*

***Finding 2-9: ODJFS has not developed standards for providing services and performance outcomes for its providers.***

---

<sup>3</sup> An Evaluation of Independent Living Services in Ohio, Institute of Applied Research, February 2000.

H.R. 3443 mandates that HHS, in consultation with state and local public officials responsible for administering IL and other child welfare programs, develop outcome measures that can be used to assess the performance of states in operating the IL program. Outcome measures can assist states in assessing the benefits of the IL programs and make adjustments, if necessary. The federal government currently legislates that the states and related parties start collecting data in federal FY 2002.

Even though the law requires HHS to develop these IL performance outcomes, H.R. 3443 has set out several outcomes it expects to be measured, such as

- educational achievement,
- attainment of a high school diploma,
- employment status,
- avoidance of dependency,
- homelessness,
- nonmarital childbirth,
- incarceration, and
- other high-risk behaviors.

***Recommendation 2-9: ODJFS should develop, promulgate and enforce standards for providing services and performance outcomes for providers of Independent Living services. ODJFS also needs to modify its current data system and intake requirements in order to compile relevant Independent Living performance outcome data from providers.***

*ODJFS should encourage Ohio's PCSAs to evaluate the need for and make available commensurate life skill services to youth 16 years of age and older. ODJFS should also encourage PCSAs to track youth who leave the children's services system, provide services for them, and ensure linkage with adult services programs.*

*ODJFS should begin planning how it will accumulate this data, since its computer system's (FACSIS) enhancements will take time to complete. ODJFS should use the results of its needs assessment and program and cost evaluation of Ohio's IL program that was completed by the Institute of Applied Research, and work with IL professionals to begin developing IL standards and outcome measures to be implemented statewide. In addition to obtaining the above-listed outcomes, ODJFS should accumulate data such as the number and characteristics of children receiving services and the types and quantity of services provided.*

*Financial Implication: See staffing recommendation 2-1, which includes an estimated 800 hours of staff time for developing and analyzing performance measures.*

## Financial Implication Summary

The following table represents a summary of the implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purpose of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

**Table 2-3: Summary of Financial Implications for Independent Living**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Implementation Costs</b>
2-1: Hiring an IL Administrator	\$49,000
2-1: Hiring an IL Developer	44,000
2-1: Hiring an IL Specialist	40,000
2-3: Provide IL training courses	800,000
2-9: Provide Medicaid funding to IL youth	\$4,443,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,376,000</b>

## Conclusion

The IL program provides supportive services to children and families when a youth ages out of a foster home. The significant impact of H.R. 3443, coupled with the current administrative weaknesses noted in this report, emphasize the critical need for ODJFS to establish a clear direction for the IL program.

Inadequate staffing contributes to operational inefficiencies and hinders efforts aimed at developing and enhancing programmatic issues. One part-time administrator who is also responsible for other programs cannot manage the current workload. ODJFS should consider hiring three additional full-time employees to provide administrative services ranging from policy development to technical assistance and training.

ODJFS does not effectively monitor or supervise the IL programs administered by IL providers; this results in a wide range of program practices among them. ODJFS should develop regulations and other guidance to assist counties in providing Independent Living services. The rules and provisions should promote structure and consistency among the service providers, logically link program goals to outcomes, and delineate what services are allowable. Defining the services allowed will result in

counties and private providers becoming more efficient and accountable for the types of services provided. Also, ODJFS should initiate or support new state legislation to provide updated legal guidance on H.R. 3443.

ODJFS should also develop Independent Living training courses for child welfare workers and foster parents to help them learn to address issues confronting youth about to leave substitute care. It should analyze conclusions in the needs assessment report prepared by the Institute of Applied Research to determine and prioritize long-term issues facing foster care youth. Additionally, ODJFS should require public and private IL providers to take IL courses to help promote quality and consistency of care among IL agencies.

ODJFS does not adequately monitor its providers to ensure they are using IL funds to achieve desired program outcomes, nor are they using performance reports and site visits or providing sufficient technical assistance to providers. ODJFS should develop standard monitoring procedures to save time and ensure uniform monitoring procedures. Performance reports can be a valuable tool in monitoring provider compliance with program-specific requirements throughout the grant period and in identifying program strengths, weaknesses, and the need for technical assistance.

H.R. 3443 will increase funding to states, thereby having a direct impact on all areas of the IL program. ODJFS IL funding may double in upcoming years; it will be crucial for ODJFS to develop a strategic plan to distribute the funding in a manner that best meets the needs of Ohio's youth. ODJFS should carefully consider its IL objectives, aligning them with its needs assessment study, as appropriate. After ODJFS sets its strategic direction for the program, it should also implement a tracking mechanism for retrieving information on IL expenditures. This information will allow ODJFS to assess how it uses federal funds and whether a need exists for additional state funding of the program.

ODJFS should establish a funding structure and standards which have flexibility in providing transitional housing arrangements for youth. If counties are reimbursed for housing, ODJFS will need to develop an internal expertise in the housing area, establish rules and regulations to govern housing, and maintain a tracking schedule to ensure housing disbursements do not exceed 30 percent of the total state IL allocation.

H.R. 3443 will continue to have a large impact on the future direction of the IL program. ODJFS must be more proactive, and less reactive, on changes impacting Independent Living. ODJFS should work in conjunction with the PCSAs and other IL providers to develop, accumulate, and monitor key performance indicators for the IL program.



**CHILD CARE SERVICES**



# Child Care Services

---

## Background

### *Overview*

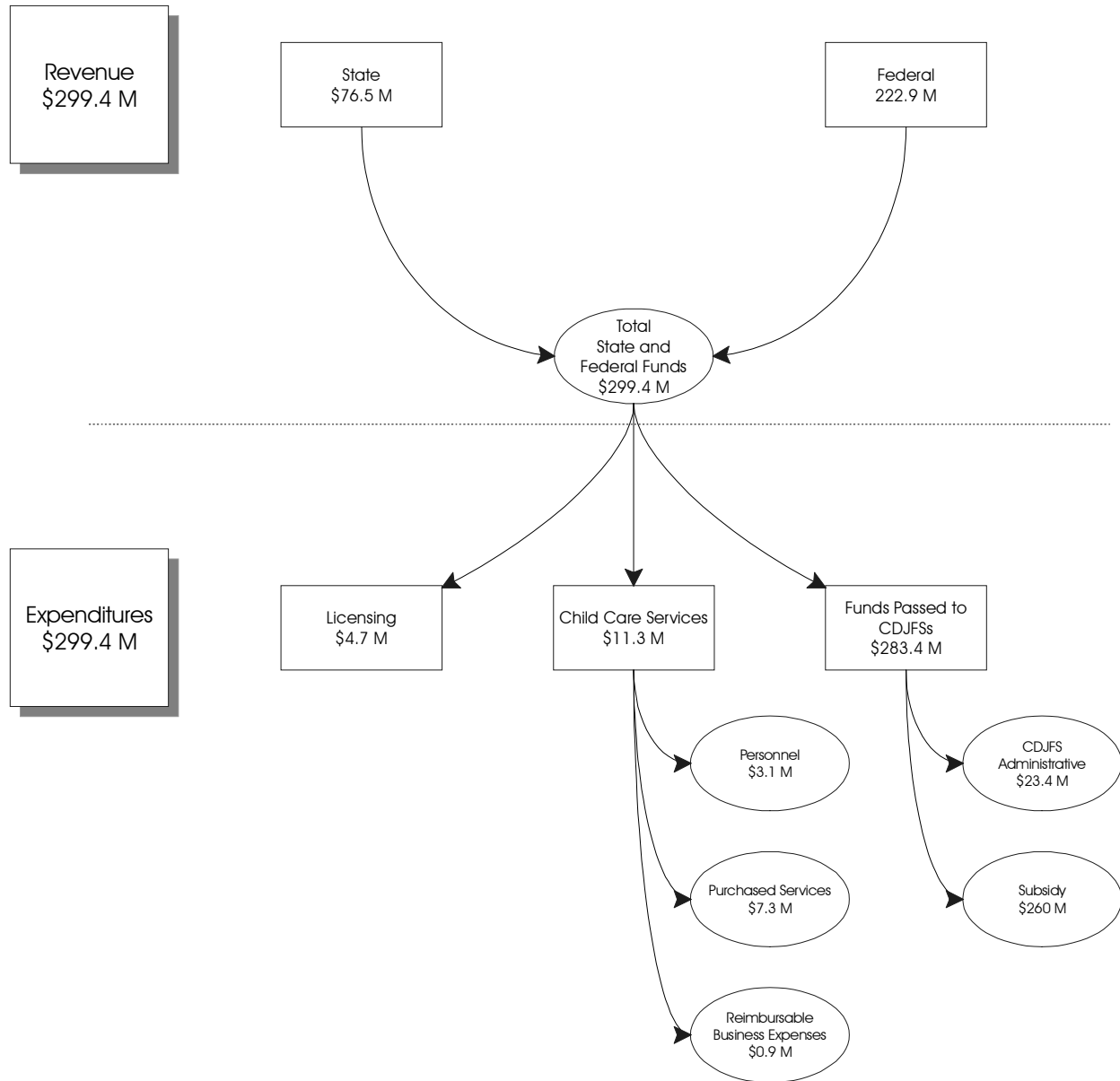
Ohio offers child care subsidies to Ohio Works First (OWF) families, as well as those transitioning from OWF assistance, to ease the financial burden of child care and help lower employment barriers. The Child Care Services Section of the Bureau of Child Care administers these publicly funded child care services. According to the Ohio Legislative Budget Office's FY 2000-2001 Operating Budget Analysis, 94 percent of clients receiving OWF Child Care services are single, female, and heads of households; they need child care services to help them maintain their employment or remain in an education or training program. For state FY 1999, ODJFS reimbursed approximately \$210 million to 88 County Departments of Job and Family Services (CDJFSs) for direct services; the counties in turn provided child care subsidies to approximately 138,000 children.

As outlined by the Children's Defense Fund in its 1999 Key Facts: Essential Information about Child Care, Early Education, and School-Age Care, many changes in child care assistance have taken place in the last three decades. During the 1970's and 1980's, the federal government provided several types of limited assistance to supplement parental child care costs. During the 1970's, the federal government required that the states spend a portion of Title XX funds on child care. In 1981, however, the Title XX program was combined with the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG); thus states could choose whether to use SSBG funds instead for child care assistance to families.

By 1988, child care assistance was recognized as an essential component of welfare reform, and the federal government created two programs as a result of the Family Support Act: JOBS—a program of child care for welfare families who were working or enrolled in job training or education; and Transitional Child Care, a 12-month program of child care assistance for families leaving welfare. In 1990, the Congress created the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and the At-Risk Child Care Program to provide funding for child care assistance to low-income working families as well as improvements in the quality and supply of child care. However, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 eliminated several federal child care assistance programs and the guarantee of cash assistance to low-income families. All of these programs (JOBS, Transitional Child Care, CCDBG, and the At-Risk Program) were included in a new CCDBG. The new grant program now provides states with child care assistance money for low-income working families or families enrolled in training or education; the grant requires states to spend at least four percent of total funds to improve the quality and supply of child care available. In federal FYs 1997, 1998, and 1999, Ohio spent approximately \$4.7 million, \$9.6 million, and \$7.2 million, respectively, on child care quality and availability. Chart 3-1 outlines the current stream of child care funds from the CCDBG, as well as a portion of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (or TANF), SSBG

funds, and state matching and maintenance-of-effort funds projected for state FY 2000.

**Chart 3-1: Budgeted Child Care Funding as Projected for State Fiscal Year 2000**



Source: State Fiscal Year 2000-2001 Budgeted Revenues and Expenditures

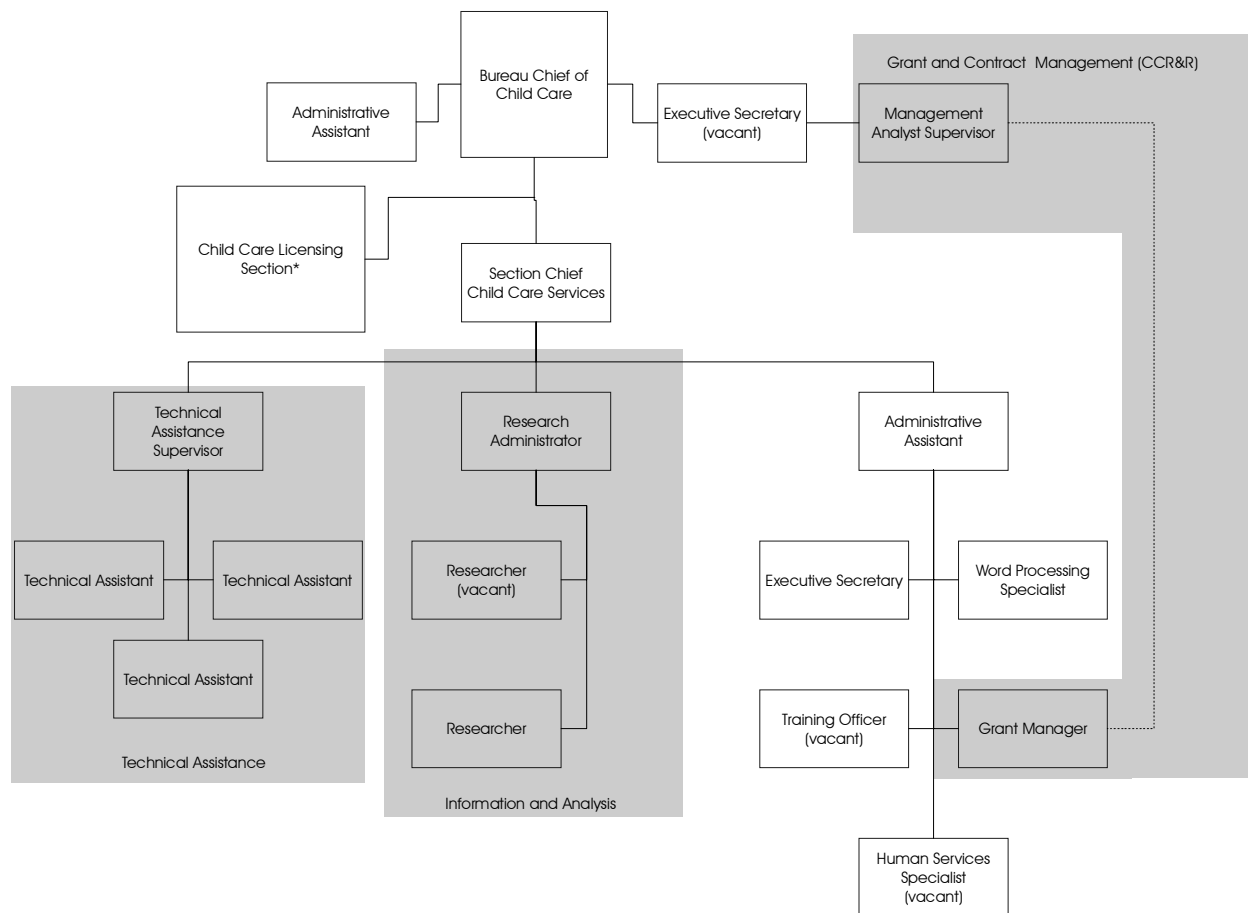
### *Governing Rules*

For the purposes of this section, rules and regulations governing child care services include Ohio Administrative Code Chapters 5101:2-14 (Certification of Type B Family Day-Care Homes), 5101:2-16 (Publicly Funded Child Care and Transitional Child Care), and Revised Code Chapter 5104 (Child Care). Moreover, Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 5101:2-16 and Chapter 5101:2-14 outline child day care eligibility and certification rules, respectively. These sections appoint ODJFS as the responsible child care oversight agency; its duties are to preside over monitoring and assist CDJFS agencies in administering child care services to the public. They also detail how ODJFS will carry out these functions.

These rules and regulations contain several key definitions—of child care, market rate, and child care resource and referral service organization (CCR&R)—associated with the delivery of child care services. “Child care” is defined as an organization’s administering to the needs of infants, toddlers, preschool children, and school children outside of school hours by persons other than their caretaker parents for any part of a twenty-four hour day. “Market rate” refers to the maximum reimbursement that a CDJFS can receive from ODJFS for the purchase of child care services. A CCR&R is any community-based nonprofit organization that does not provide child care but offers child care provider referral services to parents and training to providers.

### *Organizational Staffing and Function*

Chart 3-2 provides an overview of the organizational structure of the Child Care Services Section at ODJFS.

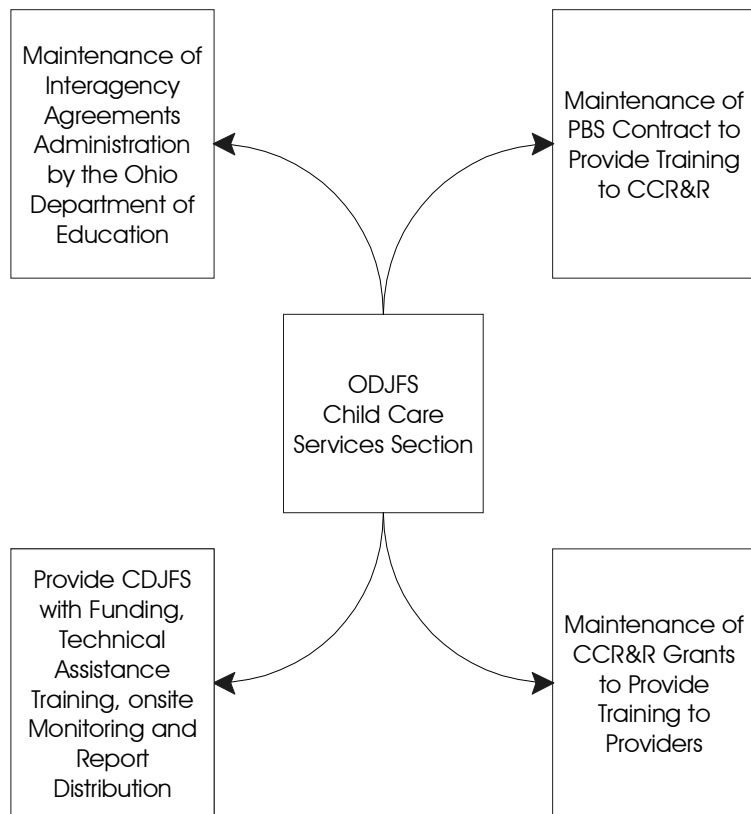
**Chart 3-2: Organizational Chart of Child Care Services**

\*See Child Care Licensing Section of the Report for Detail.

Source: ODJFS Bureau of Child Care Organizational Table, February 2000

The Child Care Services Section is located in the Bureau of Child Care's Columbus office and is managed by one Child Care Services Section Chief and a Management Analyst, with both reporting to the Child Care Bureau Chief. The Section Chief's direct reporters are also located in the Columbus Central Office. The Section Chief oversees each reporting unit and employs a supervisor with several staff members; the unit run by the Management Analyst Supervisor uses one staff person. The Bureau expects unit members to perform all key Child Care Services functions.

Chart 3-3 outlines the general function of the Child Care Services Section.

**Chart 3-3: Services Provided by the Child Care Services Section**

PBS - Public Broadcasting Services

CDJFS - County Department of Job and Family Services

Source: Interviews with various ODJFS personnel.

The Section provides key child care functions, including technical assistance and monitoring and onsite reviews of CDJFSs and CCR&Rs. It reviews and writes eligibility and certification rules, as needed; provides training to CDJFSs, determines the market rate that (in turn) determines provider reimbursement, and administers the Request for Proposals (RFP) process to award CCR&R grants.

The Section is organized into three main units: Technical Assistance, Information and Analysis, and Grant and Contract Management.

#### *The Technical Assistance Unit*

The Technical Assistance unit serves as the main conduit linking the CDJFSs child care sections to ODJFS. The three technical assistants assigned to the unit address inquiries, interpret child care rules, provide training, and perform onsite visits for child care eligibility and certification practices. The Technical Assistance unit performed approximately 78 eligibility and 63 certification onsite visits in

state fiscal year 1999. Additionally, the unit reviews and rewrites child care eligibility and certification rules as needed.

Once a month, each of the three technical assistants organizes training at a CDHS in his or her assigned unit. The training sessions concentrate on topics such as implementation of new or upcoming rules or current and past rules related to eligibility and certification. About once a year, the three technical assistants perform separate onsite reviews of eligibility and certification compliance with rules and regulations at the CDJFSs, and track and follow-up on any potential issues.

The Technical Assistance unit also steps in when child care eligibility or certification rules require review or revision. Because Ohio Revised Code Section 119.032 required a review of all child care rules during the 5-year period beginning March 1997, ODJFS has until March of 2002 to complete its first comprehensive rule review under the 1997 statute.

#### *The Information and Analysis Unit*

The Information and Analysis unit supports the CDJFSs by using the Child Care 3299 computer system—an automated tool that allows the CDJFSs to track and monitor its child care expenditures and clients. The unit addresses inquiries, performs a biennial market rate survey (and a market rate update in the second year), monitors and reports errors submitted by counties that do not use the Child Care 3299 computer system, distributes monthly standard reports to the CDJFSs to assist them in tracking and monitoring clients and expenditures, as well as taking on any other assigned duties, such as the development of the Ohio Child Care 2000 computer system—a system intended to merge the ODJFS Client Registry Information System - Enhanced (CRIS-E) and the Child Care 3299.

The unit administers the biennial market rate survey to CDJFSs, Child Care Centers, large child care homes, type B homes, and type C homes to determine the reimbursement rate for subsidized child care. It distributes the survey to a representative sample of providers in each county; once the provider completes the survey, it returns it to Information and Analysis, which enters the results into a database, analyzes the data statistically, and adjusts the subsidy reimbursement rate accordingly.

#### *The Grant and Contract Management Unit*

The Grant and Contract Management unit administers the Request for Proposal (RFP) process to negotiate the CCR&R grants, the Ohio Educational Television Association Public Broadcasting Services (PBS) contract, and two interagency agreements with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The Grant Manager performs a biennial onsite evaluation of each recipient's operation, as well as year-round monthly comparisons of recipient expenditures to budgeted expenditures.

The grants, contracts, and agreements have various purposes. The CCR&R grants provide Child Care Resource and Referral services to families in Ohio. The PBS contract provides training to CCR&Rs through educational workshops designed and conducted by PBS. The two interagency



agreements with ODE provide school-age care and training for school-age care providers.

Table 3-1 depicts the amount of funding provided to the CCR&Rs, PBS, and ODE for state FYs 1997, 1998, and 1999.

**Table 3-1: Funding for CCR&Rs, PBS, and ODE for State Fiscal Years 1997, 1998, and 1999**

Disbursement Agreement	1997	1998	1999
Grants	\$2.6 M	\$3.5 M	\$3.5 M
Contract (PBS)*	N/A	N/A	\$1.34 M
Interagency Agreement (ODE) School Age Child Care (SACC)	\$0.2 M	\$0.7 M	\$0.7 M

\*The PBS Contract began in SFY 1999.

Source: Management Analyst, Child Care Services Section

## Processes and Recommendations

The following areas and functions within the Child Care Services Section were reviewed:

- Organizational Structure
- Staffing
- Policies and Procedures
- Technical Assistance
- Training, including
  - Training Provided for County Departments of Job and Family Services
  - Training for Child Care Services Personnel
- Monitoring

### *Organizational Structure*

***Finding 3-1: Because roles among the Section's staff are not clearly defined, the Section's organizational structure does not promote efficient functioning. Also, certain support positions under the Section Chief remain unfilled, and others are not clearly defined.***

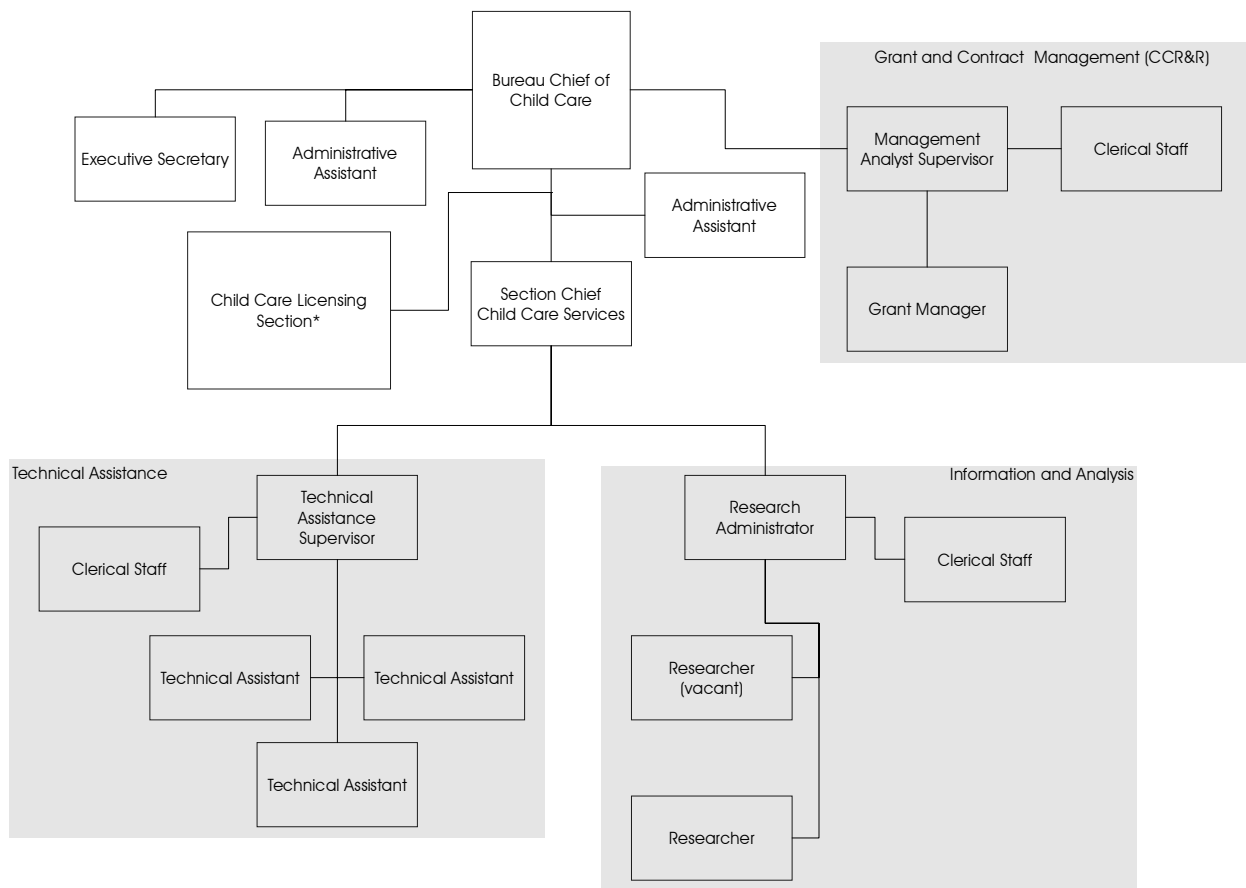
The structure of an organization should be designed to facilitate the efficient and effective performance of its mission and objectives, and should represent the authority, responsibilities and roles of its staff. Once an organizational structure is well documented, both internal and external clients and observers can understand how those within the structure relate to each other. Moreover, an organizational chart should indicate each employee's responsibilities; that is, an employee's duties should correspond with that person's job description, and personnel working with related functions and programs should be grouped into logical units.

As Chart 3-2 on page 3-4 shows, the Technical Assistance and Information and Analysis units are grouped independent of each other under the Section Chief. And while the chart shows that the Grant and Contract Manager reports to the Section Chief, in practice the Manager reports to the Management Analyst, who is organizationally above the Section Chief. Because of the confusion among these role boundaries, the Section may experience substantial inefficiencies in its ability to function. Additionally, certain administrative support positions and the two vacant positions not highlighted in Chart 3-2 support the clerical needs of each unit and the Section as a whole, with the exception of the Administrative Assistant and the Executive Secretary, under the Section Chief, who perform special duties for the Bureau Chief, such as handling difficult media correspondence, attending various meetings and committees, and preparing budget requests. These roles are not clearly defined.

**Recommendation 3-1: ODJFS management should reorganize the Child Care Services Section to establish appropriate role boundaries; it should also dedicate clerical staff to the three individual units within the Section.**

*ODJFS management should reorganize the Section’s structure so that lines of responsibility are clearly defined and logical. In Chart 3-4, a new type of organizational structure is recommended.*

**Chart 3-4: Recommended Organizational Chart**



\*See Child Care Licensing Section of the Report for Detail.

Source: Devised based on concepts from What Every Supervisor Should Know: The Complete Guide to Supervisory Management by Lester R. Bittel and John W. Newstrom , McGraw-Hill, 1992.

*As proposed in Chart 3-4, the Section could reorganize by realigning its staff, eliminating two vacant positions, and adding two clerical staff. The Administrative Assistant and Executive Secretary previously under the Section Chief would report directly to the Bureau Chief, with the remaining staff organized into defined units. Since the Section has not budgeted for or yet filled the vacant Training Officer and Executive Secretary positions, the positions would be eliminated. Finally, two clerical staff have been added so that one clerical position would be allotted to each unit. The Word Processing Specialist 2 would be reassigned to one of the three units, thereby allowing a single, dedicated clerical staff position to each unit.*

*By better defining positions in the three units and dedicating a support staff person to each unit, ODJFS would clarify personnel and unit responsibilities and management structure. Having three well-defined units would allow ODJFS upper management to better focus on holistic issues than on individual issues in each unit. Furthermore, assigning a support staff person to each unit would let these new staff gain experience with the specific functions, adding greater value to their services and reducing frustration on the part of those unit personnel needing administrative assistance.*

*Financial Implications:*

*Table 3-2 estimates the total annual cost for acquiring two additional Clerical Staff Persons.*

**Table 3-2: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring Two Additional Clerical Staff Persons**

<b>Beginning Annual Rate<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Benefits<sup>2</sup> Employer's Share</b>	<b>Total Annual Cost</b>
\$24,648	30%	\$32,042
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		2
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$64,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Word Processing Specialist 1, January 5, 2000.

2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

## Staffing

***Finding 3-2: Since 1991, the responsibilities for the Child Care Services Section's Information and Analysis unit have increased, yet its staffing level has decreased from six to two staff.***

When the Information and Analysis unit formed, it consisted of six staff: one Word Processor, one Administrative Assistant, two Researcher 2 staff, one Researcher 3 staff, and one Research Administrator. Currently, the unit consists of two staff members: a Researcher 2 staff and a Research Administrator. In addition to other duties, these two staff have the following responsibilities, according to the May 25, 2000 Bureau of Child Care Services, Information and Analysis Staffing Request:

- Managing all functions of the ODJFS 3299 Child Care On-Line Reporting System;
- Monitoring CDJFS child care and participation data;
- Providing On-Line System training to CDJFS and ODJFS staff;
- Providing technical assistance;
- Designing and redesigning On-Line System screens and functionality to comply with child care policy revisions and providing technical assistance regarding the system to all CDJFS and ODJFS staff;
- Designing, collaborating, distributing, and storing child care statistical reports, including
  - a Monthly Utilization Report,
  - a Monthly Child Care Licensing Activity Report,
  - a Bimonthly Child Care Certified Home Provider Report,
  - a Monthly Child Care state FY 2000 Statewide Subsidy Utilization Report, and
  - other ad hoc reports, as requested;
- Developing the methodology and generating the Family Per Child Monthly Co-Payment chart;
- Developing the Market Rate Survey tool;
- Collaborating with Ohio's ten CCR&Rs to ship surveys to providers and batch mail returned surveys to the Information and Analysis unit, where the survey data are manually entered into a customized provider database, then assessed, evaluated, and analyzed to establish statewide and CDJFS-specific reimbursement ceilings;
- Assessing and analyzing the fiscal programmatic impact of proposed or implemented Ohio Administrative Code policy revisions, including
  - an Absentee policy, and
  - a 200 percent poverty eligibility limit; and
- Leading the current initiative to merge the ODJFS 3299 Child Care On-Line Reporting System and ODJFS Child Care Licensing Systems with the CRIS-E System. This project has been dubbed Ohio Child Care 2000.

Information gathering, analyzing, and reporting units should have sufficient staff to effectively implement and maintain new systems while maintaining their regular responsibilities. Generally, the implementation of large, complex information systems demands the use of additional resources for training and system support; as it puts the Ohio Child Care 2000 automated system on line, the Section will need to devote additional resources to implementing and managing the system.

***Recommendation 3-2: The Child Care Service Section should hire three Social Science Research Analysts and one Social Science Research Specialist to address current and future needs of the unit and the Section.***

*Increasing the staffing level of the Information and Analysis unit will allow it to begin addressing the information needs of the entire Section. For instance, the unit could assist the Section in effectively monitoring, evaluating, assessing, analyzing, and identifying effective quality indicators. The unit could also begin proper identification of quality indicators that would aid the Section in developing statewide initiatives to increase the quality of child care.*

*Adequate staffing would also allow the unit to meet its current responsibilities. Though staffing has declined and responsibilities have increased, the unit is currently responsible for developing the structure for the child care portion of the Ohio Child Care 2000 automated system and has been assisting the Legislative Budget Office by using its market rate survey to perform a payment system analysis between the counties and providers.*

*Financial Implications:*

*Table 3-3 estimates the total cost of hiring three Social Science Research Analysts and one Social Science Research Specialist.*

**Table 3-3: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring Three Social Science Research Analysts and One Social Science Research Specialist**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost	
\$35,589	30%	\$46,265	\$139,000
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		3	
Estimated Annual Cost:		\$139,000	
\$39,020	30%	\$50,727	
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		1	\$51,000
Estimated Annual Cost:		\$51,000	
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		\$190,000	

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Social Science Research Analyst and Social Science Research Specialist, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

### *Policies and Procedures*

***Finding 3-3: The Section documents very few of its normal operating procedures and processes. In times of high employee turnover, this lack of documentation could impair the Section's functioning due to a loss of organizational knowledge.***

Written procedures document and establish the steps management takes to accomplish its overall objectives and goals. Documenting procedures offer several benefits to an organization, including reducing the learning curve to teach new staff their job duties, enhancing staff's ability to accomplish new or improved goals; and making the application of processes performed by multiple employees consistent. Also, documented procedures can be used to establish staff accountability for completing job functions. Such procedures not only provide a map to help an organization reach its goals, they also provide a solid way to mold more effective and efficient objectives.

The Child Care Services Section has several key processes and subprocesses it uses to accomplish its goals, especially in the areas of

- C Technical Assistance:
- performing certification and eligibility on-site visits;
  - Information and Analysis:
    - performing the biannual market rate survey,
    - distributing 3299 Child Care reports to CDJFSs, and
    - handling and resolving error reports for off-line CDJFSs;
  - Grant and Contract Management:
    - completing the Request for Proposal (RFP) process,
    - performing on-site visits, and
    - performing monthly desk reviews of expenditures.

***Recommendation 3-3: The Child Care Services Section should document its processes and procedures to help maintain consistent practices and acclimate new employees to their duties and functions.***

*In order to develop procedures, staff who work directly within a function should document the process or processes they perform. In addition, the initial development of procedures should involve immediate as well as upper management so that the unit can resolve any obvious inefficiencies or misinterpretations. Finally, upper management should review procedures to ensure they are consistent with management's objectives for the Section. This should also make management more familiar with the day-to-day operations of the Section.*

*Initially, outlined procedures should be identified and encapsulated for each unit. Each identified procedure should be clearly labeled with the objective of the process defined. Additionally, documented procedures should be updated annually or at the point when processes change to provide the most recent and valid picture of the Section's operations. Procedures may be written as follows:*

1. *First, an overview of the function or objective of the procedure; then*
2. *step-by-step descriptions of tasks and the time frames—if applicable—to accomplish the function or objective; and, third,*
3. *for more complex processes, an overview flowchart detailing subprocesses within the main process.*

*Documentation should provide a clear and well-defined guide for each employee to use in fulfilling staff responsibilities and duties while helping them identify inefficiencies and implement new and innovative ideas.*



*Technical Assistance*

***Finding 3-4: The Information and Analysis unit provides technical assistance to the CDJFSs for the Child Care 3299 automated system inquiries on an as-needed basis. However, the Section's Technical Assistance unit has an ongoing historical relationship with the CDJFSs and may be able to more effectively perform this function.***

For an organization to function efficiently and effectively, it should group common functions and continuously evaluate its customers' needs. Within the area of technical assistance, organizations must be able to monitor and document customer inquiries and address common issues.

Technical assistants within the Section's Technical Assistance unit have a longstanding relationship with the CDJFSs, providing assistance for child care eligibility, certification, and interpretation (since 1990); they appear to be well-suited to fielding questions of a technical nature. Personnel in the Information and Analysis unit also receive inquiries, on topics ranging from complex technical issues to standard operating questions; the unit receives between 10 and 12 inquiries per day of this nature. Because the current volume of Child Care 3299 technical questions fielded by the Technical Assistance unit is low, the unit should be able to absorb the bulk of the Child Care 3299 automated system technical inquiries without requiring additional resources. Consequently, the unit could be called upon to filter out the general computer system inquiries received from more complicated inquiries. Technical assistants may need to receive additional training to perform these duties, but being involved with the CDJFSs on this level could also help the unit assess and develop the CDJFS's training needs.

***Recommendation 3-4: Technical assistance duties arising from the Child Care 3299 System that are currently performed by the Information and Analysis unit should be transferred to the Technical Assistance unit to utilize established relationships between the technical assistants and the CDJFSs to more efficiently and effectively support the CDJFSs. Additionally, the Technical Assistance unit should document and track CDJFS technical inquiries to monitor and address common problematic issues.***

*The following steps should be taken to implement recommendation 3-4:*

- *ODJFS should shift responsibility for incoming inquiries from the Information and Analysis unit to the Technical Assistance unit.*
- *The Technical Assistance unit should maintain a log of all inquiries to*

- *identify trends and areas for CDJFS training.*
- *The unit should also divide inquiries into two categories: routine calls and complex issues requiring research.*
- *Technical Assistance should then route these more complex issues to the Information and Analysis unit.*
- *ODJFS should increase training of Technical Assistant unit employees; the unit should continuously update this training based on the nature of the inquiries and emerging issues it identifies.*
- *The unit should monitor the number of inquiries it receives.*

*Technical assistants should log all inquiries to identify trends and areas for educating CDJFS personnel. Each inquiry received should be documented in a spreadsheet and contain notations on several characteristics, including Identity of County, Nature of Inquiry, and Additional Information. Furthermore, the unit should analyze the log monthly; then on an annual basis, it should use the logs to identify training gaps. By doing so, the unit could use this latter analysis as a performance measure to help technical assistants to self-evaluate the value and completeness of training offered.*

*In order to ensure that Technical Assistance personnel accept and consistently use this analysis, the unit may need to periodically analyze the relevance and accuracy of the information maintained in the inquiry log. It may also need to revise the log over time based on the usefulness of the information obtained. For instance, if the unit determines that the descriptions are too detailed or time-consuming to log, it should evaluate and determine an alternative means to tracking and addressing the impact of services rendered.*

*Based on an evaluation of the log, the unit should also produce a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) each month. The FAQs could be maintained on the Child Care Web site or e-mailed to each CDJFS with details of a resolution. The FAQs would be especially helpful when ODJFS issues a new child care rule; this method would function as a kind of implementation guide. Over time, the use of FAQs should reduce the number of inquiries the Child Care Services section receives, and should enhance the value of the services it provides to CDJFSs.*

*To implement recommendation 3-4, the Information and Analysis unit would need to train the Technical Assistance unit and provide ongoing support until technical assistants felt comfortable answering inquiries about ODJFS 3299 Child Care On-Line Reporting. Such training and assistance should take no longer than one month. Technical assistance staff would receive an initial training session of about three to four hours; the remainder of the month would serve as a period of transition.*

## Training

### Training Provided for County Departments of Job and Family Services

***Finding 3-5: The Technical Assistance unit does not currently require that its technical assistants use a standard curriculum to address CDJFS training needs. Additionally, the Section has no documented policies regarding training the CDJFSs.***

When organizations provide training to their service providers to promote consistency in the services provided, they should take steps to standardize their training curriculum. Moreover, they should use appropriate evaluation tools to monitor a client's ongoing needs and to realign the curriculum as needed. Currently, the Technical Assistance unit provides ongoing training to the CDJFSs on a monthly and an as-needed basis; the unit's three technical assistants also provide training for new CDJFS child care employees, as well as training to CDJFSs to address new rule implementation and rule interpretation.

In February 2000, the Technical Assistance unit started administering a survey to evaluate the training and assistance they administer to the CDJFSs. The survey is intended to allow the unit to evaluate the services the CDJFSs provide and identify any future training needs. Currently, the unit's technical assistants administer the survey.

***Recommendation 3-5: The Technical Assistance unit should develop and implement a performance-based training program for CDJFSs that includes clearly stated objectives and measurable performance standards to ensure a consistently high level of quality for services the CDJFSs provide. In addition, the Child Care Services Section should continue to survey the CDJFSs on the training they receive.***

*The development of a provider training program should require input from technical assistants and should be geared toward promoting consistent training materials and methods. For this to happen, standardized materials and methods should be developed. By tailoring training in this way, the organization will promote a standardized application and interpretation of child care eligibility and certification, as required by applicable rules and regulations. It should also produce a feasible, dynamic program to reduce the learning curve within the CDJFS child care role.*

*Since the unit currently uses its survey to evaluate the services rendered by the technical assistants, it should be administered by the Technical Assistance Supervisor before the onsite monitoring visits. This is to ensure the CDJFS is receiving the proper services and any unique situations may be prepared for and addressed at the onsite monitoring visit. In addition, this should provide an evaluation tool for the technical assistants themselves to determine whether they are meeting their customers' expectations.*

*The survey should be annually evaluated to assess the relevance of topics discussed through reviewing responses for the previous year. By evaluating the relevance of the survey the Child Care Services Section could maintain the applicability by updating the survey as necessary. For instance, implementing questions pertaining to newly developed training programs could aid in assessing training. Perpetuating the survey as mentioned would enable the Section to constantly respond to its customers' training and assistance needs.*

### **Training for Child Care Services Personnel**

***Finding 3-6: The Child Care Section has yet to establish a Section-wide training program that addresses all aspects of the child care services rendered by their employees. Additionally, the Child Care Services does not have any formalized training curriculum or policy for its employees.***

Training accomplishes several essential functions within an organization. It promotes the development of staff skills necessary to meet and maintain professional demands. It also helps the organization develop staff skills that address normal day-to-day operations while providing staff with opportunities for professional growth and development.

The duties of staff within the Section range from providing technical assistance to developing and managing grants, contracts, and interagency agreements. With such a wide variety of tasks to perform, it might be difficult to design a single training program that would adequately address all tasks. The implementation of core and general training could help address these multiple training demands.

***Recommendation 3-6: The Child Care Section should establish a professional development training program for all Section personnel. Such a program could ensure that Section employees can meet the demands of their duties and have appropriate opportunities for further growth and development.***

*The overall training program should be divided into two sections: core training and general training. Core training would address the specific objectives or specialties of each unit—the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to complete each job duty. General training would address overall Section objectives—specifically, the enhancement of communication and computer use skills. Core training could be adjusted to serve any new rules and regulations governing child care or emerging issues or trends. It would also enhance the each employee’s skills to better serve customers, either directly or indirectly. The core training program developed for each unit might include (but need not be limited to) courses addressing services to customer, techniques to gather and analyze data, and skills involved in administering grants, contracts and interagency agreements. Table 3-4 details these services.*

**Table 3-4: Examples of Core Competencies Addressing Each Unit**

Unit	Core Competency
Technical Assistance	Methods of Instruction
	Organizational Structural Design
	Technical Writing
Information and Analysis	Continuation of Statistical Sciences
	Surveying Methods
	Basic Information and Technology
Grants and Contract Management	Monitoring Methods
	Technical Writing
	Organizational Structural Design

*Each core competency listed in Table 3-4 would be aimed at enhancing key services that each unit provides. For instance, the Technical Assistance unit provides training to the CDJFSs and conducts on-site visits to assist CDJFSs in adhering to eligibility and certification rules. Additionally, technical assistants write a minimal amount of correspondence to the CDJFSs, such as entrance notifications, reports, and exit agendas. Training in these specific areas would serve as essential core skills.*

*In contrast, general training addresses the Section as a whole and should involve training in areas that apply to the entire Section. Such training might explore communication methods, including training techniques and client communication, management techniques, and basic computer use skills. Because the Section*

*provides client services (whether to CDJFSs, CCR&Rs, or to its own staff), basic communication skills would allow it the ability to effectively communicate, implement, and achieve its goals with a clear understanding of intended outcomes.*

*The Section's employees also make management decisions about the adequacy of client operations. For example, the technical assistants indirectly manage CDJFS operations. By training them in better management techniques, the Section could provide its staff with the skills to enhance the decision-making process.*

*Finally, the Section could benefit from better staff computer skills. Each employee of the Section uses a personal computer to organize daily functions and a word processor to generate written communication. Improving basic computer use skills could help the Section cut costs and improve staff efficiency.*

*To accomplish these general training objectives, management should consider using training provided internally by the ODJFS Office of Professional Development and Quality Services (OPDQS). The OPDQS is responsible for training to all state and county ODJFS employees. A review of OPDQS's most recent directory of internal training programs revealed a number of courses that address general training subjects (see Table 3-5).*

**Table 3-5: Training Subjects which Apply to a General Training Program**

<b>Program Description</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Program Length</b>
Communication methods including training techniques and client communication.	Learning, Communication, Coaching, Change	2 to 3 hours
Management techniques.	Management (Leadership) (Supervision)	3 hours
Information technology and computer utilization skills.	Computer Training	3 hours. to 1 day

Source: ODJFS Office of Professional Development and Quality Services, Bureau of Personnel Development, March 2000.

*The Section should continuously evaluate its training program to keep apprized of emerging issues and modify its offerings accordingly. It could also identify training requirements through its performance evaluation process. These ongoing appraisals would prevent the Section's offering unnecessary or outdated training to child care services employees. Once it has established a training process, the Sections should require its management to monitor staff training to ensure each employee receives the appropriate type and amount of training. For example, since Section employees*

have no set continuing educational requirements, it was determined that staff should be required to take between 40 and 60 hours of core and general training annually.

*Financial Implications:*

Table 3-6 estimates total annual cost for providing both core and general training.

**Table 3-6: Annual Financial Implication Providing the Aforementioned Core and General Training for Child Care Services Section Personnel**

Competencies	Registration Fee Per Employee	Number of Employees	Total Cost
Methods of Instruction <sup>A</sup>	\$150 to \$1,675 <sup>1</sup>	4	\$600 to \$6,700
Data Collection and Analysis <sup>B</sup>	\$695	4	\$2,780
Successful Letter Writing <sup>B</sup>	\$395	4	\$1,580
Data Collection and Analysis <sup>B</sup>	\$695	7	\$4,865
Cost Benefit and Analysis Workshop <sup>B</sup>	\$425	7	\$2,975
Basic Statistics <sup>B</sup>	\$545	7	\$3,815
Introduction to Program Evaluation <sup>B</sup>	\$695	3	\$2,085
Project Management <sup>B</sup>	\$545	3	\$1,635
Cost Benefit and Analysis Workshop <sup>B</sup>	\$425	3	\$1,275
Learning, Communication, Coaching, Change <sup>C</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>	15	\$5,000
Management (Leadership) (Supervision) <sup>C</sup>			
Computer Training <sup>C</sup>			
<b>Estimated Total Cost:</b>			<b>\$30,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>The range \$150 to \$1,675 per employee represents:  $[(\$6,500 \div 60) + \$50] = \$158$  " \$150, and  $[(\$6,500 \div 4) + \$50] = \$1,675$  assuming ODJFS would have to bear the entire cost of the training and only meal costs for the four employees. The total theoretical cost of this type of training is  $[\$6,500 \text{ registration} + (60 \times \$50) \text{ for meals}]$  or \$9,500 based on 60 employees.

<sup>2</sup>This training is provided internally therefore has no documented registration fee.

<sup>A</sup>Provided through the TOPS program by the University of Cincinnati.

<sup>B</sup>Provided through the Graduate School, USDA program. Obtained in the [Nationwide Training 2000](#) catalog.

<sup>C</sup>Provided through ODJFS Office of Professional Development and Quality Services (OPDQS) Directory of Internal Training Programs.

Sources: TOPS in Human Services website: <http://topsnet.org>

Graduate School, USDA; [Nationwide Training 2000](#) catalog.

ODJFS Office of Professional Development and Quality Services (OPDQS)

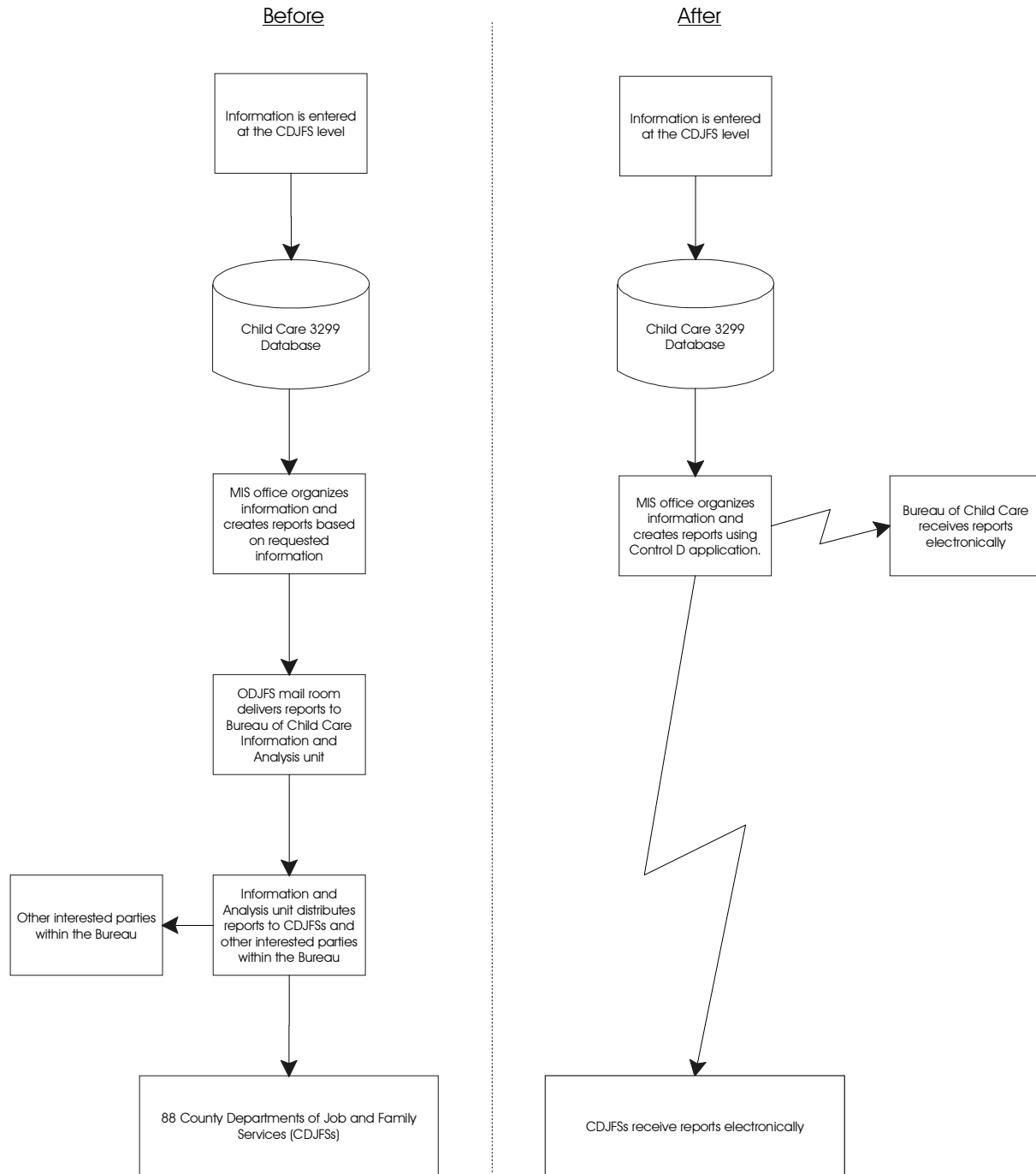
*Monitoring*

***Finding 3-7: The Section currently has no way of allowing key personnel to access monitoring data in a timely fashion. Moreover, its report distribution by way of interoffice mail slows the dissemination of monitoring data and information.***

The Child Care Services Section gathers information from providers and relies on the ODJFS Office of Management Information Systems (MIS) to organize the data into reports. Once generated, the reports are delivered to the Information and Analysis unit through interoffice mail, which sorts and organizes them by CDJFS and mails them out. This process typically takes about two to three weeks. The volume of reports and the method of distribution both affect report timeliness. Chart 3-5 outlines the current way reports are produced and distributed, as well as suggesting a faster, more efficient way to distribute reports: electronically.



**Chart 3-5: Overview Flow of Child Care Services Reports**



Source: Research Administrator, Information and Analysis unit.

The ability for users to prepare data into specific reports addressing one-time needs would be advantageous when gathering information for management, legislative, or public requests. One option could be data warehousing which could cost nearly five million dollars to implement, not including ongoing operational costs. Another less costly, more preferred option is to utilize software applications such as Crystal Reports, Statistical Analysis System (SAS), Audit Command Language (ACL), or Corel Paradox that enable users to extract information from a database to address specific one-time or sporadic needs. ODJFS has already purchased a substantial number of Crystal Reports application licenses so they would not incur additional costs to license Child Care Services employees.

Implementing an application to allow access for users responsible for oversight (specifically the Research Administrator of the Information and Analysis section), as well as the ability to better manage its data, enables management to address information requests in a timely and accurate manner. This could allow users to analyze data to address specific information needs. One possible outcome would be the user could monitor child care statistical information efficiently. Another advantage to acquiring such an application is the user would not have to submit a request for information and wait to receive the information, saving days, if not weeks, of waiting for the data, depending on the complexity of the request.

***Recommendation 3-7: ODJFS should consider implementing an application to allow users responsible for oversight to access timely monitoring data. The Department should also consider remitting electronic reports to reduce printing costs and delivery delays associated with mailing.***

*The apparent benefits of implementing the aforementioned recommendation would be threefold: increased timeliness of report distribution to the CDJFSs, elimination of mailing costs, and decreased printing costs.*

*In order to better manage its data, the user(s) would have to obtain the report in a specific file format, depending on the software application used. Reports needed for statistical analysis could be pre-identified, allowing ODJFS MIS to convert and e-mail identified reports as batches are generated. Thereby, this would allow the user to import report files into the selected application as received and perform ongoing analyses to identify possible issues and inefficiencies along with producing timely sporadic statistical reports, as requested.*

*The Department could utilize the Control D application, enabling reports to be compiled and electronically mailed to the user, which would allow the user to select and print reports that are needed. With Control D, the user can view both current and historical reports. Additionally, depending on the type of installation, reports may be printed by screen, a preselected page or range of pages, or the entire report.*

*For example, rather than printing all the reports at ODJFS MIS as depicted in the “before” column of Chart 3-5, the use of Control D would significantly streamline the process as depicted in the “after” column of Chart 3-5. An advantage of more timely reports would be that the Information and Analysis staff would not have to manually stuff envelopes, a process taking weeks, and could concentrate on technical issues such as the implementation of Ohio Child Care 2000 or addressing technical inquiries. For example, it currently takes approximately two to three weeks for a report to be generated and distributed; implementing the electronic distribution process reports would take approximately an hour to be available for viewing.*

*Implementing Control D in this way could eliminate two unnecessary steps from the process illustrated in the before portion of Chart 3-5. The reports would not have to be printed, stuffed, and forwarded to the ODJFS mail room; therefore the Information and Analysis section would not have to sort and distribute the reports for the CDJFSs and other interested parties, thereby freeing clerical and technical personnel to perform more value-added duties such as data entry and addressing technical inquiries, respectively. Additionally, this revised method of obtaining data will enable the section to maintain historical reports on electronic backup in order to perform trend analyses and determine impact of strategic initiatives.*

*Implementation of Control D would have virtually no cost implications. To fully utilize the application, the user should be trained. CDJFSs could access Control D one of two ways, either through dialing in to the ODJFS mainframe or through a CRIS-E terminal. The only step that would require implementation would be the process of obtaining a Control D userid.*

*The collaboration of MIS and Child Care Services personnel will be essential for the successful implementation of this recommendation. Once MIS project administrators and assistants implement applications that create the ability to extract data from the child care services database and organize that data into meaningful reports, Child Care Services personnel can use that data to monitor the Child Care Services Section, CDJFSs, CCR&Rs, ODE, and PBS. The MIS and Child Care Services personnel should meet consistently at least twice per year, focusing on implementation of our recommendation 3-7 and other data-related issues that arise. In addition, the group should continue to record and keep formal meeting minutes to keep them focused, ensure continuity of effort, and communicate progress to management.*

*Financial Implications:*

Table 3-7 estimates cost savings of implementing electronic distribution of reports.

**Table 3-7: Annual Cost Savings of Implementing Electronic Distribution of Reports**

Cost Description	Annual Amount of Cost Savings
Printing Costs <sup>1</sup>	\$20,500
Mailing Costs <sup>2</sup>	500
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>Cost based on an estimated 23,256 annual pages printed at a cost of 3¢ a page. Also, approximately 1000 personnel hours may be saved annually.

<sup>2</sup>Cost estimated based on bulk mailing to District Offices taking into account frequency and volume.

Source: ODJFS Office of Management Information Systems; Ohio Data Network; and ODJFS Office of Children and Families Services, Bureau of Child Care, Child Care Licensing Section.

Table 3-8 depicts the cost implications of *recommendation 3-7*.

**Table 3-8: Cost Implications of Implementing Crystal Reports 6.0, Training One Supervisor, and Implementing an Electronic Distribution of Reports.**

General Description	Cost Description	One-Time Cost Amount
Implementation of Crystal Reports 6.0	One-Time Training per User (8 users at approximately \$2,500 each for development and other costs)	\$20,000
	Total Cost	\$20,000

Source: ODJFS MIS; and ODJFS Office of Professional Development and Quality Services.

## Financial Implications Summary

The following table represents a summary of the implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purpose of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

**Table 3-9: Summary of Financial Implications for Child Care Services**

Recommendation	Annual Implementation Costs	One-Time Implementation Costs	Annual Cost Savings
3-1: Hiring two additional Word Processor Specialists	\$64,000		
3-2: Hiring three Social Science Research Analysts and one Social Science Research Specialist	190,000		
3-6: Providing Training to Child Care Services Personnel	30,000		
3-7: Implement electronic distribution of reports and train key personnel on Crystal Reports.		\$20,000	
3-7: Savings associated with printing and mailing via electronic distribution of reports.			\$21,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$284,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>

## Conclusion

The Child Care Services Section's actual organizational structure varies significantly when compared to its documented table of organization. According to the April 1, 2000 table of organization prepared and approved by the ODJFS Human Resources, the Section has two defined units, when in practice the Section is divided into three units. This could lead to some Section personnel being confused as to their roles and responsibilities and could create an atmosphere where the most efficient delivery of services is not the number one priority.

The Child Care Services Section's Information and Analysis unit has had a decline in staff since the early 1990's. The leading cause for this is the Section not replacing and even eliminating vacated positions. The Section's vision for the future is to base recipient funding on the outcome of performance indicators. Without the proper staffing the Section will undoubtedly lose the ability to

identify and analyze indicators, thereby diminishing their ability to determine programmatic outcomes.

The Child Care Services Section does not have documented procedures for most of its main functions. Although the Grant and Contract Management unit has limited procedures documented from the previous grant year, key processes may not be performed if the Section were to experience high turnover. The Section should document all key processes and continually update documented processes as they evolve to ensure, in the event of key employee turnover, assimilation time is minimized.

The Child Care Services Section's Technical Assistance unit has a historical relationship with the Child Care areas of the CDJFSs, yet the unit is not utilized to address all areas of technical assistance available to the CDJFS. Without routing all CDJFS child care inquiries through the Technical Assistance unit, the Child Care Services section is forgoing utilizing a long historical relationship between the CDJFS and the unit. By not simplifying the inquiry process to one single point of contact, the section will maintain a system of multiple contacts, which could lead to some CDJFS frustration and not provide an efficient delivery of assistance services.

The Technical Assistance unit also provides training to the CDJFS Child Care areas, yet the unit has not developed a standardized training program for training provided to CDJFSs. Without a standard training program for assimilating new CDJFS employees, the section could hinder its ability to maintain consistency throughout the state among CDJFSs in the application of child care eligibility and certification rules.

Currently, the Child Care Services Section does not have any formalized training for its employees. Without ongoing professional development, personnel may not maintain the necessary level of skills and knowledge to provide quality services to the Section's clients. In the future, a lack of development could equate to Ohio's child care delivery of services falling behind national practice, creating an underdeveloped, outdated child care system.

The Child Care Services section has taken strides toward utilizing technology to accomplish its information needs. The Information and Analysis unit serves as the main conduit between the Section and its employees and clients. The unit has aided in the development of a Child Care 3299 On-Line Reporting system and is currently active in developing and implementing the Ohio Child Care 2000 automated system. This system will combine CRIS-E and the 3299 system into one large automated system and will be able to track clients in the system more adequately. However, other technologies should be pursued to enable the Section to consistently gain efficiencies. Continued growth and efficient utilization of information technology will assist in ensuring timely inspections and accurate up-to-date analysis of the status of child care centers in Ohio, further ensuring the safety of children.

**CHILD CARE LICENSING**





---

# Child Care Licensing

---

## Background

### *Overview*

According to the Children’s Defense Fund’s 1999 edition of Key Facts: Essential Information about Child Care, Early Education, and School-Age Care, an estimated 13 million U.S. children under the age of six are in the care of someone other than their parents each day, many for several hours or more. Sixty-five percent of mothers with children under age six, 78 percent of mothers with children ages six to thirteen, and 61 percent of mothers of infants are in the labor force. Ohio’s statistics are nearly identical to the national averages.

The availability of good, reliable child care is obviously vital to working parents in the 21st century. Such care has been currently receiving increased media attention within the State of Ohio. The licensing of child care providers is administered by the state—the purpose of this licensing being to promote child health and safety by establishing and monitoring certain child care standards. In 1970, Ohio became the 48th state to pass child care licensing laws; within two years Ohio had licensed approximately 1,200 centers. Currently, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) utilizes 47 field staff to monitor over 3,400 licensed centers and large family homes.

### *Governing Rules*

For purposes of our review in this section, child care licensing rules and regulations include

- C the Ohio Administrative Code, Chapters 5101:2-12, “Licensing of Child Day Care Centers”; 5101:2-13, “Licensing Type A Family Day-Care Homes”; 5101:2-17, “Licensing of School Child Day Care Centers”; and 5101:2-18, “Child Day Camps”; and
- C the Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 5104, “Child Day Care.”

According to Ohio Revised Code Section 5104.01, a child care center is defined as any place with thirteen or more children in attendance at one time that provides child care, or any place with seven to twelve children that is not a permanent residence of the licensee or administrator, or any place with four to twelve children if four or more children are under two years of age. A “type A,” or large family home, is a child care administrator’s permanent residence where child day care is provided for seven to twelve children, or to four to twelve children if four or more children are under the age of two. Revised Code Chapter 5104 and Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2 define child day care as “administering to the needs of infants, toddlers, preschool children, and school children outside of school hours by persons other than their parents or guardians, custodians, or relatives by blood, marriage, or adoption for any part of the twenty-four hour day in a place or residence other than a

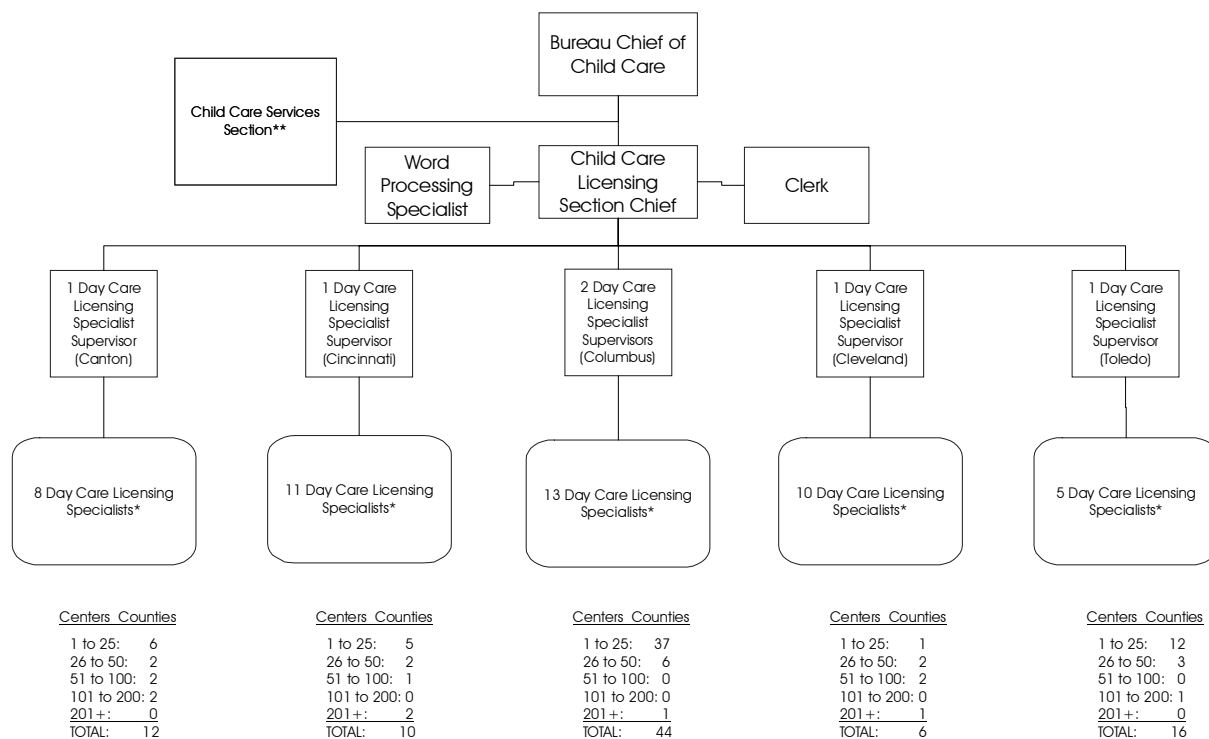
child's own home.”

Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-13-02 states: “No person, firm, organization, institution, or agency shall operate, establish, manage, conduct, or maintain a type A family day-care home without a license issued under Section 5104.03 of the Revised Code. These sections expressly state the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) should oversee the licensing of centers and type A homes; the sections also detail how ODJFS should perform this function.

### Organizational Staffing

Chart 4-1 provides an overview of the child care licensing function, the ODJFS staffing levels, and the county makeup of each district office. The state categorizes counties based on size, from small (a county contains from 1 to 25 centers); medium (26 to 50 centers); large (51 to 100 centers); small metropolitan (101 to 200 centers); and large metropolitan (over 201 centers).

**Chart 4-1: Organizational Chart of Ohio Child Care Licensing**



\*Average number of day care licensing specialists throughout 1999.

\*\*See Child Care Services Section of the Report for Detail.

Source: ODJFS Bureau of Child Care Organizational Table, December 1999.

ODJFS Report NPR510RA, June 1999.

*Organizational Function*

## The Child Care Licensing Section

- C licenses child care centers and type A homes;
- C inspects licensed centers and type A homes;
- C investigates consumer complaints and allegations; and
- C enforces child care licensing rules and regulations at noncompliant centers.

ODJFS operates child care differently than it operates other child welfare functions. Child care licensing in Ohio is state-supervised and state-administered (as opposed to county-administered), making its effect on statewide child care services more direct or streamlined.

The section is managed by one licensing Section Chief, located at the Bureau of Child Care's Central office in Columbus; the Section Chief currently has two support staff. The Section's five district offices report directly to the Chief. One or two day care licensing specialist supervisors manage staff at the district offices, who are referred to as day care licensing specialists. Each day care licensing specialist is expected to perform all key Section functions.

Throughout the year, Section personnel license child care units as they receive applications. Before recommending the applicant for full licensure, the day care licensing specialists ensure that each applicant submits a completed application, application fee, and plan of operation; the specialists also conduct required inspections. The state also requires each licensed center and type A home to renew its license once every two years. In addition, the section uses the child care database located on the ODJFS mainframe computer to track license expirations. The State of Ohio had an estimated 3,631 child care centers and 83 type A home licenses in effect as of December 31, 1999.

Section personnel inspect child care centers in order to assess the provider's compliance with child care rules and regulations. ODJFS also requires inspections before it can issue, maintain, or renew the licenses of centers and type A homes. Once the state grants a license, the facility is inspected annually (if it is a part-time center) or biannually (if it is full-time). Inspectors examine the center's plan of operation and on-site facilities and provide written reports to providers. The written report includes any information on noncompliance, as well as any actions the center must take to correct violations and the date by which the center must complete corrective activity. In 1999, the section performed approximately 6,490 inspections.

Inspectors generally start their investigations as soon as they receive a complaint about a licensed provider or alleged operation. (An "alleged operation" is the term used for an unlicensed provider who is caring for more children than the law allows.) The inspectors must begin any investigation of complaints alleging serious life, health, or safety risks within 24 hours of complaint receipt. The investigation and any action taken to correct all other complaints must be completed within five working days of the complaint's receipt. When allegations include complaints about child abuse or

child neglect, the section will notify the local public children services agency to arrange a joint inspection. Once performed, the inspection is included in written summary of findings produced by the section, along with a list of any actions the provider must take. According to ODJFS' Second Annual Child Care Licensing Report: January 1999, the section initiated an investigative action on nearly 3,000 of the almost 6,500 complaints it received during a recent review period.

The state initiates enforcement action when a center or type A home is no longer safe for child care. The section takes such action when a provider consistently violates rules they cannot or will not comply with, or when the provider has committed major rule violations and immediate action is necessary. After the section takes action, such as recommending a hearing, enforcement usually results in the denial or revocation of a provider's license. The outcome for "alleged operations" could include injunctions and contempt rulings handed down by a court of law. Between 1997 and 1999, the section engaged in 31 enforcement actions—12 against licensed providers and 19 against unlicensed providers.

### *Funding*

Over the years, Ohio has funded its child care licensing function in a variety of ways. From 1970 to 1990, the section was predominately state-funded. Although federal funding was introduced in 1990 with the advent of the Child Care Development Block Grant and the At-Risk Child Care Program, funding still came primarily from the state. However, the Block Grant and At-Risk programs recognized the need and provided funds for a greater public role in improving child care. In 1996, federally funded child care programs were condensed into the Block Grant; these are now commonly referred to as the Child Care Development Fund, which has led to a largely federally funded licensing system.

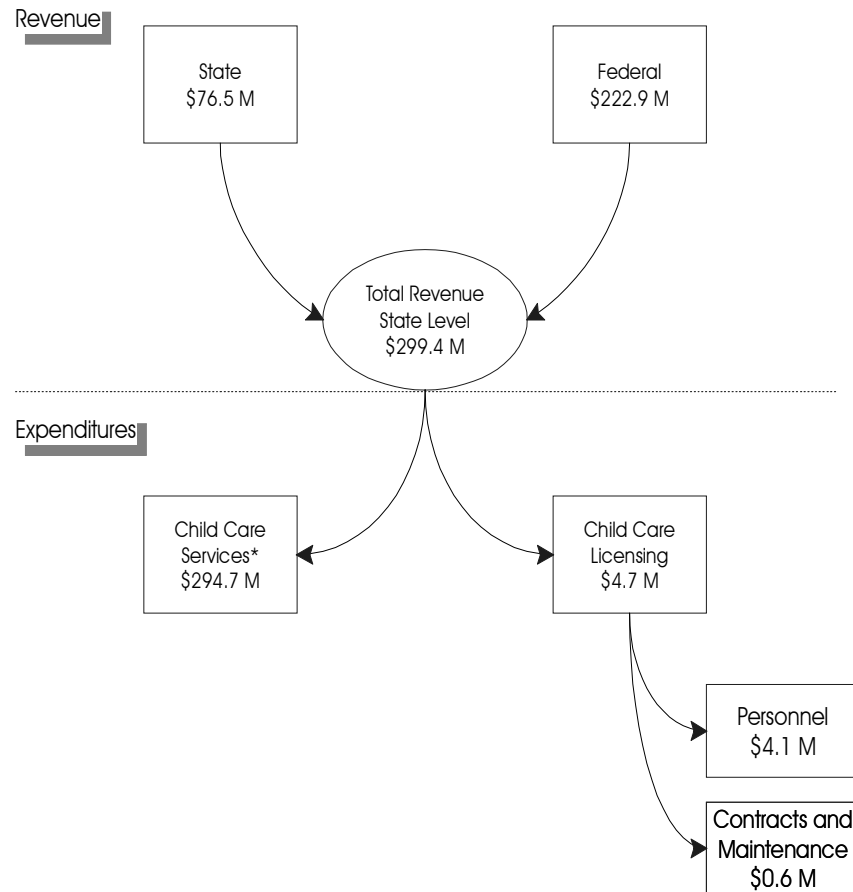
Table 4-1 denotes funding provided for child care as a whole through state and federal funds. In addition, the table depicts the dollar amount of child care licensing expenditures for state fiscal years 1997, 1998, and 1999.

**Table 4-1: Funding Provided for Child Care as a Whole and Child Care Licensing Expenditures for State Fiscal Years 1997, 1998, and 1999.**

REVENUE	State Fiscal Years		
	1997	1998	1999
Federal (Child Care Development Fund, TANF)	Unavailable	\$162,615,495	\$190,642,509
Federal (Title XX Social Services Block Grant)	Unavailable	8,431,191	15,218,984
State	Unavailable	123,353,150	81,699,660
Federal and State Matching	Unavailable	80,178,729	61,774,008
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Unavailable</b>	<b>\$374,578,565</b>	<b>\$349,335,161</b>
EXPENDITURES	1997	1998	1999
Direct Services	Unavailable	\$247,485,295	\$210,451,414
Maintenance-of-Effort	Unavailable	91,032,297	45,403,943
TANF Child Care	Unavailable	0	39,894,721
Title XX Child Care	Unavailable	8,431,191	15,218,984
Quality Services	Unavailable	5,749,440	18,614,379
Child Care Administrative	Unavailable	2,824,545	10,220,199
Indirect Services	Unavailable	19,055,797	9,531,521
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Unavailable</b>	<b>\$374,578,565</b>	<b>\$349,335,161</b>

Source: ODJFS Office of Fiscal Services, Bureau of Reporting and Grants.

Currently, Ohio's child care licensing is funded through a combination of state matching and maintenance-of-effort monies, the federal Title XX or the Social Services Block Grant, TANF and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The department was unable to provide financial data for the results in 1997. Chart 4-2 illustrates the budgeted funding stream from the state and federal levels to various child care licensing expenditures for state FY 2000.

**Chart 4-2: Budgeted Funding of Child Care Licensing for State FY 2000**

\*See Child Care Services Section of the Report for a Detailed Description of Funding

Source: Child Care Maintenance-of-Effort and Federal Funds Report for SFY 00 and SFY 01

While this chart illustrates the revenues and expenditures for Ohio child care as a whole, a further separation can be made between child care licensing and child care services expenditures, which are primarily subsidy payments for child care. In state FY 2000, approximately \$7.7 million will be expended on child care licensing personnel, contracts, and maintenance. Personnel includes licensing and supervisory staff salaries, contracts, and maintenance costs, including computer software and any maintenance or equipment costs. An additional \$300,000 will be collected through initial and renewal licensing fees. The state deposits licensing fees into the general revenue fund, as required by Revised Code Section 5104.03.

## Processes and Recommendations

The following are areas of focus within Child Care Licensing:

- C Staffing, including
  - C Day Care Licensing Specialists, and
  - C Technical Assistant Licensing Specialists;
- C Enforcement, including
  - C District Office Consistency,
  - C Inspections of Providers Under Enforcement Proceedings, and
  - C Enforcement Coordinator;
- C Training;
- C Rules and Regulations; and
- C Monitoring.

### *Staffing*

#### *Day Care Licensing Specialists*

***Finding 4-1. The current level of day care licensing specialists appears inadequate based on preferred and maximum caseload levels recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation's largest organization of early-childhood care professionals.***

The trend around the nation as well as in Ohio is toward an increasing number of new providers, especially as Ohio strives to move families off welfare and into the workplace. ODJFS must continually review its caseload averages to determine if they are within established benchmarks and adjust staffing levels accordingly.

Licensing specialists have many prescribed roles, ranging from technical assistance to enforcement. Table 4-2 outlines the different responsibilities of licensing specialists as defined by ODJFS position descriptions.

**Table 4-2: Roles of the Day Care Licensing Specialist**

Role	Duties Performed
Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides guidance and interpretation of requirements and procedures to prospective operators, initial applicants, and licensed centers</li> <li>- Clarifies areas of non-compliance, problems or discrepancies to centers and type A homes regarding inspection findings. Advises the provider on alternative methods to achieve compliance.</li> <li>- Consults the licensed child care operations in the areas of program, nutrition, health, administration, and other aspects of child care.</li> <li>- Conducts training programs, workshops, conferences and other meetings.</li> </ul>
Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveys, evaluates and inspects day care operations to ascertain level of compliance with statutory requirements, department regulations and standards and recommends licensing action.</li> <li>- Provides post-licensing issuance supervision. Provides written notification of areas of noncompliance and follow-up to assure achievement of compliance.</li> </ul>
Investigation & Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigates complaints about licensed facilities and provides a written summary of the findings and corrective action to be taken.</li> <li>- Initiates contact with and investigates persons of alleged and illegal operations.</li> <li>- Gathers evidence in cases; recommends and initiates the Chapter 119, Revised Code, actions against the licensed facility in order to revoke the license due to noncompliance. Testifies for these cases before judicial bodies when necessary.</li> <li>- Coordinates and exchanges information with other private/public social service agencies (mainly county children services agencies) and performs joint inspections with these agencies.</li> </ul>

Source: ODJFS Position Description List, November 24, 1996

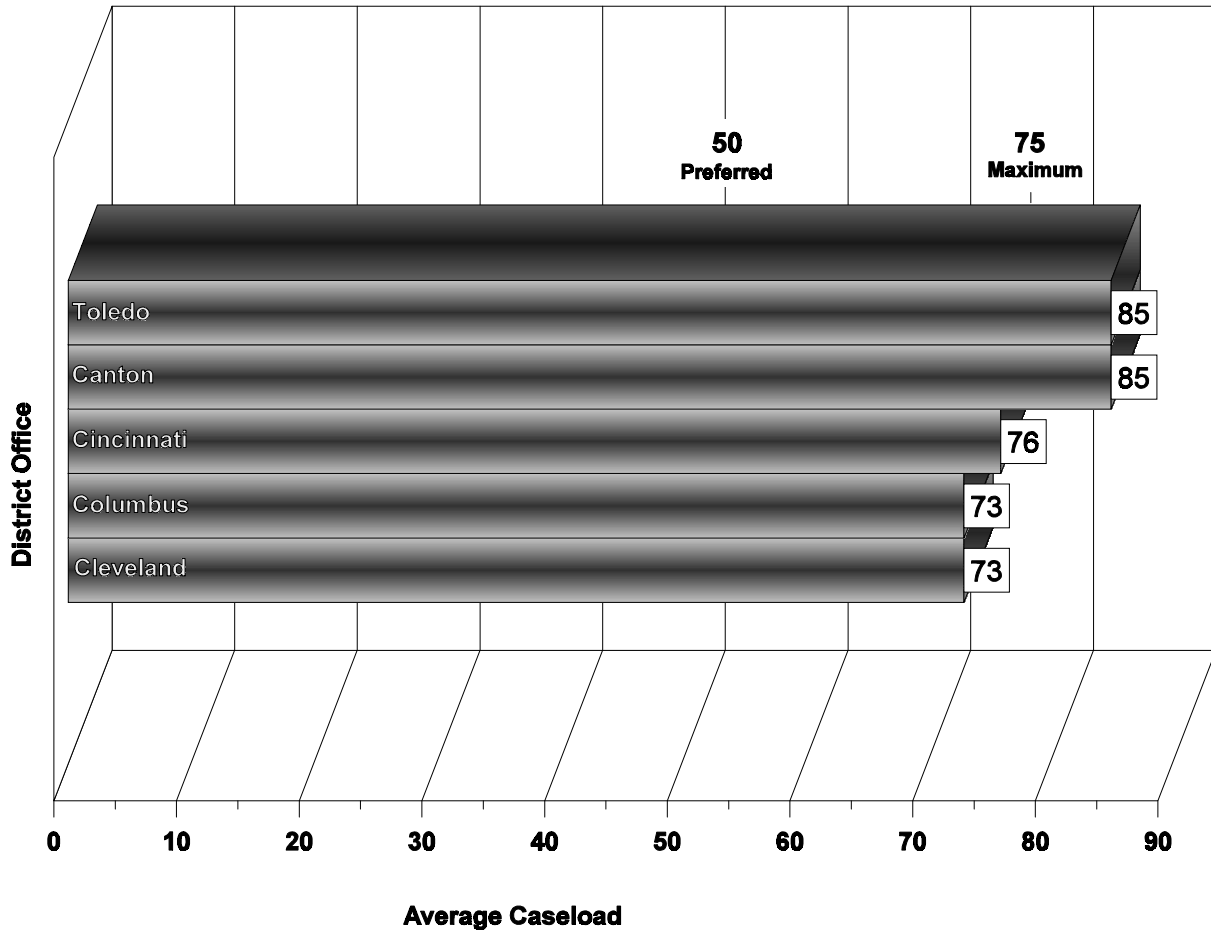
In order to regulate these child care roles and responsibilities, licensing agencies must have sufficient staff. A shortage may lead to inconsistencies in job performance and child care quality. When compared, the child care licensing section's clients match those of a caseload study performed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The NAEYC has recommended that caseloads for each licensing specialist should be no more than 75 centers and large family child care homes per specialist, with a caseload of 50 being preferred. However, caseloads among Section district offices typically exceed this preferred level, and some district office averages exceed the maximum NAEYC-recommended level. Additionally, alleged operations appear to be increasing, which may eventually diminish the specialists' ability to merely complete all required inspections. Chart 4-3 depicts the average caseload of each district office for calendar year 1999.

We determined the average caseload by dividing the average number of licensed child care providers under district office supervision by the average number of employed licensing specialists in that district office for 1999. The average caseloads for the Cincinnati district (76 providers), the Cleveland district (73 providers), and the Columbus district (73 providers) were approximately at the



maximum level suggested by the NAEYC. The average caseload for the Canton and Toledo district offices (85 each) exceeded the maximum suggested level of 75.

**Chart 4-3: Average Caseloads for Day Care Licensing Specialists for State FY 1999 Exceed the Preferred Levels.**



Source: ODJFS Workload Levels Reports, #NMR580RA, Calendar Year 1999.

This case overload is in addition to licensing specialist duties and responsibilities in other areas. For instance, the ODJFS Second Annual Child Care Licensing Report: January 2000, covering calendar year 1999, indicated that 8,030 inspections in centers and type A family homes resulted in nearly 42,000 violations. In some instances, repeat violations of the same rule or regulation required the licensing specialist to make more than one inspection at a center even though the center may never have corrected the original violation.

***Recommendation 4-1: We recommend that ODJFS maintain caseload levels at approximately 60 cases per specialist, which appears to be reasonable if ODJFS combines this limitation with a proactive program of provider child care education and training. In order to bring the level to 60, however, ODJFS needs to add 13 licensing specialists to its staff.***

Table 4-3 displays the breakdown and impact of staffing additions.

**Table 4-3: Allocation of Additional Staff and Impact of Current Caseload Ratios**

District Office	Current Staffing Levels <sup>1</sup>	Average Cases <sup>2</sup> Per Specialist	Additional Employees	Updated Staffing Levels	Averages Cases Per Specialist
Canton	8	85	3	11	60
Cincinnati	11	76	3	14	58
Cleveland	10	73	2	12	61
Columbus	13	73	3	16	61
Toledo	5	85	2	7	64
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>61</b>

Source: <sup>1</sup> Workload Levels, ODJFS Report NMR580RA, December 1999

<sup>2</sup> Workload Levels, ODJFS Report NMR580RA, Calendar Year 1999

*ODJFS should continue to pursue filling all vacant licensing supervisor positions. Subsequent to hiring additional specialists, ODJFS should develop a benchmark which periodically analyzes the current and projected workload distribution to determine proper specialist staffing levels, then adjust accordingly.*

*Financial Implication:*

*Table 4-4 estimates the total annual cost for acquiring an additional 13 day care licensing specialists.*

**Table 4-4: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring an Additional 13 Day Care Licensing Specialists**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$36,960	30%	\$48,050
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		13
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$625,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Fac Std Rep 2, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

*Technical Assistant Licensing Specialists*

***Finding 4-2: Currently, Child Care Licensing staff do not have the time to promote education and training of licensing laws and regulations proactively, which could lessen the caseload of all licensing specialists by reducing noncompliance and subsequent follow-up inspections.***

Additional ODJFS personnel could provide education and training of licensing laws and regulations to providers while reducing the necessity for costly follow-up inspections and visits to provider centers. The overall effect would be that day care centers and type A homes would be safer and more conducive to the healthy development of young children.

The Columbus District office has developed a pilot project to be implemented in mid-August of 2000 involving the use of a technical assistance licensing specialist. We encourage ODJFS to continue this pilot and fully implement it in all district offices once the department has evaluated the pilot's effectiveness and made adjustments as necessary. Each district office could utilize a licensing specialist in this role, thus preventing noncompliance on the part of the providers while consequently freeing up the time other specialists can use to perform their assigned duties.

***Recommendation 4-2: ODJFS should hire and distribute an additional 5 technical assistant licensing specialists among the districts based on individualized caseloads.***

*ODJFS should employ an additional employee per district office to coordinate and provide technical assistance to licensed day care providers. Technical assistance*

licensing specialists' activities could include, but not be limited to the following:

- periodically review representative samples of inspections and determine common types of noncompliance for providers;
- establish and provide ongoing training that instructs providers on how to remedy issue(s);
- work individually with providers who are habitual and major rule violators to bring them into compliance;
- develop corrective action plans and monitor the progress of the providers in adequately adhering to these plans; and
- coordinate and oversee training and onsite consultation of licensing specialists with providers.

*Financial Implication:*

Table 4-5 estimates the total annual cost for acquiring an additional 5 technical assistant licensing specialists.

**Table 4-5: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring 5 Additional Technical Assistant Licensing Specialists**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$36,960	30%	\$48,050
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		5
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$240,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

**Enforcement***District Office Consistency*

***Finding 4-3: The number of enforcement cases among the five district offices varies widely. The Canton and Cleveland district offices have not had an enforcement case in the past three years, and the Cincinnati district office has had only one. There is no clear reason why provider noncompliance should be different in those districts as it is in the Columbus district office. Inconsistent enforcement of child care rules and regulations among the five districts may indicate the safety of children in child care settings is not adequately ensured.***

The Child Care Licensing Section uses enforcement to encourage compliance and to resolve provider noncompliance with state laws, rules, and regulations. The section serves in a technical assistance capacity to the providers it monitors. When licensing specialists see that child care centers or type A homes are out of compliance with Chapter 5104 of the Ohio Administrative Code, the specialist uses all available means to bring the operation into compliance.

ODJFS has typically restrained from using any legal actions against noncompliance, rather choosing to work with the center or type A home to resolve matters as expeditiously as possible. However, some centers and type A homes continue to remain noncompliant even after repeated efforts by licensing specialists to bring providers back into compliance. When a specialist determines that children may be at risk of harm due to rules violations, that specialist will initiate enforcement proceedings.

ODJFS has limited jurisdiction in regulating in-home unlicensed day care providers. However, ODJFS has been empowered by the Ohio Administrative Code to legally intervene in cases of such “alleged operations”—that is, of providers that care for more children than the law allows. Centers and type A homes that operate without a license are also deemed by law to be “alleged operations.”

The state enforces its child care rules and regulations through adjudication. The Licensing Section pursues two general types of adjudication: Chapter 119, Revised Code, proceedings, and injunctive actions. The Chapter 119, Revised Code proceedings involve the licensed centers and type A homes that are regulated by ODJFS. These proceedings do not entail a court of law; the cases are heard by an impartial third party at a Chapter 119, Revised Code, hearing. On the other hand, “alleged operation” cases (injunctive in nature) are turned over to the state Attorney General’s Office to be prosecuted; these cases are heard in the Court of Common Pleas and the judgments are binding and enforceable through law.

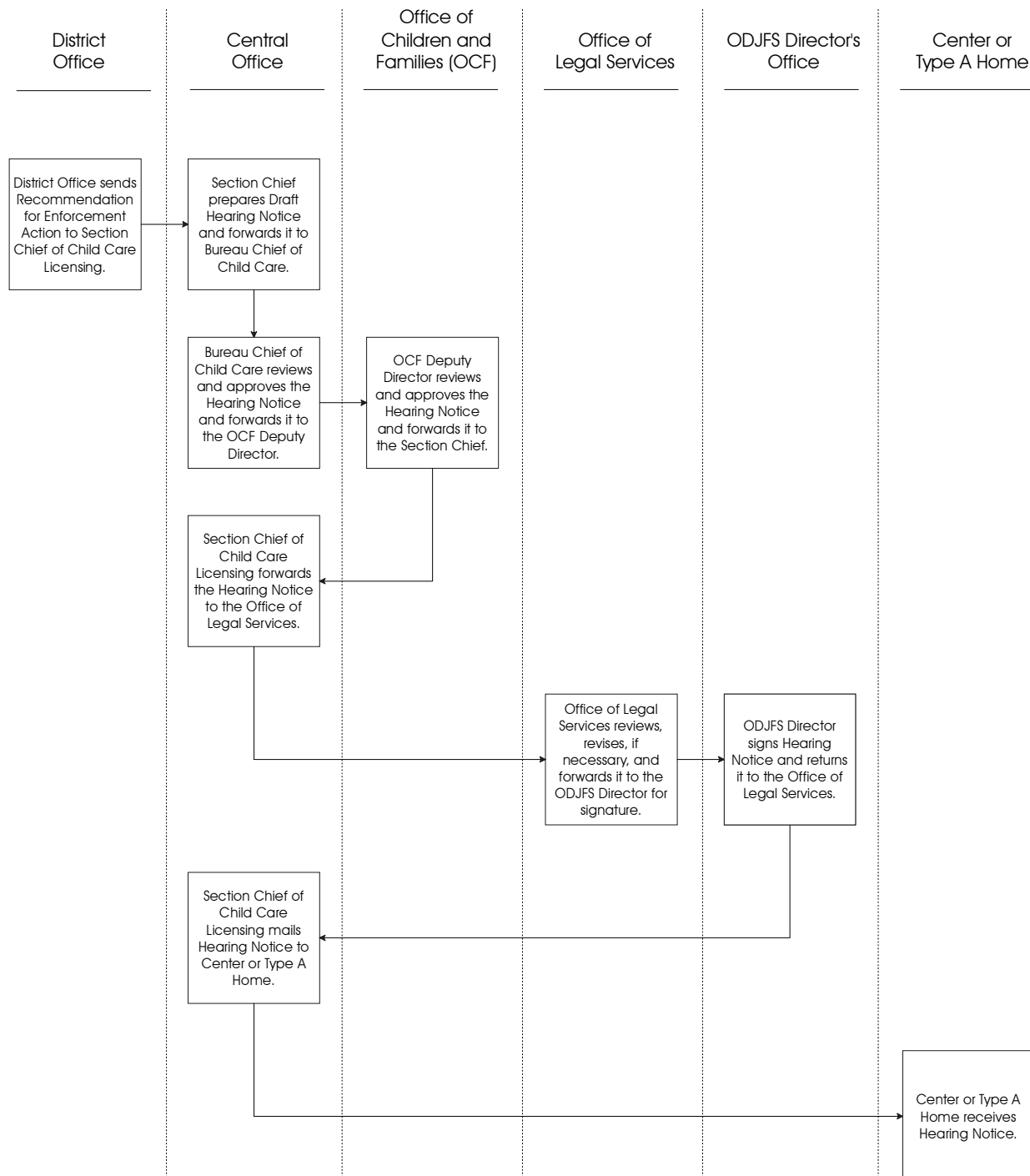
**Table 4-6: Types of Adjudication Actions for Enforcement**

WHERE INITIATED	TYPE	ADJUDICATION ACTION	DESCRIPTION
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	Chapter 119 Revised Code Proceedings	Intent to Deny	Denial of an application (either initial or renewal)
		Intent to Revoke	Revocation of either a full or provisional license
		Jurisdictional Hearing	Determination that prospective licensee is a “child day care center” or “type A home”. If not, licensing rules do not apply.
		Denial of Full Licensure	During provisional licensure it is determined that a provider cannot have their license amended to full licensure.
		Terms of Licensure Hearing	For a provider challenging assigned license capacity.
Court of Common Pleas	Injunction	Center Having Made Application	Applicant provider operating without a license.
		Post Adjudication	Provider operating after revocation or denial of a license.
	Contempt	Center Having Made Application	Provider continued to operate after having been found to be operating without a license.

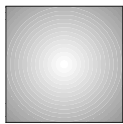
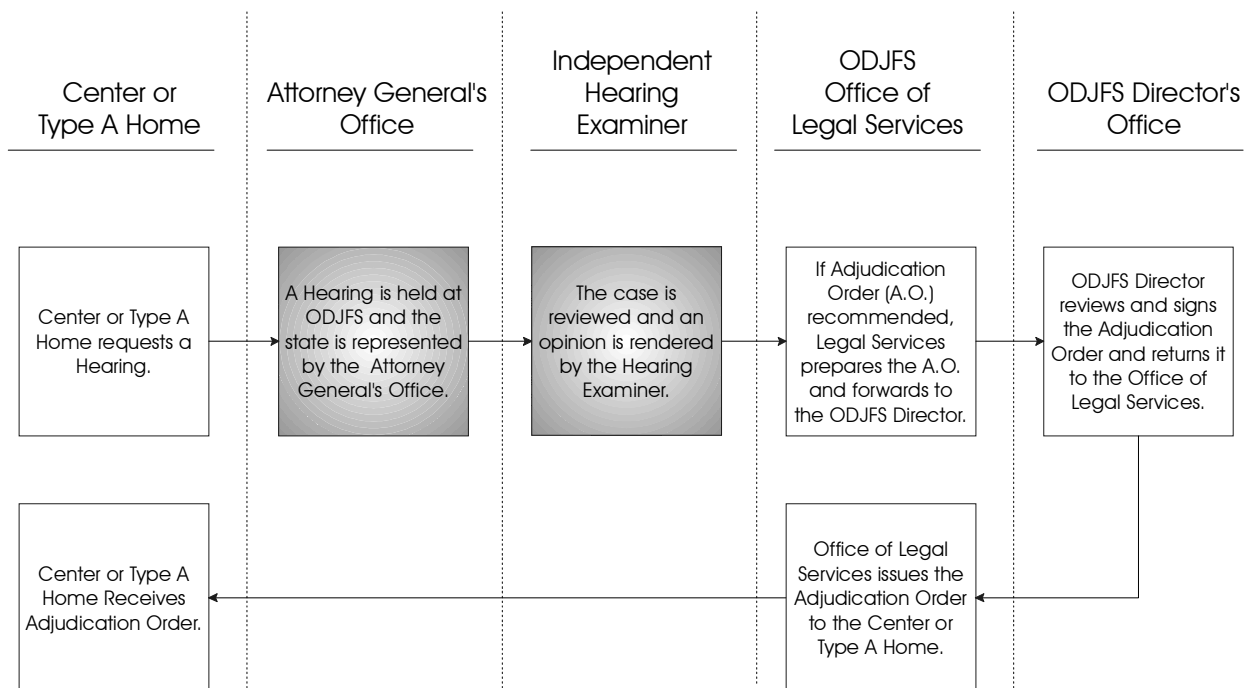
Source: Child Care Licensing, Procedure Manual, Chapter 4000, Enforcement

The enforcement process can be divided into two phases: initiation and adjudication. The initiation phase involves several stages necessary to move the proposed enforcement action to its conclusion, including identification of potential enforcement actions, drafting and review of proposed Revised Code Chapter 119 hearing notices, and the serving of hearing notices to the providers. The adjudication phase involves the actual adjudication of an enforcement action, from the provider response to the hearing notice to the drafting, review, and issuance of the adjudication order. Charts 4-4 and 4-5 illustrate an overview of the initiation and adjudication phases of the enforcement process, respectively.

**Chart 4-4: Overview of the Initiation Phase**



Source: Child Care Licensing Procedural Manual, Chapter 4000, Enforcement

**Chart 4-5: Overview of the Adjudication Phase**

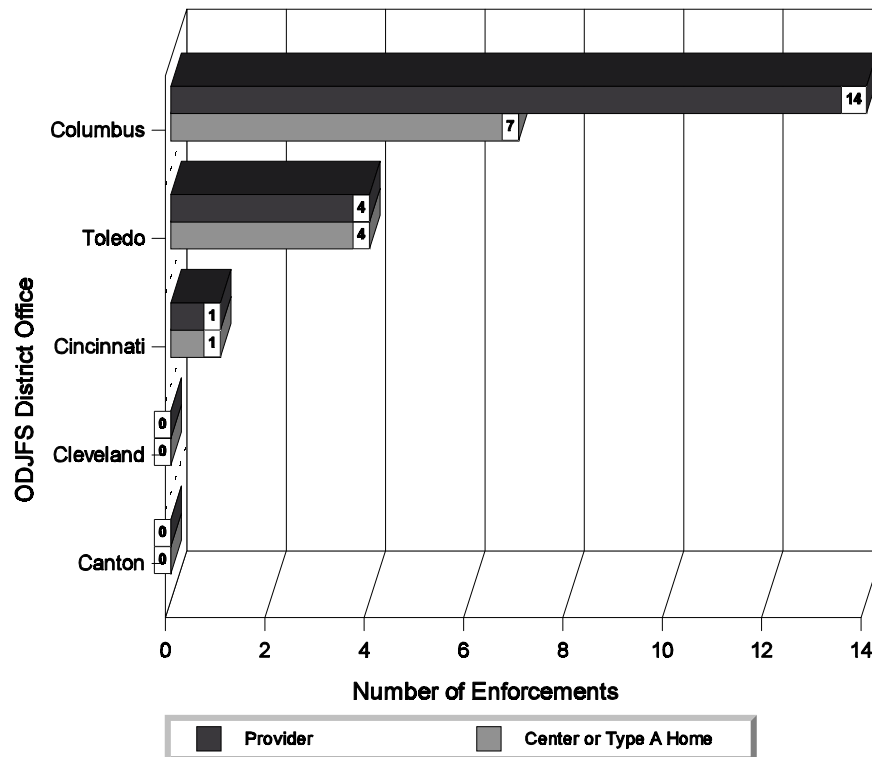
NOTE: These steps are eliminated if the center or type A home does not request a hearing within 30 days of receipt of the Hearing Notice.

Source: Child Care Licensing Procedural Manual, Chapter 4000, Enforcement

However, we found that there are no policies or procedures in place within the section to reasonably ensure a consistent application of enforcement actions by the district offices. Chart 4-6 further illustrates the lack of consistency in enforcement actions taken by each district office to address noncompliance by unlicensed and licensed providers from 1997 through 1999.



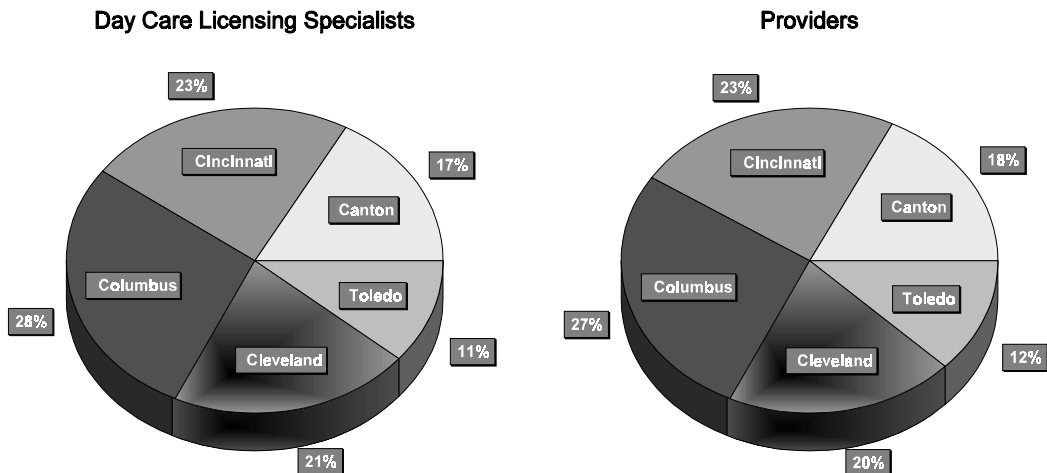
**Chart 4-6: Processing enforcement actions within the last 3 years among the 5 district offices has been inconsistent.**



Source: Licensed Facilities in Enforcement; ODJFS Report Number NMR900RA, 1997 to 1999  
 Alleged Operators in Enforcement; ODJFS Report Number NMR900RB, 1997 to 1999

As Chart 4-6 indicates, there is a wide disparity in the number of enforcement cases in the five district offices. While the district offices vary widely in the number and variety of demographics of counties covered by each district office, they have similar ratios in comparing their numbers of monitored child care providers per day care licensing specialist (see chart 4-7). Therefore, the disparity in the number of enforcement cases is not due to a disproportionate number of providers assigned to each district office. Chart 4-7 compares the average percentage of providers and day care licensing specialists per district for 1999 to the average total of providers that all district offices were assigned. It also compares staff resource allocations to the number of providers assigned to each district office.

### Chart 4-7: Comparison of Regional Percentages of Day Care Licensing Specialists and Providers To Totals



Source: Workload Levels; Report Number NMR580RA, 1999 average.

Chart 4-7 suggests that the number of day care licensing specialists and providers are proportionally allocated throughout the state. Therefore, the inconsistencies in enforcement among districts appears more likely due to the Section's lack of guidance on the timing of enforcement action.

***Recommendation 4-3: ODJFS should develop a policy on the initiation and use of child care licensing enforcement, including clear guidelines upon which licensing personnel can exercise sound judgement, that will be consistently applied throughout the district offices.***

*All child care licensing personnel, from specialists to the Section Chief, should be involved in and have input on drafting, implementing, and maintaining procedural policies to improve enforcement consistency. The establishment of enforcement policies and procedures should include in its strategy:*

- *developing a survey to explain why enforcements are or are not initiated;*
- *administering the survey to all child care licensing staff in the district offices;*
- *creating an "enforcement team" comprised of specialists, supervisors, an enforcement coordinator (see recommendation 4-4), and the Section Chief to evaluate survey responses and compile a summary of results;*
- *having this "enforcement team" develop a draft of policies and procedures*

- using enforcement rules and regulations, the survey results, and input from licensing staff;*
- disseminating this draft to all child care licensing staff in the five district offices;*
  - holding group discussions on the draft or eliciting written responses from licensing staff to be used in amending the draft policy;*
  - composing a final draft;*
  - comparing the final draft to current enforcement rules and regulations to ensure adherence to day care licensing laws;*
  - training personnel on the policy; and*
  - reviewing and updating the policy as needed.*

*Enforcement rules and regulations, Ohio Revised Code chapter 5104, Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-12 for centers and Section 5101:2-13 for type A homes, should be reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis according to recommendation 4-7. Consequently, enforcement policy should be maintained to promote consistent interpretation and application of current enforcement rules and regulations among all districts. Additionally, top section management should emphasize strict adherence to this policy so there is a complete policy buy-in by all licensing staff.*

*This policy should be continually reviewed and monitored. Management could develop monitoring tools to evaluate whether districts handle violations of a similar nature consistently. Additionally, ODJFS could consider initiating an automated review process using information on violations and enforcements collected through the Child Care Licensing database. ODJFS could compare the types of enforcement and violations per operation to readily analyze enforcement consistency throughout the state.*

*One alternative in the effort to reduce the number of violations and personnel costs could be to consider implementing a fine schedule. A fine schedule might apply to minor violations (i.e., violations not resulting in enforcement action) and to “alleged operations”; these violations would involve a monetary fine levied against the provider for noncompliance. Implementing a fine schedule would first involve discussion with all parties affected and would require legislative changes. Fines would also assist in promoting consistency and compliance with child care licensing rules. Monies collected from these fines could be used to enhance educational efforts aimed at preventing noncompliance.*

---

*Inspections of Providers Under Enforcement Proceedings*

***Finding 4-4: Licensing staff inspect licensed providers in enforcement proceedings less frequently than providers not in enforcement proceedings, which results in a lack of ongoing oversight for the activities of these at-risk providers. This concern is compounded by the enforcement process' excessive length of time (see finding 4-5).***

Risks continue to exist with noncompliant providers during the initiation phase of the enforcement process, since the center or type A home continues to operate during this time.

***Recommendation 4-4: During the enforcement process, ODJFS should increase its monitoring procedures to ensure that a safe environment continues to exist for children at possible risk during 119 revocation proceedings.***

*It is evident that a risk exists once the initiation phase of enforcement begins. Therefore, ODJFS should increase its monitoring (employing, perhaps, biweekly inspections) until a final enforcement resolution is made. ODJFS may consider revising its policies to include these inspections. Additionally, ODJFS should include notice of these inspections to the provider when the Revised Code Chapter 119 hearing notice is issued.*

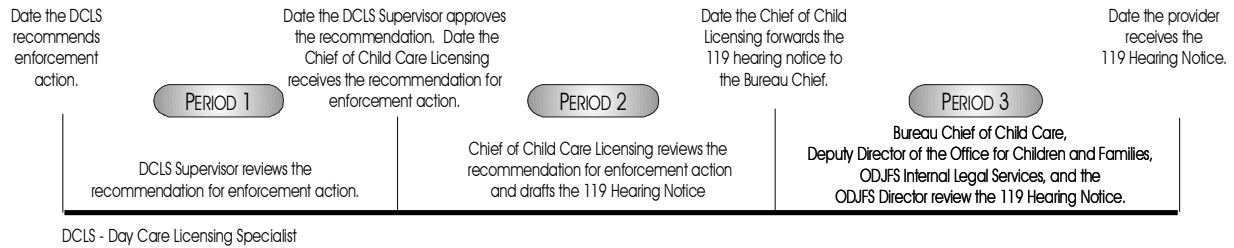
*Enforcement Coordinator*

***Finding 4-5: The timeliness of the enforcement process appears to have declined over the past decade. Compared to the first half of the 1990's, the enforcement process currently takes an average of 40 days longer to complete both periods 2 and 3. This delay appears to be due to a reduction in central office staffing—in particular, the enforcement coordinator.***

To identify any process delays in the initiation phase, we compared several key dates leading up to the adjudication process. Chart 4-8 divides the initiation phase into three time periods: period 1 represents the time between the date the enforcement action is recommended by the day care licensing specialist (DCLS) and the date the DCLS supervisor approves the recommendation; period 2 represents the time between the date the central office receives the recommendation and the completion of the draft hearing notice; period 3 represents the date the draft hearing notice is

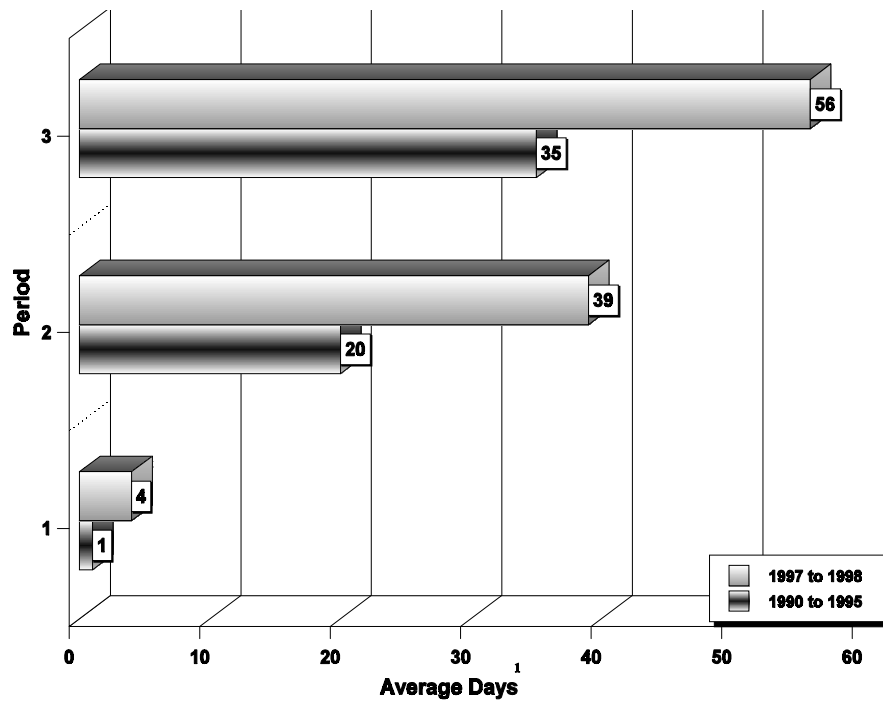
forwarded to the Bureau Chief and the date the notice is received by the provider.

**Chart 4-8: Enforcement Periods of the Initiation Phase**



As indicated earlier, ODJFS has no real power to influence and dictate timeliness in the adjudication phase. However, ODJFS and the licensing section do have control over timeliness in the initiation phase and during the drafting and issuing of the 119 hearing notice.

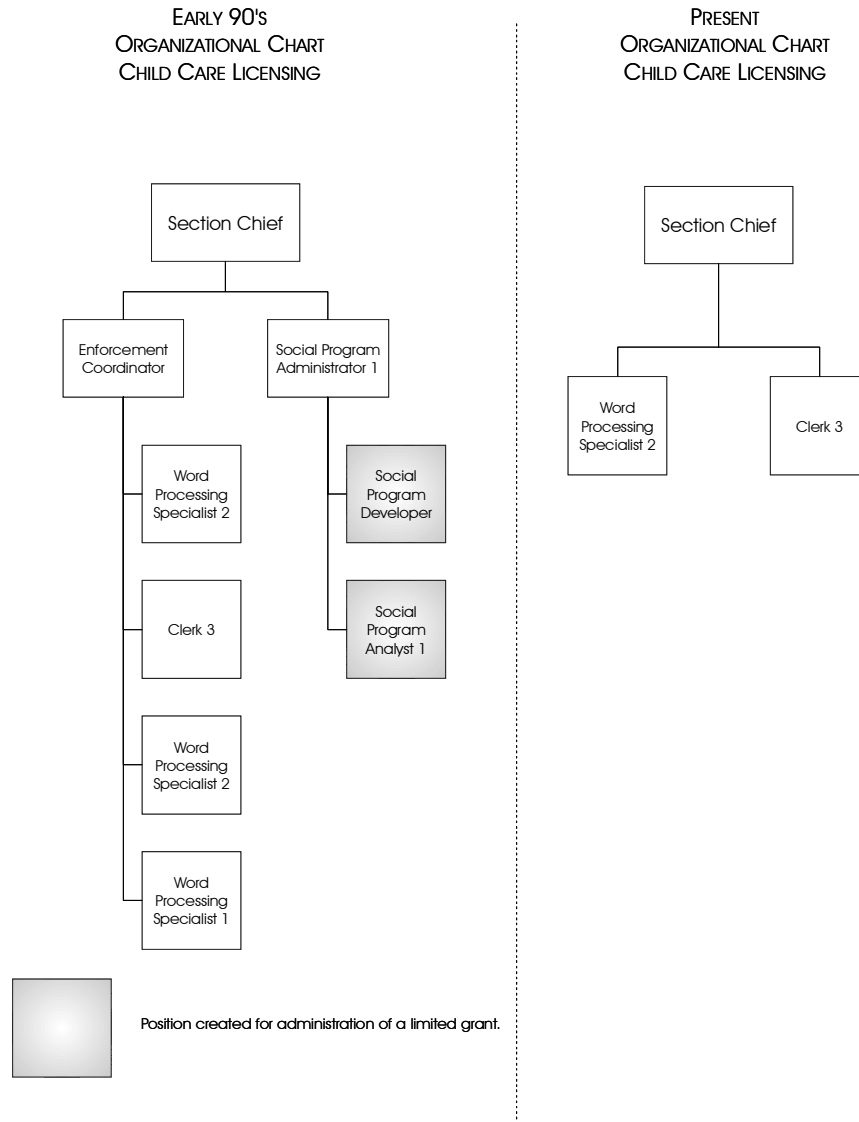
**Chart 4-9: Significant Time Delays Are Occurring within the Reviews Performed by the Chief of Child Care Licensing (Period 2) and the Bureau Chief, Deputy Director, Legal, and the Director (Period 3)**



Source: Analysis of Enforcement Files, Child Care Licensing Central Office

<sup>1</sup>Average Working Days (does not include weekends or holidays)

### Chart 4-10: Child Care Licensing Staffing within the Central Office has Decreased Substantially in the Past Decade



Source: Section Chief Child Care Licensing, January 1999

Since early 1990, one Central Office section position has been vacated about every year and a half. During our examination of the Child Care Licensing section, the Section Chief filled the role of the Enforcement Coordinator in addition to the Chief's other assigned duties. However, the number and level of the Enforcement Coordinator's duties dictate that it be a full time position. With a dedicated enforcement coordinator on hand, the section should be able to eliminate most of the time delays in period 2 of the initiation phase. An additional benefit might be to reduce delays in period 3, since the

enforcement coordinator's primary responsibility will be with enforcement action. The Enforcement Coordinator will direct and manage the efforts of district licensing personnel in accordance with the enforcement policy.

The Enforcement Coordinator should also expedite the review and drafting of the 119 hearing notice and provide technical assistance to the licensing specialists and, perhaps more importantly, to providers to ensure compliance with state child care rules and regulations. Finally, the Enforcement Coordinator could assume temporary section responsibility and authority in the Section Chief's absence.

***Recommendation 4-5: ODJFS management should place priority on filling the vacant Enforcement Coordinator position. Once done, ODJFS management should assign responsibility for the monitoring of enforcement adjudication timeliness to the Enforcement Coordinator.***

*After ODJFS reestablishes the position of Enforcement Coordinator, each enforcement case should be tracked for timeliness in a manner similar to the test approach outlined in Chart 4-8. This tracking would ensure that the section processes cases efficiently. The section should also establish benchmarks to monitor progress over controllable factors. Test results have indicated that the enforcement process can be divided into three periods: the time taken to draft the recommendation for enforcement; the time taken to review the recommendation for enforcement action and to draft the 119 hearing notice; and the time taken to review and finalize the 119 hearing notice and forward it to the provider. Enforcement cases should also be reported to ODJFS upper management when they are initiated to allow the department to act on delayed cases.*

*The desired result of filling the vacant Enforcement Coordinator position is that by doing so, fewer children will be at risk of harm at licensed centers and homes. The section can also eliminate time delays during in the initiation phase, thereby speeding up the enforcement process; this may discourage noncompliance by providers by increasing everyone's confidence and belief in the enforcement process.*

*A key concept of managing processes is the ability to continually monitor and evaluate process goals. Monitoring goals provides management with the means to effect long-lasting changes. Currently, the enforcement section does not monitor the timeliness of its enforcement cases.*

*Financial Implications:*

Table 4-7 estimates the total annual cost for filling the enforcement coordinator position.

**Table 4-7: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring an Enforcement Coordinator**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$41,520	30%	\$53,980
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		1
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$54,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, HSPA 2, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

*Training*

***Finding 4-6: The Child Care Licensing section does not have an established section-wide training program that addresses the section's functions. ODJFS contracts with the Institute for Human Services to provide training regionally. A review of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program's most recent training curriculum revealed no courses which address issues related to child care licensing.***

Training encourages staff to develop the skills necessary to meet and maintain professional demands. It is also intended to enhance skills that might address exceptional situations. In turn, this new confidence and increased self-esteem encourages employees to seek and maintain even greater professional growth.

ODJFS has yet to establish a system-wide training program that addresses all aspects of the day care licensing specialist and supervisor. The duties of the day care licensing specialist encompass areas ranging from technical assistance to enforcement. With so many varied tasks to perform, it is difficult for licensing specialists to be completely proficient in all areas. Specialized training fills these gaps. An established training program is necessary to promote efficiency and quality in the licensing function.



**Recommendation 4-6: ODJFS should develop an ongoing training program for day care licensing specialists and their supervisors, which is based on input gathered from the section's identified stakeholders, including day care licensing staff.**

*Any training program for licensing specialists should address the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to complete the job duties of the specialist and supervisor. These training courses should then be modified on an ongoing basis to adjust to any new rules and regulations governing child care or any emerging issues and trends. In addition, the development of the training program should include input from all child care licensing stakeholders including licensed centers and homes, day care licensing personnel, and parents.*

*Additionally, training would enhance the abilities of the specialist and supervisors to protect children from harm in the day care setting by making them more efficient in performing their duties. The training process developed may include—but should not be limited to—:*

- *continuation of early childhood education;*
- *interpretation and implication of licensing rules;*
- *investigation methods, including individual rights and evidence gathering techniques; and*
- *methods used to promote compliance, such as client communication techniques.*

*One way to accomplish these training objectives is for the Section to use training provided by the ODJFS Office of Professional Development and Quality Services (OPDQS). The OPDQS is responsible for training to all state and county ODJFS employees.*

*The child care training program should be continually evaluated and modified accordingly to keep it abreast of new issues. Moreover, the department can identify new training requirements through the performance evaluation process in order to address any areas needing improvement. These ongoing appraisals should prevent the section from offering unnecessary or obsolete training to the specialists. Staff evaluations also need to be reviewed to identify and correct weaknesses. Once a training process has been established, management should also develop a method of monitoring to ensure each employee receives the appropriate amount and type of training.*

*Financial Implication:*

*The annual cost of developing and implementing a continuation for early childhood education is based on a model implemented by the Ohio Nurses Association that provides program development based on identification of target user needs and 40 hours of annual continuing education. The estimate is based on five one-day courses that total approximately 40 continuing education hours.*

**Table 4-8: Annual Financial Implications of Training Recommendation 4-6**

Annual Travel and Speaker Fees	Number of Personnel	Average Cost Range per Person	Average Annual Personnel Cost	Total Annual Cost
\$2,000	40	\$650	\$26,000	\$28,000

Source: Estimate developed by Training Developer, ODJFS Bureau of Professional Development

***Rules and Regulations***

***Finding 4-7: The Ohio Administrative Code Chapters 5101:2-12 and 5101:2-13 were implemented in September, 1986; as minimum standards that govern child care centers and homes, these rules and regulations could be outdated. In March 1997, Ohio Revised Code Section 119.032 was implemented requiring all state agencies to perform a comprehensive review of their rules and regulations every five years.***

Public regulation of the child care and early education market should ensure that children in nonparental care settings are protected from harm and live in a healthy development. A growing body of research emphasizes the importance of a child's earliest experiences to proper brain development and development of skills and abilities used later on in learning. Given the proportion of children who currently spend a significant portion of their time in child care, a healthy child care environment has become increasingly important in recent years. The state's licensing laws and regulations greatly influence the child care environment.

State licensing laws and regulations set out minimum requirements for the legal operation of a child care center or type A home. These rules and regulations represent the most basic levels of care that all child care providers must provide. Such licensing rules and regulations should be clear and reasonable so providers can understand and meet these standards and furnish a safe environment for

children. The rules also need to reflect current research findings and best practices to enhance safety and quality of care. Rules and regulations covering child care should be streamlined to promote greater effectiveness and efficiency on the part of providers and strict enforcement on the part of ODJFS day care licensing staff.

In order to maintain laws and regulations that reflect current practices, an agency should periodically review their applicable laws and regulations as trends and issues arise. Furthermore, these rules and regulations should be updated as required based upon the aforementioned periodic review.

***Recommendation 4-7: ODJFS should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the rules and regulations governing child care licensing, as required by Revised Code Section 119.032, which requires ODJFS to review the current rules and regulations by March 2002. Additionally, an ongoing process should be put in place to periodically update rules and regulations more timely.***

*To carry out this process, several procedures should be set in place:*

- *ODJFS should consult with parents and consumers of child care services, child care providers, experts in the child care field, and ODJFS licensing staff and supervisors to evaluate and amend licensing laws and regulations;*
- *ODJFS should present recommendations to state policymakers and legislators so the state's rules and regulations can be occasionally revised as needed;*
- *For future monitoring, the section should continue to fulfill the statutory requirements of Ohio Revised Code Section 119.032 to review rules and regulations annually, or at least every five years, to ensure they remain current and effective and meet the needs of all children affected by them.*

*The rules and regulations should set high quality standards to safeguard all children in any type of out-of-home setting. Specific revisions to rules and regulations should cover*

- *staff qualifications and ongoing training requirements;*
- *child care group size and staff-to-child ratios;*
- *child discipline, health, and safety;*
- *standards that reflect current parent and child needs.*

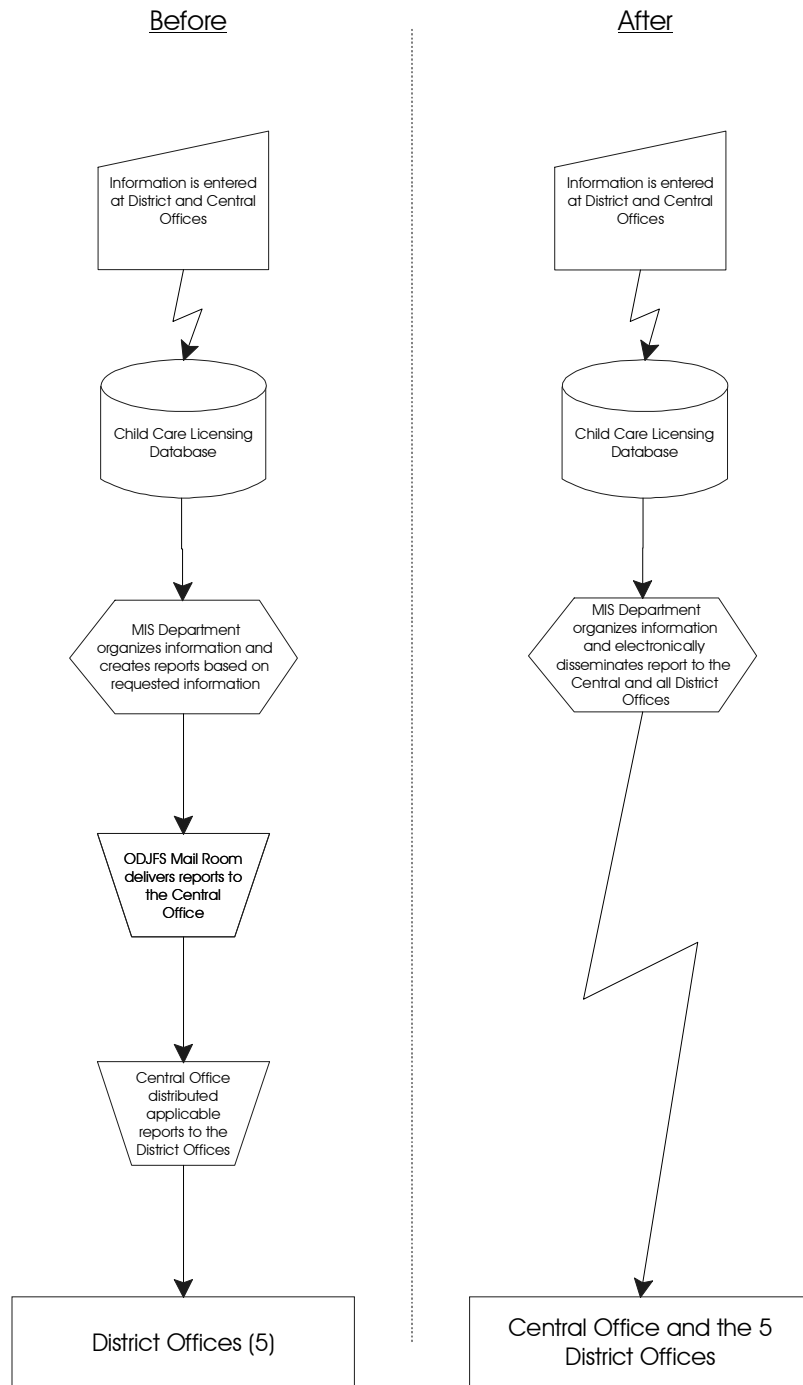
**Monitoring**

***Finding 4-8: While ODJFS maintains many types of child care licensing information in its computer databases and produces many useful reports, its system does not enable its users responsible for oversight to create specialized reports. Without this ability, users are obliged to manually prepare data or initiate a lengthy information request process if they wish to customize the data for their particular needs. Additionally, the method of hard copy report distribution to the Central and District Offices is not time or cost efficient.***

The volume and method of the distribution of child care licensing reports impacts the productivity of the personnel who rely on the data to perform their job duties. Therefore, it is imperative that critical information be distributed timely so management may make well-informed decisions.

The section gathers information from child care providers and relies on the ODJFS Office of Management Information Systems (MIS) to organize the data into meaningful periodic reports. The “before” column of Chart 4-11 outlines the flow of child care licensing reports from MIS to its users as it currently exists. The “after” column represents the flow of child care licensing data reporting after ODJFS implements recommendation 4-8.

**Chart 4-11: Overview Flow of Child Care Licensing Reports**



Source: Project Administrator Supervisor, MIS Department.

The district and central offices receive numerous hard copy reports at varying times. Table 4-9 illustrates the volume and frequency of reports received by the central, fiscal, and district offices.

**Table 4-9: Volume and Frequency of Child Care Licensing Reports**

		NUMBER OF REPORTS RECEIVED BY LOCATION		
		Central Office	District Offices	Fiscal Office
F R E Q U E N C Y	Weekly x 52	2	2	-
	Monthly x 12	29	26	1
	Quarterly x 4	2	2	-
	Annually x 1	5	-	-
	Per Request	2	-	-
	<b>Total Annually</b>	<u>465</u>	<u>424</u>	<u>12</u>

Source: Project Administrator Supervisor, ODJFS MIS Department.

ODJFS' ability to deal with such a high volume of reports is further complicated by the amount of detailed information contained within them. The information contains data ranging from the number of active day care centers in the state to the status of Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification background checks on child care employees. Furthermore, with so much data available, users should have the ability to address specific information requests.

One solution to the high volume of reports could be data warehousing, which could cost nearly \$5 million to implement, not including ongoing operational costs. Another less costly, more preferred option is for ODJFS to utilize software applications such as Crystal Reports, Statistical Analysis System (SAS), Audit Command Language (ACL), or Corel Paradox that enable users to extract information from a database to address specific one-time or special information needs. ODJFS has already purchased a substantial number of Crystal Reports application licenses so they would not incur additional costs to license Child Care Licensing employees.

***Recommendation 4-8: ODJFS should consider implementing an application to allow users responsible for oversight to access data for timely monitoring of child care information. Additionally, the Department should consider remitting reports in an electronic format to reduce printing costs and time delays associated with mailing.***

*The apparent benefits of implementing the aforementioned recommendation would be threefold: increased timeliness of report distribution to the District Offices, decreased printing costs, and elimination of mailing costs.*

*Implementing an application to allow users responsible for oversight (specifically the Child Care Licensing Section Chief) access and the ability to better structure its report data enables management to address information requests in a timely and accurate manner. This could allow users to organize data in order to address specific information needs. One possible outcome would be the user would have the ability to determine a number of specific rule violations in a county or any combination of counties enabling more efficient development of annual reports. Another advantage to developing such an application is the user would not have to submit a request for information and wait to receive the information, rather the user could quickly access, organize, and print the required information, saving days, if not weeks, of waiting for the data, depending on the complexity of the request. To fully utilize the application, the user should be trained.*

*In order to better manage its data, the user(s) would have to obtain the report in a specific file format, depending on the software application used. Reports needed for statistical analysis could be pre-identified, allowing ODJFS MIS to convert and e-mail identified reports as batches are generated. Thereby, allowing the user to import report files into the selected application as received and performing ongoing analyses to identify possible issues and inefficiencies along with producing timely sporadic statistical reports, as requested.*

*The Department could utilize the Control D application, enabling reports to be compiled and electronically mailed to the user, which would allow the user to select and print reports that are needed. With Control D the user can view both current and historical reports. Additionally, depending on the type of installation, reports may be printed by screen, a preselected page or range of pages, or the entire report. For example, rather than printing all the reports at ODJFS MIS as depicted in the “before” column of Chart 4-11, the use of Control D would significantly streamline the process as depicted in the “after” column of Chart 4-11. An advantage of more timely reports would be that Day Care Licensing Specialists would have a smaller time gap between when information is entered into the Child Care Licensing System and when the District Office receives the report. For example, it currently takes approximately two weeks for a report to be generated and distributed; implementing the electronic distribution process reports would take approximately an hour to be available for viewing.*

*Implementing Control D in this way could eliminate two unnecessary steps from the process illustrated in the before portion of Chart 4-11. The reports would not have*

to be printed or forwarded to the ODJFS mail room; therefore the Central Office would not have to sort and distribute the reports for the district offices, thereby freeing clerical personnel to perform more value-added duties such as data entry. Additionally, this revised method of obtaining data will enable the section to maintain historical reports on electronic backup in order to perform trend analyses and determine impact of strategic initiatives.

Implementation of Control D would have virtually no cost implications. District Offices could access Control D one of two ways, either through the Internet or through a CRIS-E terminal. The only step that would require implementation would be the process of obtaining a Control D userid.

The Office of MIS and child care licensing personnel are the key drivers for the flow of information. The project administrators and project assistants from the MIS department are responsible for constructing programs that extract data from the child care licensing database and organize the data into meaningful reports. The Child Care Licensing Section Chief, day care licensing specialist supervisors, and the day care licensing specialists utilize the data extracted and organized by the MIS department to monitor the Child Care Licensing Section, centers, type A homes, and providers. This group of professionals should consistently meet at least twice per year, focusing on the implementation of **recommendation 4-8**.

#### Financial Implications:

Table 4-10 estimates cost savings of implementing electronic distribution of reports.

**Table 4-10: Annual Cost Savings of Implementing Electronic Distribution of Reports**

Cost Description	Annual Amount of Cost Savings
Printing Costs <sup>1</sup>	\$8,500
Mailing Costs <sup>2</sup>	\$2,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>

<sup>1</sup>Cost based on an estimated 83,296 annual pages printed at a cost of 3¢ a page. Also, approximately 300 personnel hours may be saved annually.

<sup>2</sup>Cost estimated based on bulk mailing to District Offices taking into account frequency and volume.

Source: ODJFS Office of Management Information Systems; Ohio Data Network; and ODJFS Office of Children and Families Services, Bureau of Child Care, Child Care Licensing Section.



Table 4-11 depicts the cost implications of **recommendation 4-8**.

**Table 4-11: Cost Implications of Implementing Crystal Reports 6.0, Training One Central Office Employee and One Employee from Each District Office, and Implementing an Electronic Distribution of Reports**

General Description	Cost Description	One-Time Cost Amount
Implementation of Crystal Reports 6.0	One-Time Training per User (9 users at approximately \$2,500 each for development and other costs - includes district office supervisors and section chief)	\$22,500
Total Cost		\$22,500

Source: ODJFS MIS; and ODJFS Office of Professional Development and Quality Services.

## Financial Implications Summary

The following table represents a summary of the implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purpose of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

**Table 4-12: Summary of Financial Implications for Child Care Licensing**

Recommendation	Annual Implementation Costs	One Time Implementation Costs	Annual Cost Savings
4-1: Hiring an additional 13 licensing specialists	\$625,000		
4-2: Hiring an additional employee to provide technical assistance per district office	\$240,000		
4-4: Fill the vacant enforcement coordinator position	\$54,000		
4-6: Develop and deliver training curriculum	\$28,000		
4-8: Implement electronic distribution of reports and train key personnel on Crystal Reports		\$22,500	
4-8: Savings associated with printing and mailing via electronic distribution of reports			\$10,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$947,000</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>

## **Conclusion**

Ideally, the Child Care Licensing Section should be adequately staffed to perform its licensing functions to better serve its customers. Currently, the average ratio of centers to staff exceeds the maximum suggested by the National Association for the Education of Young Children by over 50 percent. The ODJFS central office staff, charged with administering licensing across the state, has decreased from seven to three employees since the early 1990's. This decrease has negatively affected the section's ability to effectively enforce and monitor activities and services, train personnel, and perform rule reviews.

The section has only one administrator, the Section Chief, to manage the district licensing staff, compile information requested by legislators, review and resolve sensitive licensing issues, and review potential enforcement actions. The Enforcement Coordinator position should be able to encompass and supplant other roles, based on an historically low number of enforcement cases. For instance, a full-time Enforcement Coordinator could handle both incoming recommendations for enforcement action and public information requests. This would improve the efficiency of the enforcement process and allow the Section Chief to take more of an administrative role in actively monitoring the section.

Advancements in information technology are enabling organizations to become more effective and efficient in endeavors to monitor and provide services. The Child Care Licensing section has taken steps toward using advanced technology to accomplish its monitoring goals, yet needs to continue to pursue various methods of increasing service efficiency through automated means. Continued growth and efficient utilization of information technology will assist in ensuring timely inspections and accurate up-to-date analysis of the status of child care centers in Ohio, further ensuring the safety of children.

The section does not currently engage in any type of formalized staff training. Employee training is sporadic and generally does not pertain to child care licensing. Due to the complex and evolving nature of child care, specialists should receive specific, ongoing training to enable them to stay abreast of emerging issues. For example, specialists may benefit from training that stresses the importance of maintaining consistency as they perform and evaluate inspections. Such training could reduce the section's exposure to litigation and help day care licensing specialists perform investigations with more assurance and guidance.

With advances in technology and increased public awareness of child care issues, day care licensing rules and regulations should be in a constant state of review and revision. Section 119.032, Revised Code, established a five-year rule review requirement for all administrative code rules. The rule review may either be conducted continually, in sections, or all at once within the stated period. A continuous rule review may take a significant amount of time; however, the ability to react to and provide guidance on issues as they develop may prove beneficial enough to offset the time spent.

## **FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION**



---

# Family Violence Prevention

---

## Background

### *Program Overview*

In 1986, Ohio's Family Violence Prevention (FVP) Program was established when the Department applied for and received federal funds under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). The FVPSA funds are used to provide funding to local domestic violence shelters for safe and temporary housing for victims of domestic violence and their dependents and to assist communities in establishing programs for domestic violence victims. Several of ODJFS' FVP initiatives are intended to improve community prevention efforts with enhanced resources such as: training, on site technical assistance, and program performance monitoring by the domestic violence coalitions; statewide public awareness campaigns; and establishing collaborative networks and cross-training at local agencies which are involved with individuals at risk of domestic violence.

In 1994, Ohio's General Assembly began appropriating approximately \$800,000 annually in general revenue funds for family violence prevention efforts, which can be used to provide grants for county and local family violence prevention community education initiatives and for shelters which are exclusively for domestic violence victims.

FVP staff are responsible for administering FVPSA and state family violence prevention funds, developing statewide domestic violence policies and procedures for local agencies under ODJFS administrative oversight, and developing and coordinating statewide family violence prevention public awareness campaigns.

The FVPSA defines **family violence** as an act or threatened act of violence, including any forceful detention of an individual, which (a) results or threatens to result in physical injury and (b) is committed by a person against another individual (including an elderly person) to whom such person is or was related by blood or marriage or otherwise legally related or with whom such person is or was lawfully residing.

The central values which guide the FVP program are the health, safety, well-being, stability and self-sufficiency of the family. The FVP program has four primary goals which include:

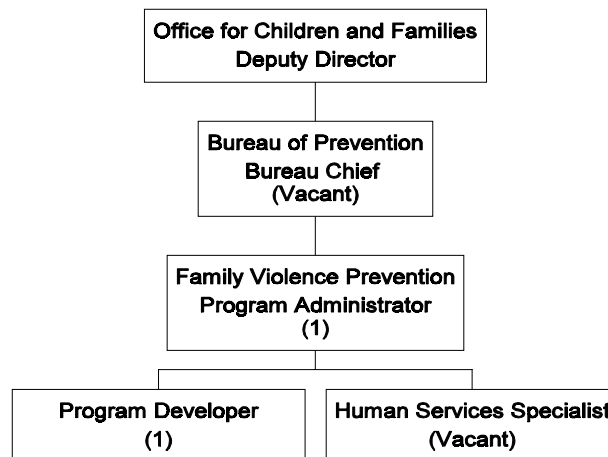
- preventing family violence through public awareness, education, and community outreach efforts aimed at children and young adults;
- encouraging individuals who are involved in family violence to seek help;

- assuring state-wide availability of safe, temporary shelter to victims of family violence and their dependents; and
- assuring state-wide availability of supportive services to family violence victims and their families.

### Organizational Chart

FVP is located in the Office for Children and Families, Bureau of Prevention. FVP’s organizational structure and staffing levels are depicted in the following chart.

**Chart 5-1: Family Violence Prevention Reporting Structure**



In November 1999, FVP moved from the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection to the Bureau of Prevention. The program currently consists of two full-time employees: one program administrator and one program developer. The human services specialist position has been vacant since August 1999, and there are no immediate plans to fill it. The program currently does not receive any clerical support. When FVP was located in the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection, clerical support was available when needed through a secretarial pool.

### *Summary of Operations*

The FVP staff spends the majority of its time administering the FVPSA and state family violence prevention funds. In state FY 2000, 55 domestic violence shelters and 25 non-profit organizations were each awarded approximately \$10,000 to \$63,000 to provide immediate shelter and related services including counseling, outreach, job skills training, and education to domestic violence victims and their dependents. Three other organizations were awarded contracts ranging from approximately \$45,000 to \$100,000 to provide a variety of indirect services including training and technical assistance for domestic violence service providers, a resource center, and a toll free domestic violence telephone line. In the past, ODJFS has also contracted out site visits and administrative tasks such as the completion of the annual federal activity and performance report. In addition, ODJFS awarded each County Department of Job and Family Services between \$1,800 to \$3,600 to develop local policies and procedures through collaborative networks to address the needs of individuals who may be impacted by domestic violence.

The Program Administrator is responsible for completing a variety of tasks including ensuring all the federal guidelines relating to the FVPSA grant are met, preparing the request for proposals, and developing statewide domestic violence policies and procedures for local agencies under ODJFS administrative oversight. The Program Administrator is also responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures for monitoring service providers.

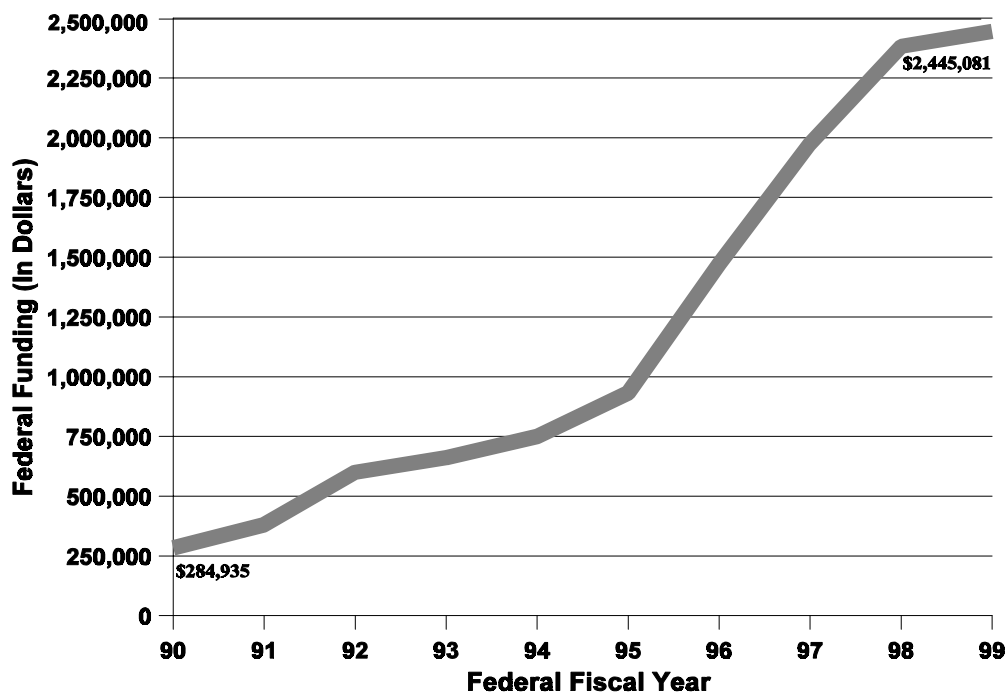
The Program Developer is responsible for managing all the grants, including making sure the grantees are providing the agreed upon services, approving all grantee reimbursement requests, reviewing performance reports, conducting site visits, and providing technical assistance to the grantees. The Program Developer spends most of the time processing and approving invoices and completing administrative tasks. No site visits have been performed during the current grant period, and cursory reviews of performance reports are completed.

### *Program Funding*

In 1986, Ohio received its first FVPSA award totaling \$302,706. The original grant award was used to fund 15 community-based agencies which provided direct FVP services. The grant award has grown steadily over the last 10 years by an average of approximately 28 percent each year. For federal FY 1999, ODJFS received approximately \$2.4 million. Those funds are being used to fund 80 direct service providers, 3 indirect service providers and the local family violence networking initiative.

Chart 5-2 outlines Ohio's 10-year FVPSA funding award history.

**Chart 5-2: Ohio's FVPSA Funding Award Has Increased Steadily Between 1990 - 2000**



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Award Letters

In 1994, Ohio's General Assembly began appropriating general revenue funds for family violence prevention efforts. For state FY 2000, the governor requested a 3 percent decrease in all line item budgets. As a result, the family violence prevention line item decreased by 3 percent to \$812,274.

ODJFS allocates the majority of the state funds to domestic violence shelters. In state FY 2000, 55 domestic violence shelters each received \$12,720 in state funds. The remaining state funds were combined with federal funds and allocated to County Departments of Job and Family Services for the development of collaborative networks to address the needs of individuals who experience domestic violence.

Table 5-1 outlines the state family violence prevention funding levels from state FY 1994 to state FY 2000.



**Table 5-1: Family Violence Prevention State Funding Level Changes Have Been Minimal**

State Fiscal Year Award Period	Funding Amount	Percentage Change From Previous Year
1994	\$829,143	N/A
1995	\$829,143	0.0%
1996	\$816,557	(1.5)%
1997	\$837,396	2.6%
1998	\$837,396	0.0%
1999	\$837,396	0.0%
2000	\$812,274	(3.0)%

Source: Ohio Biennial Operating Appropriations

### *State Sources for Domestic Violence Funding*

In Ohio, five state agencies administer funds for domestic violence victim services and prevention programs. Those agencies include: ODJFS, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Ohio Department of Health, and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

ODJFS is responsible for administering the FVPSA grant award and the state general revenue funds appropriated for family violence prevention. OCJS is responsible for administering the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program (VAWA) and the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program (Byrne). OAG is responsible for administering the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and the State Victims Assistance Act (SVAA) programs. The Department of Health administers funds for sexual assault prevention, education, and crisis intervention. The Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services administers the Public Health Services Act grant award which provides funding to six domestic violence shelters for substance abuse counseling services. Since the grant programs administered by the Department of Health and the Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services serve dissimilar populations and have differing goals from the grant programs at ODJFS, Attorney General, and Ohio Criminal Justice Services, we will exclude those programs from our analysis and comparisons for the purposes of this report.

Table 5-2 contains key statistics about each grant program administered by ODJFS, OCJS and OAG.

**Table 5-2: State Administered Domestic Violence Grant Program Key Statistics**

Agency	ODJFS		OCJS		OAG	
Program	FVPSA	FVP	VAWA	Byrne	VOCA	SVAA
Revenue Source	Federal	State	Federal	Federal	Federal	State
Funding Priorities	Temporary shelter and related services for DV victims and their dependents	Temporary shelter and related services for DV victims and their dependents	Law enforcement projects and prosecution strategies which reduce violent crimes against women and services for violent crime victims	Multi-county-jurisdictional narcotics trafficking task forces, victim/witness assistance projects and crime prevention projects	Services which directly benefit sexual assault, spousal or child abuse crime victims.	Services which directly benefit sexual assault, spousal or child abuse crime victims.
Grant Period	July 1-June 30 <sup>1</sup>	July 1- June 30 <sup>1</sup>	April 1- March 31 <sup>2</sup>	January 1- December 31	October 1- September 30 <sup>3</sup>	October 1- September 30
Award Period	SFY 2000	SFY 2000	FFY 1998	FFY 1999	FFY 2000	FFY 2000
Funding Available	\$2.4 million	\$800,000	\$5 million	\$19.2 million	\$9.2 million	\$ 1.7 million
DV Program Awards	\$2.4 million	\$800,000	\$2.1 million	\$600,000	\$4.1 million	\$500,000
Total Grants Awarded	83 <sup>4</sup>	55 <sup>4</sup>	50	111	138	88
Number of DV Grants	83	55	32	16	64	29

Sources: CFDA sheets, funding applications, and state agency data

<sup>1</sup> Or upon execution, whichever is later. ODJFS' SFY 2000 funding cycle began on July 15, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Prosecution projects start on October 1 and end September 30.

<sup>3</sup> This time period is for continuation programs only. Newly funded programs are funded for three years beginning October 1.

<sup>4</sup> For comparative purposes, allocations made to County Departments of Job and Family Services were excluded.

None of the agencies have the same grant award periods. ODJFS funds its programs based on the state fiscal year while OAG offers its funding based on the federal fiscal year. OCJS funds Byrne based on the calendar year while VAWA funding begins April 1. Byrne is the largest DV federal award Ohio receives. Of the approximately \$19.2 million dollars available from the Byrne grant, approximately 3 percent, or \$600,000, is used to fund 16 domestic violence-related programs. The majority of the Byrne funds are used to provide leadership and direction in controlling the use and availability of illegal drugs and to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system.

The Attorney General's Office provides the largest amount of funding—approximately \$4.6 million in

state and federal funds—to domestic violence victim assistance program providers. ODJFS funds 83 domestic violence grantees—more than Criminal Justice Services and the Attorney General’s office combined. The larger number of ODJFS grantees is due in part to the agency’s implementation of funding caps for the state and federal funds it distributes: state fund recipients do not receive more than \$13,500, and federal fund recipients—with the exception of the two statewide domestic violence coalitions—do not receive more than \$50,000 each. Neither the Office of Criminal Justice Services nor the Attorney General have implemented funding caps; both agencies grant some recipients over \$100,000 each.

Our review focused on six issues involving FVP, including

- C Program Location;
- C Staffing;
- C Distribution and Award of Funds, specifically:
  - C Internal Requests for Proposals Review Process,
  - C State FY 2000 RFP, and
  - RFP Distribution of Review Process;
- C Guidance for Grantees;
- C Grantee Reimbursement, including
  - C Invoices, and
  - C The Reimbursement Process; and
- C Monitoring, including
  - C Desk Reviews and Documentation; and
  - C Site Visits.

## Processes and Recommendations

### *Program Location*

***Finding 5-1: Even though ODJFS recently moved the Family Violence Prevention program to the department’s Bureau of Prevention, the future of the program within ODJFS is uncertain.***

ODJFS has spent more than two years trying to determine what it should do with the FVP program. The department has considered moving the program to another area within ODJFS or to another state agency. In November 1999, FVP was moved from the department’s Bureau of Child and Adult Protection to its Bureau of Prevention. As of June 2000, the department had not determined if the FVP

program would remain at ODJFS.

***Recommendation 5-1: ODJFS should determine if it wants to keep the Family Violence Prevention program within the department or consult with the Governor's Office to move it to another state agency.***

*ODJFS is legislatively assigned to administer the Family Violence Prevention program and any proposed administrative change by ODJFS would require the involvement of the Governor's Office. If the decision is to keep the program within ODJFS, the department should increase the FVP program staffing level (see recommendation 5-2, below). The current workload cannot be effectively managed by one program developer. The Department should also reestablish ownership over the program and make an effort to improve grantee monitoring (See recommendations 5-11 and 5-12, below), increase technical assistance, improve communication, and strengthen working relationships with its grantees.*

*If ODJFS and the Governor's Office decide to move the program to another state agency, they should consider offering the program to OCJS. OCJS appears to have sound grant management practices and the necessary resources to effectively administer the FVP program and FVPSA funds. In October 1999, OCJS installed a grant management information system to allow for more effective federal grant management. The system allows OCJS to score and rank funding proposals, track subgrant and subgrantee expenditures, and monitor progress. A second phase of the project will extend the grant management system into areas of performance evaluation and statistical analysis.*

*OCJS also houses the Center for the Prevention of Family and Community Violence which was created with the passage of Ohio S.B. 9 in December 1999. The purpose of the center is to coordinate all victim assistance and violence prevention efforts throughout the state and to implement the recommendations of the Ohio Supreme Court Domestic Violence Task Force. Eight core state agencies have been identified and invited to participate in the center's efforts to develop and coordinate victim assistance programs, prevention efforts, public awareness, domestic violence legislation, and to promote formal training and education.*

*If ODJFS and the Governor's Office decide to move the program to another state agency, an interagency transfer agreement could be completed in the interim to allow ODJFS to immediately give the program to another state agency. Under the*

*agreement, all of the funds associated with the program would be transferred to the receiving agency, and the FVP staff could also be transferred. Under the transfer agreement, ODJFS would still be responsible for ensuring the FVPSA funds are spent appropriately. In order for responsibility to be relinquished from ODJFS and given to the agency receiving the program, legislation would have to be passed to revise the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). The ORC could be revised as part of the budget bill, or it could be done apart from the budget bill.*

*Financial Implication:*

*If the Department and the Governor's Office decide to move the FVP program to another state agency, ODJFS could reduce its operating expenditures by approximately \$115,000 in salaries and approximately \$32,000 in benefits for a total annual savings of approximately \$147,000.*

## Staffing

***Finding 5-2: Family Violence Prevention staff currently numbers two, which seems substantially understaffed given the ratio of grantees to program staff at Office of Criminal Justice Services and the Attorney General's Office. The lack of sufficient staff has hindered ODJFS' ability to perform monitoring as well as efficiently distribute funding to their grantees.***

At ODJFS, two full-time employees are assigned to administer the FVP program, one Program Administrator and one Program Developer. Table 5-3 compares the number and type of FVP staff at ODJFS to the number of OCJS and OAG personnel responsible for administering the domestic violence-related grant programs. Since each agency's grant administration program is structured differently, the analysis below attempts to include all full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members performing functions similar to the FVP staff.

**Table 5-3: The Ratio of Federal Grantees to Program Staff is Significantly Higher at ODJFS**

	ODJFS	OCJS		OAG
	FVPSA/FVP	VAWA	Byrne	VOCA/SVAA
<b>Program Management Personnel</b> -Director of Victims Assistance -Grants Coordinator -Program Administrator	1	1	1	1
<b>Total Program Management FTEs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Program Staff</b> -Fiscal Planner -Grants Management Representative -Program Developer -Victims Assistance Specialist	1	.8 1.2	1.3 2.8	3
<b>Total Program Staff FTEs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total Federal Grantees to Manage</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Ratio of Federal Grantees to Program Staff</b>	<b>83:1</b>	<b>25:1</b>	<b>27:1</b>	<b>46:1</b>

Sources: Organizational and staffing charts, grant award listings

The Program Developer at ODJFS is responsible for managing approximately three times as many grants as the program staff at OCJS and almost twice as many grants as the program staff at OAG. The program staff at OCJS consists of fiscal planners and grants management representatives. The fiscal planners are responsible for fiscal monitoring, reviewing and approving grantee quarterly financial reports, and sending the approved reports to the fiscal department for payment. The grants management representatives provide technical assistance to the grantees, conduct site visits and programmatic monitoring, approve budget adjustments, and review and score grantee funding applications. The Victims Assistance Specialists at OAG evaluate grantee funding applications, provide technical assistance, and review grantee performance reports.

***Recommendation 5-2: ODJFS should consider increasing its Family Violence Prevention staff by two full-time employees, which would reduce the ratio of grantees to program staff to approximately 27:1—more in line with the ratios at OCJS.***

*The VAWA and Byrne grant programs at OCJS are structured very similarly to the FVP program. Both ODJFS and OCJS provide funding on a reimbursement basis, unlike OAG which provides advances to its VOCA and SVAA grantees. Increasing the FVP staff by two full-time employees would allow ODJFS to better focus on program outcomes and grantee performance. The additional staff would allow ODJFS to improve its monitoring efforts (See recommendations 5-10 and 5-11, below), conduct site visits (see Recommendation 5-12), and provide more technical assistance to its grantees.*

*Financial Implication:*

*If ODJFS hired two full-time program developers, it would cost the Department approximately \$82,000 in salaries and \$25,000 in benefits, for a total annual cost of approximately \$107,000.*

### *Distribution and Award of Funds*

The FVP staff spends the majority of its time distributing and monitoring state and federal funds which have been allocated to nonprofit and local governmental agencies to carry out family violence prevention programs and activities. When awarding funds, FVPSA requires ODJFS to give special emphasis to community-based projects of demonstrated effectiveness, particularly nonprofit private organizations whose primary purpose is to operate shelters for victims of family violence and their dependents and those which provide direct services such as counseling, alcohol and drug abuse treatment, advocacy, and self-help services to victims and abusers. The federal guidelines also require the Department to award at least 70 percent of the FVPSA funds to local public and non-profit agencies which provide immediate shelter and related assistance to victims of family violence and their dependents. Approximately 20 percent of the FVPSA funds must go toward related assistance, and no more than 5 percent of the award may be spent on administrative costs. ODJFS uses a request for proposal (RFP) process to competitively award the FVPSA funds.

### **Internal RFP Review Process**

***Finding 5-3: When a grant period start date is delayed, ODJFS does not offer retroactive reimbursements to its grantees. As a result, the delays negatively impact the grantees' ability to provide family violence prevention services and programs.***

Rather than focusing on helping domestic violence victims, the grantees must readjust their priorities and look for alternative funding sources. Some agencies are forced to reduce staff and delay services they provide.

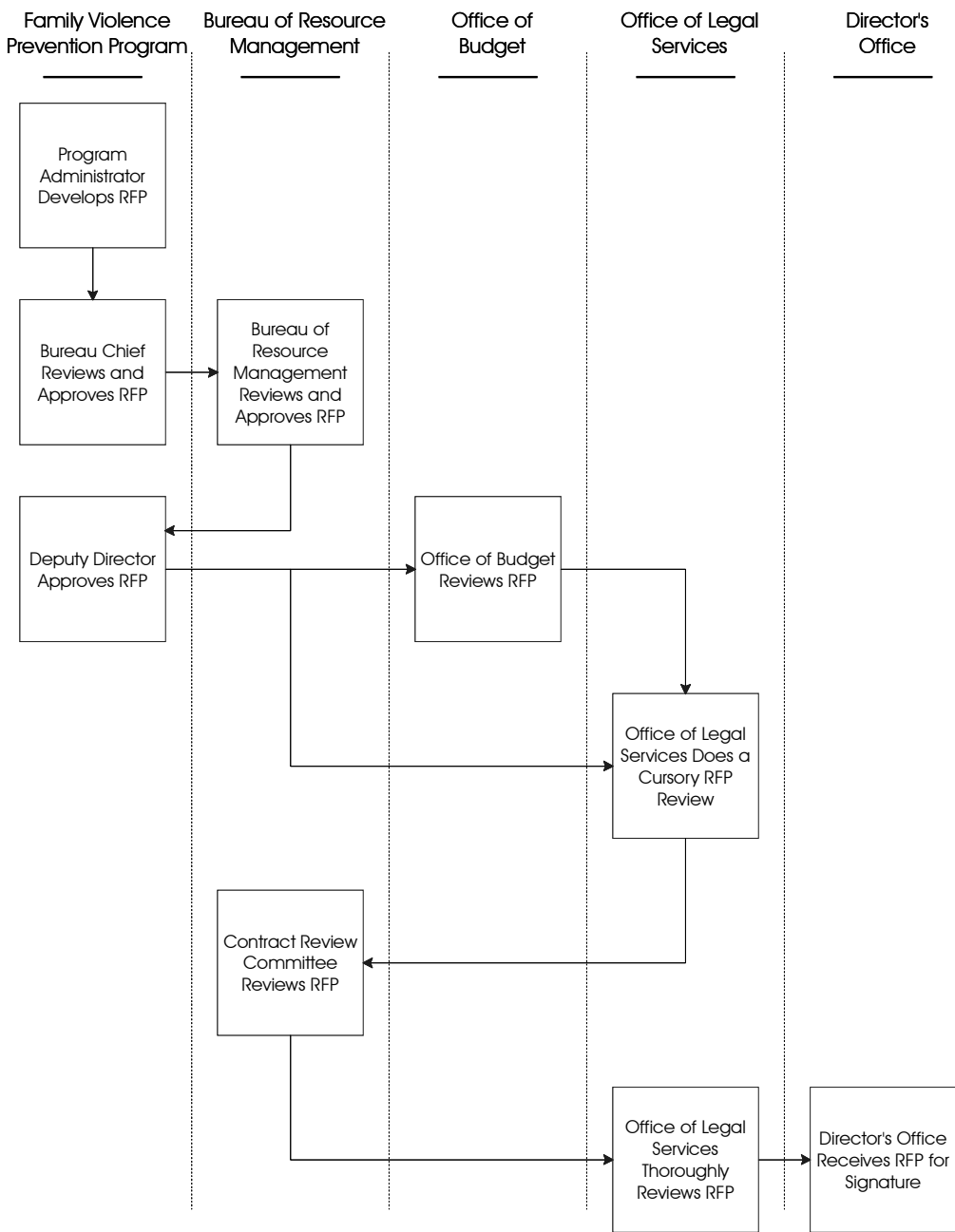
Before FVP releases the RFP to the public, it reviews the document internally. The review process used prior to state FY 2000 was thorough but time-consuming. A new process, used to review the state FY 2001 RFP, is less cumbersome and appears more efficient.

Once the RFP was sent out to review, the Program Administrator and FVP staff could not control how quickly the RFP was reviewed. In fact, the state FY 1998 federal RFP took approximately three months in review, and the state RFP took approximately four months. Because of this lengthy review period, the state had to delay the grant start date. The speed of review depended on the workloads and agendas of the Bureau of Resource Management, the Contract Review Committee, the Office of Budget, and the Office of Legal Services. To help ensure the state FY 2000 RFP would be released in a more timely manner, the Director's Office intervened during the review process. Even so, ODJFS recognized that the RFP review process was typically tedious and time consuming, and in an effort to increase efficiency, it revised the process in December 1999. Several changes were made to the original state FY 2000 RFP at the request of the Bureau of Resource Management, the Contract Review Committee, and the Office of Legal Services. The review and approval process for the RFP took approximately six weeks to complete.

The following two charts document ODJFS' RFP review process. Chart 5-3 illustrates the process used to review the state FY 2000 RFP; Chart 5-4 depicts the review process for the state FY 2001 RFP.



**Chart 5-3: The SFY 2000 FVP RFP Review Process Was Complex and Could Be Time Consuming**



Source: FVP Program Administrator

The process displayed in Chart 5-3 included numerous exchanges and redundant reviews which did not necessarily add value to the RFP process. We identified the following steps within the RFP process:

- Program Administrator developed the RFP;
- Bureau Chief reviewed it, then sent it to the Bureau of Resource Management for review;
- Once the Bureau of Resource Management approved the RFP, they sent it to the Deputy Director for approval;
- Deputy Director then forwarded the approved RFP to the Office of Budget and the Office of Legal Services;
- Office of Budget reviewed the RFP to ensure it was fiscally sound, and then notified the Office of Legal Services of any concerns it had.
- Office of Legal Services conducted a cursory review of the RFP, then scheduled it for review by the Contract Review Committee, which consisted of approximately six different individuals, including representatives from the Office of Budget, the Office of Legal Services, and the Director's Office;
- After the Contract Review Committee approved the RFP, they sent it back to the Office of Legal Services for a more thorough review of the legal issues contained in the document; and
- Once the Office of Legal Services approved the RFP, they sent it to the Director's Office for signature.

With the signature attached, the RFP could be released. However, at any point during the approval process, the RFP could be returned to the FVP Program Administrator for revisions; this occurred frequently. When the Program Administrator had made the appropriate changes, the approval process would start all over again.

The following chart depicts the revised RFP process for state FY 2001.

**Chart 5-4: The SFY 2001 RFP Review Process Is More Efficient**



**Sources:** FVP Program Administrator, Bureau of Contract Administration

The new process streamlined the RFP review process to include the following steps:

- Once the FVP Program Administrator revises the state FY 2001 RFP, it goes to the Bureau Chief for review, then to the Deputy Director's Office;
- Deputy Director approves the RFP and forwards it to the Bureau of Contract Administration

for review; and

- Bureau of Contract Administration revises and approves it and forwards it to the Assistant Director's Office for approval and release.

The entire process takes about one month to complete—an improvement of about two weeks over the state FY 2000 RFP review. Under the new review process, the Bureau of Resource Management, the Contract Review Committee, and the reviews by the Office of Budget and the Office of Legal Services have all been replaced by the Bureau of Contract Administration. (The Bureau of Contract Administration was created in August 1999 after the department recognized the need to strengthen and unify its procurement practices and procedures.) Rather than reviewing the RFP and sending it back to the FVP Program Administrator for revision, the Bureau of Contract Administration staff makes the revisions after consulting with the FVP Program Administrator. The Bureau of Contract Administration is also responsible for reviewing the federal guidelines and requirements for FVPSA funds.

The RFP review and approval process has changed significantly in the last year. The Bureau of Resource Management, the Contract Review Committee, and the reviews by the Office of Budget and the Office of Legal Services have all been replaced by the Bureau of Contract Administration. The Bureau of Contract Administration was created in August 1999, after the Department recognized the need to strengthen and unify its procurement practices and procedures. Rather than reviewing the RFP and sending it back to the FVP Program Administrator for revision, the Bureau of Contract Administration staff made the revisions after consulting with the FVP Program Administrator. Under the new process, the Bureau of Contract Administration is also responsible for reviewing the federal guidelines and requirements concerning the FVPSA funds.

We commend ODJFS for recognizing the importance of competitively procuring services and taking steps to speed, strengthen, and simplify the RFP review and approval process. Nevertheless, the delays in the release of the last three RFPs has resulted in later starting dates and shortened grant periods.

***Recommendation 5-3: ODJFS should continue to take steps to ensure RFPs are released in a timely manner to avoid shortened grant periods.***

*When grant period starts are delayed, grantees' cash flows are negatively impacted, and grantees may be unable to begin or continue programs unless alternative funding sources are secured. When FVP services are unavailable, family violence victims and their dependents go unassisted. ODJFS should continue to implement process changes which promote better planning and coordination of efforts within the Office for Children and Families, such as the new RFP review process (See Chart 5-4).*

**State FY 2000 RFP**

***Finding 5-4: The state FY 2000 RFP does not require applicants to set forth goals, objectives and program outcomes, but instead requires excessive documentation, such as copies of administrative policies and procedures, that do not directly communicate the grantee's goals and objectives for the program.***

ODJFS changed several features of the state FY 2000 RFP, most of which improved the RFP process, but which did little to ensure program outcomes. These included

- C combining the federal and state RFPs into one document;
- C reducing the duration of the RFP grant period from two years to one; and
- C reimbursing grantees for salary costs only.

In an effort to make the funding application process easier for both ODJFS and the grantees, the department combined the federal and state RFPs into one document. Federal funds are awarded competitively and proposals must score a minimum of 70 out of a possible 100 points before the department will consider them for funding. State funding, on the other hand, is not awarded competitively, and the department considers funding for any domestic violence shelter that submits a proposal.

We again commend ODJFS for streamlining the application process by combining state and federal applications while reducing its FVP program workload. Prior to state FY 2000, grantees who were selected to receive both state and federal funds entered into separate grant agreements and were required to submit two different invoices and two separate performance reports each quarter, one for state funds and one for federal funds. But the combined RFP allows applicants to apply for both funding streams using one application. As a result, the department has reduced the number of applications it must process and the number of proposals it must review. The combined RFP also reduces the number of grants and contracts the FVP program staff has had to manage.

In addition, ODJFS opted to shorten the state FY 2000 RFP grant period from two years to one since the department was unsure if the FVP program would remain at ODJFS (See recommendation 5-1). ODJFS did not want to have two-year agreements outstanding in the event the program was moved to another state agency in state FY 2001. For state FY 2001, the department wrote and released a new RFP which is also for a one year grant period.

The RFP requirements has shifted from an emphasis on the applicant's programmatic goals and strategies to the applicant's administrative policies and procedures. The state FY 1996 RFP required applicants to submit a program narrative which included: a statement of problems and needs, goals and

objectives, methodology, time schedule, and expected long-range impacts. The state FY 2000 RFP requires the applicant to submit copies of the applicant's articles of incorporation, mission statement, bylaws, accounting and personnel policies and procedures, and a list of the organization's board members with a description of each board member's duties. With the exception of the articles of incorporation and mission statement we question the value of the remaining documents for awarding the FVP grants.

The FVP RFP is more restrictive and compliance-oriented than OCJS' and OAG's grant applications. Table 5-4 compares the state FY 2000 FVP RFP to OCJS' and OAG's most recent funding applications and requirements.

**Table 5-4: ODJFS' SFY 2000 RFP Is More Restrictive Than OCJS' and OAG's Funding Applications**

	ODJFS	OCJS		OAG
	FVPSA/FVP	VAWA	Byrne	VOCA/SVAA
<b>Application Provided</b>	No. Format Guidelines Only	Yes	No. Concept Paper Format	Yes
<b>Type of Costs Funded</b>	Salaries Only	Multiple Cost Categories	Multiple Cost Categories	Multiple Cost Categories
<b>Funding Level Can Be Requested</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Funding Cap</b>	\$50,000 for FVPSA \$13,500 for FVP	None Stated	None Stated	None Stated
<b>Collaboration with Other Providers</b>	Encouraged; Not Required	Required	Required	Encouraged; Must Be Promoted
<b>Problem/Need Statement Required</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Program Goals and Objectives Required</b>	No	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Timetable Required</b>	No	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Assistance Provided for Application Completion</b>	1 Vendor Conference	Generic Technical Assistance; 5 Regional Meetings	Generic Technical Assistance	Generic Technical Assistance; 3 Regional Meetings
<b>Proposals Are Evaluated by Program Staff</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Attachments Needed</b>	24 <sup>1</sup>	3	2	4 <sup>2</sup>

**Sources for Table 5-4:** SFY 2000 FVP RFP, FFY 1999 VAWA Funding Directive, 1999 Byrne Funding Directive, FFY 2000 VOCA/SVAA Application

<sup>1</sup> Domestic violence shelters are required to provide 24 attachments, and all other applicants are required to submit 16.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants already receiving VOCA/SVAA grant funding are required to provide two attachments, unless their Articles of Incorporation have been amended or their IRS status has changed.

Both OCJS and OAG fund multiple cost categories including salaries, benefits, supplies, materials, and operating costs, while ODJFS only provides funding for salary costs. Also, ODJFS is the only state agency with published funding caps which limits awards to a maximum of \$50,000 in federal funds and \$13,500 in state funds. OCJS and OAG both require their applicants to provide a problem or need statement. OCJS is the only state agency which requires applicants to include program objectives, goals, and an implementation plan and timetable. Both OCJS and OAG provide generic technical assistance and host regional meetings to answer questions regarding the completion of the funding

application. ODJFS limits its applicant assistance to one three-hour vendor conference; the applicant must ask any questions related to the FVP RFP at the conference. ODJFS is also the only state agency which does not have its program staff review and evaluate FVP proposals (see recommendation 5-6, below).

ODJFS began addressing some of its RFP weaknesses in the state FY 2001 FVP RFP. However, the state FY 2001 RFP, which was released on March 1, 2000, has continued to shift the emphasis towards the applicant's administrative policies and procedures, as opposed to programmatic goals and strategies. ODJFS changed the budget component of the RFP in state FY 2001 to begin funding multiple cost categories. Applicants are required to submit a project budget detailing the costs associated with the proposed services. The project budgets have to be directly linked to the services described in the proposal, and the number of required attachments has been reduced. The department required the domestic violence shelters to include 24 attachments with their state FY 2000 proposals, while all other applicants had to include 16 attachments with their proposals. All applicants submitting direct services proposals for state FY 2001 were required to include six attachments.

***Recommendation 5-4: The Family Violence Prevention RFP should place increased emphasis on program outcomes and goals.***

*Grantee compliance and accountability are important; however, the applicant's proposal should also address program outcomes and victim needs. ODJFS could review grantee operational policies and procedures when conducting site visits (see recommendation 5-12, later in report).*

*ODJFS should revise their FVP RFP and require applicants to include a problem statement, describe their proposed services or programs, identify the targeted and under-served populations, state program goals, list program objectives and performance indicators, and include a timetable and implementation plan. The department should ask applicants to justify the need for a project by providing local statistics to document the scope of the problem. The program objectives should be clearly stated and be reasonable and measurable, and the performance measures should indicate what will be counted or measured to show the objectives have been met. Applicants should also indicate how the data will be collected to determine program effectiveness. The timetable and implementation plan should identify the who, what and when for each program objective. FVP staff could use the timetable and implementation plan to assist in monitoring grantee progress.*

***Recommendation 5-5: Rather than including proposal format guidelines in the RFP, ODJFS should consider providing the applicants with a standardized application which would promote format consistency and increase proposal review efficiency.***

*Currently, each proposal received by ODJFS is unique and organized in a different manner. The amount of time the department needs to review the proposals could be reduced if ODJFS provided applicants with a single format. Using a standardized application would allow the reviewers to compare the proposals with relative ease. Going to a single application format would also benefit program applicants by ensuring that all the required information is included in the proposal.*

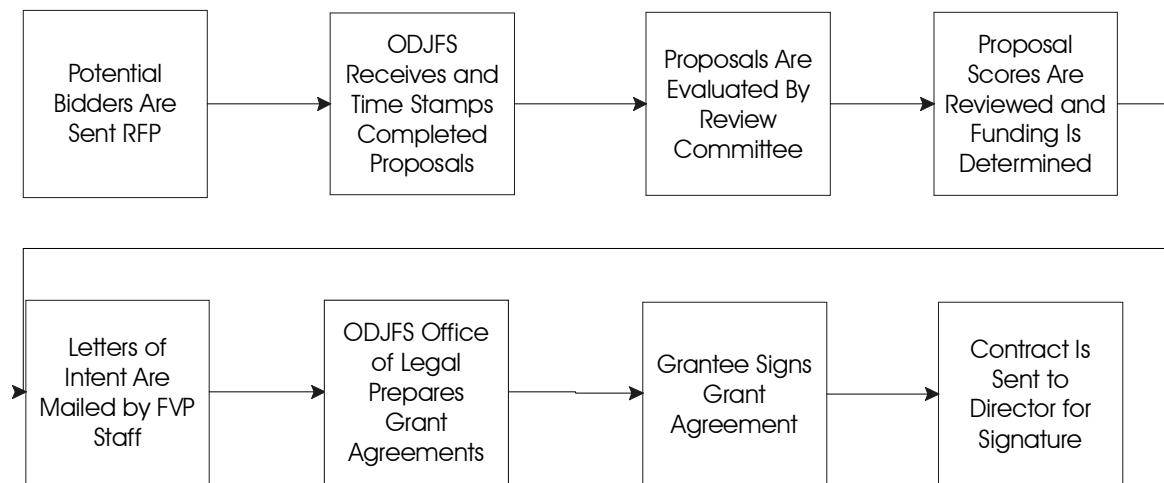
### **RFP Distribution and Review Process**

***Finding 5-6: The Family Violence Prevention RFPs are reviewed by personnel outside the section, which promotes a lack of consistency in reviewing the RFPs. This also prevents the knowledgeable personnel from adding value to the process by assessing prior grantee performance in awarding future funding.***

After ODJFS approved the state FY 2000 RFP for release, it sent the RFP to more than 1,000 potential bidders, including current grantees, churches, libraries, courts, and the United Way. The Program Administrator strives to distribute the RFP to as many potential bidders as possible. In an effort to reach more potential bidders, the state FY 2001 FVP RFP was released on ODJFS' website. Rather than sending out state FY 2001 RFPs to all the potential bidders, the department opted to send them a one page letter containing the RFP release information and website location. Interested applicants without Internet access were instructed to contact ODJFS for a paper copy of the RFP. We commend ODJFS for making the website RFP widely available and accessible to countless numbers of potential bidders and for helping to reduce departmental expenditures.

ODJFS has also made changes and improvements to its submission and review process, as shown in Chart 5-5.



**Chart 5-5: SFY 2000 FVP Proposal Review and Award Process**

**Source:** FVP Program Administrator

In state FY 2000, after the department released the FVP RFP, it gave applicants approximately 30 days to complete and submit their proposals. Once the department received a proposal, it date-stamped and assigned a number to each. Once proposals received date-stamps and numbers, the department divided them up among department employees from areas outside of FVP and employees from other state agencies familiar with domestic violence issues and programming. At least two different reviewers evaluated each direct services proposal; four reviewers evaluated proposals for indirect services. The reviewers had approximately one week to complete their evaluations, however, some reviewers only had one day. Evaluators calculated the final score for each proposal by averaging each proposal's individual evaluation scores.

Prior to the review process, the FVP staff determined approximately how much funding should be allocated to each county in order to achieve an equitable distribution of funds between the urban and rural areas. The proposals were recorded by name and score for each county served and funding was distributed equally between each proposal for that county. If there were several programs in an area and not enough funding available to award the funding maximum to each agency, then the size of the population being served was taken into consideration and the funding awards were made according to need. After the funding decisions are made, letters of intent are prepared and sent out by the FVP staff.

The Program Administrator also prepared a Request for Contract and Justification form for the Office of Legal Services. These forms have to be received by the Office of Legal Services before the grant agreement and contract preparation can begin. FVP also has to fill out a form requesting Controlling Board review and approval for contracts totaling more than \$50,000 in federal funds.

After the grant agreements and contracts are written, they are sent to the grantees for signature. The grantee signs the agreement and sends it back to the Office of Legal Services, which forwards the document to the Director's Office for signature. The grant agreements and contracts cannot be executed until the Director signs them.

***Recommendation 5-6: The Family Violence Prevention staff should review and evaluate the proposals to determine which deliverables ODJFS should fund.***

*The FVP staff possesses a high level of knowledge regarding FVP issues and programming needs. ODJFS should take advantage of the staff's knowledge base when evaluating proposals to enhance the quality of services and programs the department chooses to fund. Both OCJS and OAG involve their program staff in evaluating funding applications and proposals (see table 5-4). Having the FVP staff involved in the evaluation process also helps to ensure that projects of demonstrated effectiveness are selected for funding. If other ODJFS personnel assist the FVP staff in reviewing the proposals, the evaluation criteria should be clearly stated and explained to help ensure consistency among the reviewers.*

### Guidance for Grantees

***Finding 5-7: After the grant awards are distributed, ODJFS does not offer grantees any post-award orientation to explain and discuss what is expected of them, how to complete invoices for reimbursement, or how to report on performance.***

When the department sends a grant agreement or contract to the grantee, ODJFS includes invoicing and performance report instructions. Grantees are expected to read and understand the instructions with little or no help from the FVP program office. This lack of instruction can lead to high error rates on invoices and performance reports.

***Recommendation 5-7: At the beginning of the grant period, ODJFS should hold a mandatory post-award orientation session with all the grantees to answer any questions and to explain expectations and compliance requirements.***

*Orientation sessions are an effective means for ensuring that grantees are familiar with government-wide and program-specific requirements that apply to their grant awards. During the orientation session, the FVP staff should explain how the invoices and performance reports are to be completed and the grantees' fiscal and programmatic responsibilities and how those responsibilities should be met. Stating expectations and providing guidance at the start of the grant period could lead to a more efficient process for both ODJFS and the grantees.*

### *Grantee Reimbursement*

FVP grantees receive funding through reimbursements for their costs and services. The agency's grant agreement identifies the services to be provided, the funding amount, and the reimbursement percentage. For state FY 2000, ODJFS limited grantee reimbursements to a percentage of salary costs. Grantees are required to submit an invoice and performance report to ODJFS at least once a quarter in order to receive funding. Some grantees elect to submit invoices and performance reports monthly.

### **Invoices**

***Finding 5-8: When ODJFS recognized that vendors had problems preparing invoices correctly, it changed to a standard invoicing form. Even though this standardized form has helped ODJFS process invoices more efficiently, ODJFS no longer receives supporting documentation to substantiate the invoice.***

In an effort to improve invoice processing, ODJFS created a standardized FVP invoice form in December 1999. Grantees record employee names, rates of pay, hours worked, and payroll totals on the form. The form includes a certification statement which replaces the supporting documentation grantees were previously required to submit. The form is easier to complete and can be reviewed quickly. ODJFS is commended for creating a standardized invoicing form to help expedite the invoice review and grantee payment process.

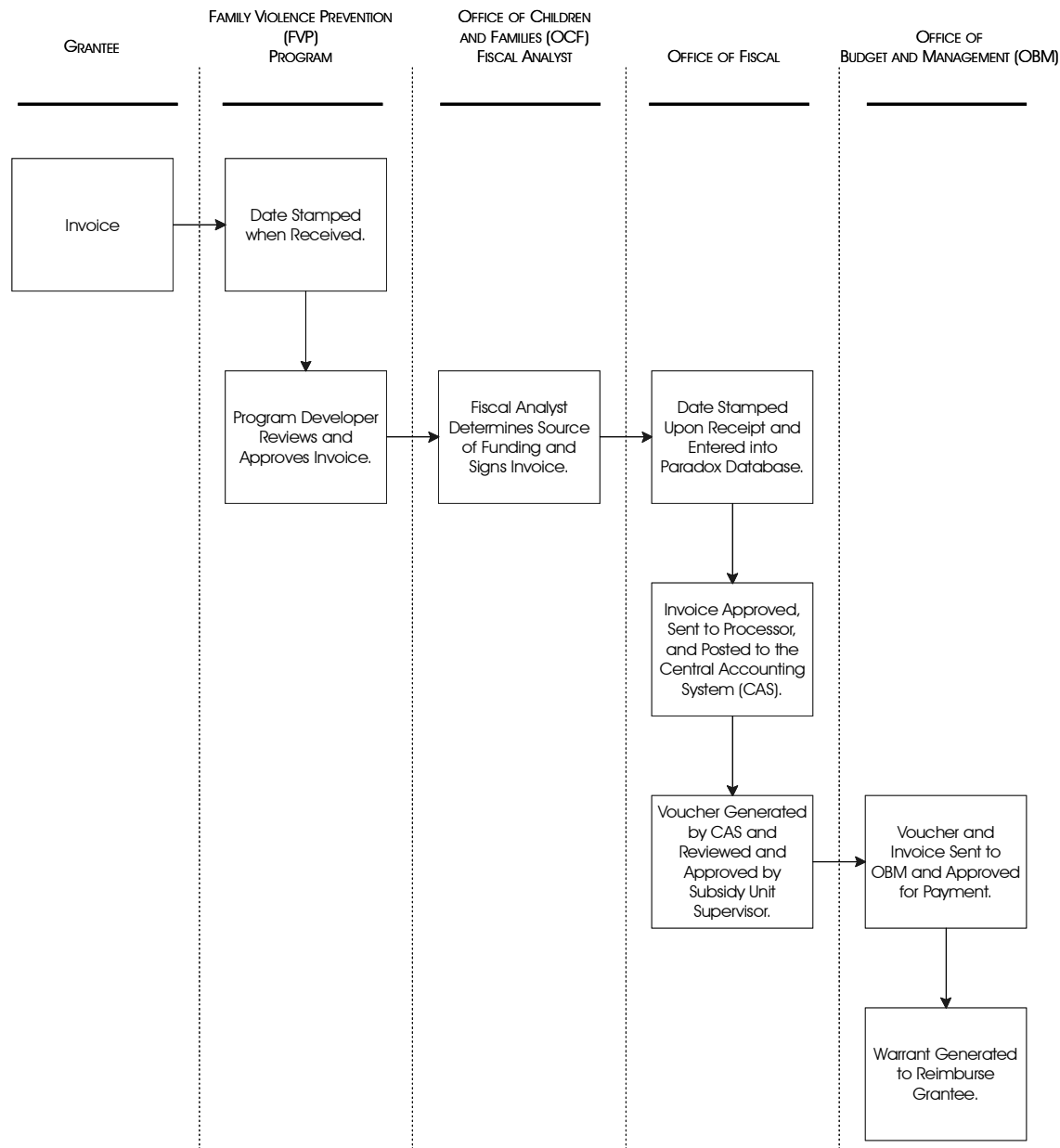
***Recommendation 5-8: During the recommended site visits to grantees (see recommendation 5-12), ODJFS should review payroll records and documentation to verify the accuracy of invoices.***

*While the standardized invoicing form helps to expedite the grantee reimbursement process, it also increases ODJFS' risk of reimbursing a grantee for unsubstantiated costs. During site visits, ODJFS could reduce the risk of improper reimbursement by performing random verifications of the information reported on the grantee's invoices. The department could verify the information by comparing an invoice to supporting payroll records and documentation.*

### **Reimbursement Process**

***Finding 5-9: Family Violence Prevention personnel have estimated that an invoice will take five to eight weeks after it has been received by ODJFS to be processed with a warrant issued to the grantee. When payments are not made timely, the grantee cannot adequately provide domestic violence services to victims in their community.***

Chart 5-6 outlines ODJFS' invoice review and payment process.

**Chart 5-6: The Grantee Reimbursement Process Is Lengthy**

**Sources:** FVP staff, OCF Fiscal Analyst, Office of Fiscal, Invoices, Vouchers

Grantees are supposed to submit their invoices no later than 15 days after their reporting period ends. Once received, ODJFS date-stamps each invoice, then gives it to the FVP Program Developer for review and approval. After reviewing the invoice, the Program Developer signs and dates the invoice

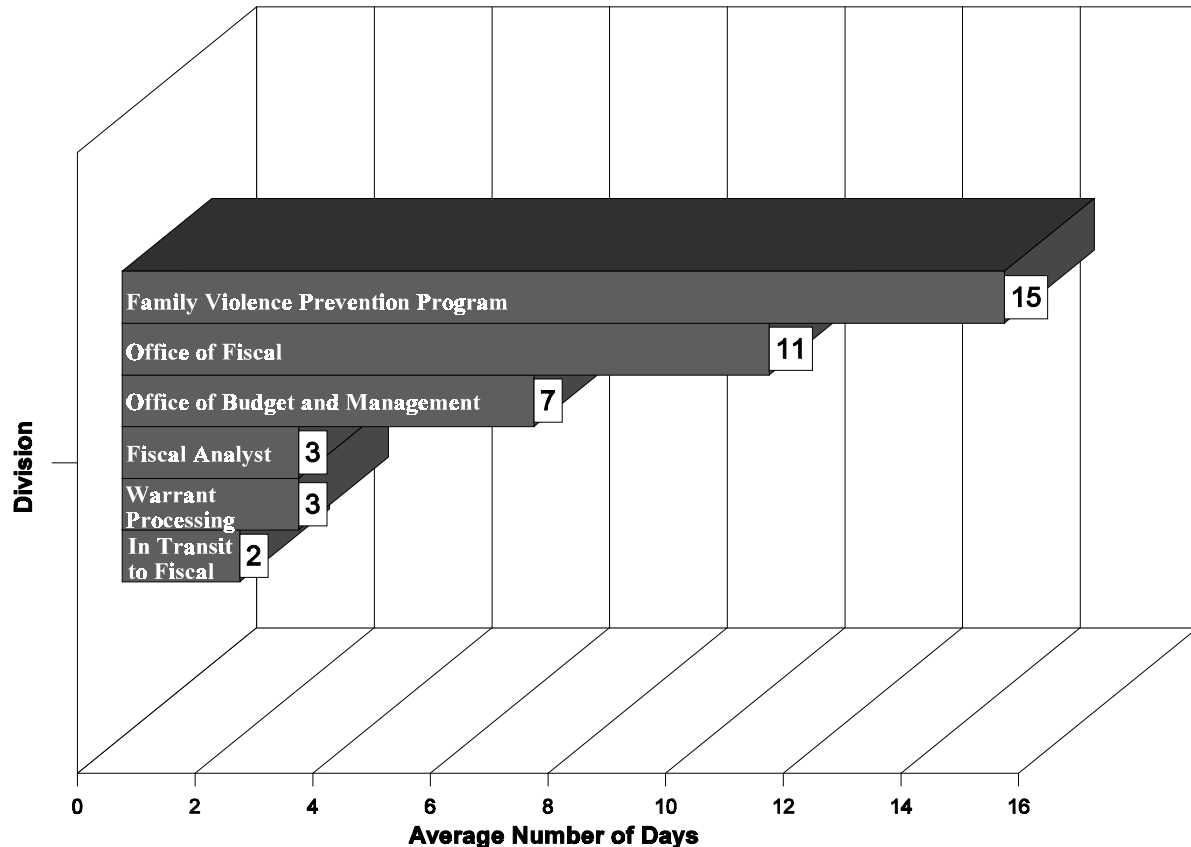
and sends it to the Office for Children and Families' Fiscal Analyst. The Fiscal Analyst compares the requested reimbursement to the agency's grant agreement to ensure ODJFS does not overpay the grantee, then codes the invoice for payment. The Fiscal Analyst signs and dates the invoice and sends it on to the Office of Fiscal.

The Office of Fiscal date-stamps the invoice and enters it into the Paradox Database system. (Paradox allows ODJFS to track the invoice while it is in the Office of Fiscal.) A subsidy unit supervisor within the Office of Fiscal reviews the invoice, then forwards it to a processor who enters the invoice into the state's Central Accounting System; once this is done, a voucher is generated. The subsidy unit supervisor reviews and initials the voucher and forwards it to the Office of Budget and Management for approval. The state accounting division of the Office of Budget and Management approves the invoice, and a warrant is then printed for the grantee. The Office of Fiscal is responsible for picking up and mailing out the warrants.

We performed a test to determine how long it takes ODJFS to process an FVP invoice and to identify key factors that might slow the invoicing process: In the 13-month period from January 1, 1999, to January 31, 2000, 646 FVP warrants were issued. We randomly selected approximately 10 percent of the warrants to determine how long it takes ODJFS to process an invoice from the time it is received to issuing a warrant. The testing process excluded the amount of time used to mail the warrants to recipients.

The amount of time necessary to process an invoice varies significantly. While 5 percent of the invoices were processed in 14 days or less, approximately 25 percent of the invoices took more than 50 days to process, with the longest taking 118 days (about 4 months). On average, it took ODJFS approximately 41 calendar days—about 6 weeks—to complete the invoicing process. The following chart shows how much time each step of the process takes during the reimbursement process.

**Chart 5-7: Invoices Spend a Significant Amount of Time in the Family Violence Prevention Area and in the Office of Fiscal**



Sources: ODJFS Office of Fiscal, CAS Reports, FVP Invoices, and Vouchers

The invoices tested spent the longest period of time in the FVP area—approximately 15 days. Prior to August 1999, two ODJFS employees approved all invoices submitted to FVP; currently, however, only one Program Developer reviews and approves the invoices. Furthermore, the invoice review and approval process FVP used prior to January 2000 was lengthy and time consuming: the Program Developer had to compare the positions and rates of pay on the invoice to the information contained in the grantee’s proposal, then review supporting documentation and verify the invoice calculations. According to the Program Developer, each invoice took approximately 30 to 40 minutes to review, and if the invoice was incomplete or if supporting documentation was missing, the grantee had to be contacted or the invoice had to be set aside until the grantee submitted correct information.

In an effort to reduce the amount of time an invoice spent within FVP, ODJFS developed a

standardized invoice for all grantees. With the new form, grantees are no longer required to submit supporting documentation. Instead, the grantees submit a certification statement attesting that all the information contained on the invoice is accurate. With the new form, the review process takes approximately 10 minutes.

In 1999, the invoices spent an average of 11 days in the Office of Fiscal; however, this 11-day average is not representative of the norm. During the first three quarters of 1999, the invoices were in the Office of Fiscal for an average of seven days, but during the fourth quarter, because of staff shortages and a hiring freeze, it took the Office of Fiscal an average of 23 days to process an invoice. The hiring freeze was lifted in January 2000, and the vacant fiscal positions were filled.

***Recommendation 5-9: ODJFS should establish internal benchmarks and a self-monitoring procedure to improve the timeliness of the Family Violence Prevention grantee reimbursement process.***

*ODJFS has not established internal benchmarks and does not have a system in place to monitor the timeliness of the FVP grantee reimbursement process. As a result, management is unaware of any delays in processing reimbursements unless the grantees call ODJFS inquiring about the status of their reimbursements. For the invoices we tested, FVP took an average of 41 calendar days, or almost six weeks, to process reimbursements. In some cases, grantees were not paid for over two months. By establishing benchmarks, ODJFS could reduce the amount of time an invoice sits idle in an area. Based on our test results and the relative simplicity of the FVP transactions, ODJFS should be able to process all invoices within two to three weeks of receiving them. ODJFS processed approximately 15 percent of the invoices we tested within 3 weeks.*

*The reimbursement process should also be reviewed periodically by management to ensure that reviewers are meeting benchmarks and ODJFS is paying grantees in a timely fashion. To further expedite the payment process, ODJFS should require the grantees to have their payments direct-deposited.*



Monitoring

***Finding 5-10: Due to an insufficient number of staff, ODJFS is not monitoring grantee activities and does not plan its monitoring activities or schedule site visits.***

ODJFS is responsible for monitoring grantee activities to ensure that grantees are using FVPSA funds for authorized purposes and in compliance with federal program laws, regulations, and grant agreements. Monitoring can also help to determine program effectiveness through document reviews, site visits, telephone calls, and training sessions.

***Recommendation 5-10: At the beginning of the grant period, ODJFS should determine what types of monitoring will be done to ensure that grantees are properly administering their grant agreements and contracts.***

*ODJFS should take into consideration the staff resources available when determining the types of monitoring that will be performed. If inadequate resources are available, management should be alerted to the situation so arrangements can be made to ensure the necessary monitoring activities are completed. ODJFS should also consider utilizing a risk-based approach in monitoring its grantees, based on criteria ODJFS establishes, such as: dollar amount disbursed to grantee, number of victims served, previous concerns with grantee programming, and grantee's years of experience with program. After determining which monitoring activities will be performed, ODJFS should establish a monitoring cycle and timetable to help ensure the monitoring is a consistent and ongoing process. ODJFS should also develop standard monitoring procedures and checklists for performing desk reviews and site visits. The checklists could save time, increase efficiency, and insure uniform monitoring procedures.*

**Desk Reviews of Documentation**

***Finding 5-11: Currently, ODJFS relies on desk reviews of documentation and on reports to monitor grantee activities and compliance. However, Family Violence Prevention staff are not currently completing these reviews due in part to a lack of staff and planning.***

Though ODJFS requires grantees to submit invoices and performance reports at least once a quarter; some grantees choose to submit invoices and performance reports monthly. Prior to the implementation of the new invoicing form and approval process (see *Invoices*, above), the FVP Program Developer spent the majority of her time reviewing payroll ledgers and proposal contents and approving grantee invoices. According to the Program Developer, a number of grantees do not complete their performance reports correctly, and due to a shortage of FVP staff, FVP cannot review or verify the information contained in the reports. Even so, the current performance reports focus on broad population statistics without providing further data analysis, and the reports do not address the progress grantees are making toward reaching their goals and objectives.

***Recommendation 5-11: Family Violence Prevention staff should review grantee performance reports to verify their accuracy and monitor grantee progress and program effectiveness.***

*ODJFS should implement this recommendation after it has hired more staff (see recommendation 5-2). Monitoring grantee performance is important because FVPSA requires ODJFS to give special emphasis to community-based projects that have demonstrated effectiveness when determining which programs to fund. In order to better monitor grantee progress and program effectiveness, ODJFS should revise its performance report contents. In addition to providing statistics on the number of people assisted and the services provided, the performance report should discuss the progress a grantee has made toward achieving its goals and objectives.*

*The performance report should include a comparison of actual accomplishments to the goals and objectives established for the grant period, reasons why the goals were or were not met, an overview of the grantee's financial status (including information on the entity's total expenditures and program income), and other pertinent information as determined by ODJFS. At the beginning of the grant period, ODJFS should review the performance report requirements at the recommended mandatory training session (see recommendation 5-7) to make sure the grantees understand what information is being requested and how the reports are to be completed.*

*Performance reports can be a valuable monitoring tool. They can be used to monitor grantee compliance with program-specific requirements throughout the grant period, identify program strengths, weaknesses, and the need for technical assistance. The FVP staff should review the grantee performance reports on a regular basis and during site visits, paying special attention to report accuracy. ODJFS could review supporting documentation to verify the data presented in the reports. To further reduce the risk of grantees submitting incorrect performance reports, ODJFS could*

*require the domestic shelter's executive director sign a certification statement attesting to the accuracy of the report's contents.*

### **Site Visits**

Site visits are an effective way for ODJFS to monitor grantee compliance with program regulations, to review program service provisions, and to provide technical assistance to grantees. According to the FVP Program Administrator, FVP staff are supposed to visit each grantee at least once each year.

***Finding 5-12: As of March 2000, ODJFS had not conducted any site visits for state FY 2000 due to a lack of staff.***

In state FYs 1998 and 1999, ODJFS contracted with the two domestic violence coalitions to conduct site visits on ODJFS' behalf. However, the department did not clearly define the purpose, objectives, and scope of the site visits at the onset of the project. As a result, the coalitions each developed their own monitoring questions and highly inconsistent approaches to monitoring.

***Recommendation 5-12: Site visits should be conducted by ODJFS staff or an independent consultant specializing in grants administration.***

*If ODJFS decides to conduct site visits, it should implement our recommendation 5-2 beforehand by increasing the FVP staffing level by two full-time employees. The two additional employees could spend the majority of their time monitoring grantees and providing technical assistance. If ODJFS decides to contract out the site visits, an independent consultant should be hired to do the work. To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, the domestic violence coalitions should not conduct the site visits. The domestic violence shelters and service providers are members of the coalitions, and they pay the coalitions to lobby on their behalf.*

*During the visits, ODJFS can ensure the grantee is providing its services in compliance with program regulations, and can interview staff and program beneficiaries, review documents and records related to the program, and provide any necessary training or technical assistance to help the grantee expand or increase its services or improve performance. At the conclusion of the visit, the department should share its initial findings and recommendations with the grantee.*

***Finding 5-13: After each site visit, the coalitions prepared a report documenting their observations. These reports did not contain any of the agency's weaknesses or recommendations for improvement. We question the objectivity of the reports due to the professional relationship between the coalitions and the domestic shelters.***

***Recommendation 5-13: Following the site visit, the ODJFS staff person or independent consultant conducting the review should prepare a written report containing their findings and recommendations.***

*The report should address each area reviewed as part of the monitoring visit and include the agency's strengths and weaknesses. A copy of the report should be placed in the grantee's file. ODJFS should send a follow-up letter that outlines any findings resulting from the monitoring, any recommendations it is making to correct the findings, any offers for technical assistance, and— if necessary—a corrective action plan. To ensure a grantee corrects any problems, ODJFS should schedule additional site visits or request reports or documentation to verify the grantee has corrected a problem.*

## Financial Implications Summary

The following table represents a summary of the annual implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purpose of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

### Summary of Financial Implications for Family Violence Prevention

Recommendation	Annual Cost Savings	Annual Implementation Costs
5-1 Move the FVP Program to another state agency	\$147,000	
<b>OR</b>		
5-2 Increase FVP staff by two program developers		\$107,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$147,000</b>	<b>\$107,000</b>

## **Conclusion Statement**

ODJFS has focused its efforts on improving FVP processes in the past six months. However, the department should decide whether they want to maintain the FVP program within the department or transfer the program to another state agency.

Currently, a number of operational inefficiencies exist due to a lack of staff. The current workload cannot be effectively managed by one program developer. Performance reports are not being reviewed, site visits are not being conducted, and minimal technical assistance is being provided to the grantees. The FVP Program Developer is responsible for managing approximately three times as many grants as the program staff at OCJS and almost twice as many grants as the program staff at OAG. ODJFS should consider hiring two additional Program Developers for the FVP program in order to address these issues.

ODJFS is commended for the strides they have made in the distribution and timeliness of the state FY 2001 RFP. However, FVP's RFPs have placed greater emphasis on an entity's operational policies and procedures rather than on program goals and outcomes; the RFP should place emphasis on victim needs and program outcomes. ODJFS should be reviewing grantee operational policies and procedures when conducting site visits. ODJFS should also consider providing applicants with a standardized application that would promote format consistency and increase proposal review efficiency.

The department should take advantage of its FVP staff's expertise when evaluating proposals in order to enhance the quality of services and programs funded and in determining which deliverables will be funded. Having FVP staff involved in the evaluation process should also help to ensure that programs of demonstrated effectiveness are awarded funding.

ODJFS has experienced many delays and frustrations with the invoices submitted by grantees. Grantees are expected to understand and execute invoicing and performance report instructions without ODJFS assistance, but often are not aware of what is expected of them. At the beginning of the grant period, ODJFS should hold a mandatory training session with all the grantees to answer any questions and to explain expectations and compliance requirements. Stating expectations and providing guidance at the start of the grant period could lead to a more efficient invoicing process for both ODJFS and the grantees. The session would also provide ODJFS with an opportunity to strengthen its working relationships with the grantees.

ODJFS has identified that grantee reimbursements are often delayed. To help expedite the invoice review and grantee payment process, the department created a standardized FVP invoice form in December 1999. The form is easy to complete and can be reviewed quickly. However, the form also increases ODJFS' risk of reimbursing a grantee for unsubstantiated costs. To prevent this, ODJFS should randomly review payroll records and supporting documentation during its site visits to grantees

to verify the accuracy of invoices. ODJFS should establish internal benchmarks and a system to monitor the timeliness of the FVP grantee reimbursement process to help ensure the grantees are being paid in a timely manner.

ODJFS does not adequately monitor its grantees to ensure they are using FVPSA funds to achieve desired program outcomes. ODJFS staff should review grantee performance reports and conduct site visits or else contract with an independent consultant specializing in grants administration. To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, the state's two domestic violence coalitions should not conduct the site visits, since the shelters and domestic violence service providers are members of the coalitions, and they pay the coalitions to lobby on their behalf. Following a site visit, the reviewer should complete a written report containing the reviewer's findings and recommendations. The report should address each area reviewed during the site visit and include the grantee's strengths and weaknesses. ODJFS should send each grantee a follow-up letter which discloses any monitoring findings, makes recommendations to correct the findings, offers technical assistance, and requests of the grantee a corrective action plan, if necessary.

If ODJFS is unable to dedicate the necessary resources to operate the FVP program effectively, it should request to transfer the program to OCJS, which appears to have sound grant management practices and the necessary resources to effectively administer the FVP program and FVPSA funds. OCJS has also taken the lead role in promoting interagency collaboration for preventing domestic violence.

**CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND**





# Children's Trust Fund

---

## Background

The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) was created in December 1984 by S.B. 319 to provide a funding stream dedicated to servicing child abuse and neglect prevention programs. When the Department reorganized in 1998, the Bureau of Prevention was created to house the CTF, the Wellness Block Grant program, and the Community-Based Family Resource Centers. In November 1999, the Family Violence Prevention program joined these other programs in the Bureau of Prevention.

The Bureau of Prevention works on the assumption that local ownership and responsibility are the key to designing prevention strategies tailored to the unique needs of individuals, families, and the communities these programs serve. The Bureau also advocates for community-wide prevention strategies involving public and private partnerships as well as such informal supporting mechanisms as neighborhood groups, drop-in centers, youth groups, civic organizations, libraries, and other neighborhood and community resources.

### *Program Overview*

In state FY 2000, the CTF awarded approximately \$2.4 million to 153 public and private agencies, schools, universities, and nonprofit and for-profit organizations to carry out primary and secondary child abuse and neglect prevention programs, including community awareness programs, professional development training, advocacy, crisis counseling, respite care, parent support, and life skills enhancement.

According to the current state plan, the CTF adheres to the following objectives:

- Provide services and supports that anticipate needs in a preventive manner and are family-centered in decision making.
- Finance prevention and community development that supports a more flexible approach and provides greater control over resource allocation at the local level, based on a comprehensive community assessment, analyses of strengths and needs, and collaborative planning.
- Organize and govern service policies to be simple and coherent supporting the communities' priorities.
- Place the development of effective policies and operations within the broader "community building" agenda that recognizes the necessary linkages between safety, family well-being, and the economic and social capital of communities.

*Governing Rules and Legal Requirements*

CTF operation is governed by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Sections 3109.13 to 3109.18 and the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rules 5101:5-1-01 to 5101:5-1-09. The CTF is directed by a 13-member state board comprised of citizens appointed by the Governor, legislators selected by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, and the directors of ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Health. ODJFS is responsible for providing budgetary, procurement, accounting, and other related management functions to the board. However, in May 1999 the Ohio House passed H.B. 283 (effective January 1, 2001), which will change the requirements governing how CTF grants are managed.

*House Bill 283*

H.B. 283's provisions affect state board membership and the grant process, and alter the duties of the state board and local child abuse and neglect advisory boards (LABs). The following table contains some of the key revisions made to Sections 3109.13 to 3109.18 Revised Code as a result of the passage of H.B. 283.

**Table 6-1: H.B. 283 Revisions Which Significantly Impact the Operation of the CTF**

Issue	Current Law (In Effect Until December 31, 2000)	Revised Law (Effective January 1, 2001)
<b>Board Membership</b>	<b>13 members</b>	Increases board membership to <b>15 members</b> (the Director of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and an 8 <sup>th</sup> public member are to be added to the board)
<b>Allowable ODJFS Administrative Fee</b>	ODJFS may use up to <b>3%</b> of the CTF for administrative costs it incurs	ODJFS may use up to <b>5%</b> of the CTF for administrative costs it incurs
<b>Distribution of Funds</b>	Board is responsible for making <b>grants to public and private agencies</b>	Board is responsible for making <b>block grants to each LAB</b>
<b>Local Advisory Board Composition</b>	<b>6 specific counties are required to have LABs. Others may establish a LAB voluntarily.</b>  LAB members must represent both <b>public and private child service agencies</b> and have a <b>demonstrated knowledge in programs for children</b> (such as parent groups, medical and education communities)	<b>Each Ohio county must establish a LAB or designate the county Family and Children First Council to serve as the LAB.</b>  LAB members must represent the <b>public and private sectors</b> and <b>must include representatives from 5 different types of service providers</b> (such as children's services agencies, mental health services, and the education community)

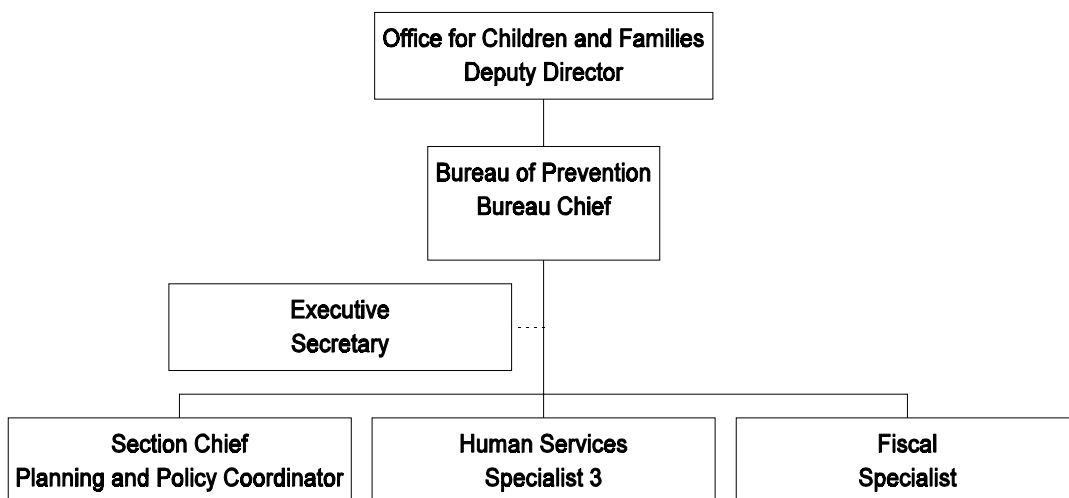
<p><b>Local Advisory Board Responsibilities</b></p>	<p><b>The LABs must advertise funding through a public notice and review all grant applications using criteria established by the CTF Board.</b></p> <p><b>Each LAB must develop a Local Allocation Plan for the county it represents and submit funding recommendations to the CTF Board for approval.</b></p> <p><b>Each LAB must monitor allocation plan implementation and establish procedures for evaluating programs.</b></p> <p><b>Each LAB must submit a copy of the grantee’s annual report to the CTF for review.</b></p>	<p><b>The LABs must notify potential applicants about available funding and establish criteria to review and approve applications.</b></p> <p><b>Each LAB must develop a Local Allocation Plan for the purpose of preventing child abuse and neglect in the county it represents and submit it to the CTF Board for review.</b></p> <p><b>Each LAB must establish grantee reporting requirements and assist the CTF Board in monitoring grantees.</b></p> <p><b>Each LAB must file an annual report with the CTF Board regarding the Local Allocation Plan and any other information required by the CTF Board.</b></p>
---	--	---

Source: H.B. 283

*Organizational Staffing*

The CTF is located in the Office for Children and Families at the Bureau of Prevention. The program’s organizational structure and staffing are depicted in chart 6-1.

**Chart 6-1: Children’s Trust Fund Reporting Structure**



T

he CTF staff currently consists of five full-time employees: a Bureau Chief, Section Chief, Human Services Specialist, Fiscal Specialist, and Executive Secretary. The Bureau Chief functions as the executive director of the CTF, but is also responsible for overseeing the operation of the Wellness Block Grant, the Community-Based Family Resource Centers, and the Family Violence Prevention program. The Section Chief spends approximately 40 percent of her time working on CTF-related issues, but is also responsible for developing policy and designing programs not only for the CTF, but for the Wellness Block Grant and the Community-Based Family Resource Centers. The Human Services Specialist—the only employee who dedicates 100 percent of his time to the activities of the CTF—is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the CTF, as well as providing technical assistance and training to the local advisory boards and grantees. The Fiscal Specialist spends approximately 60 percent of her time working for the CTF, performing such duties as assisting the grantees with budget adjustments, reviewing expenditure reports, and authorizing the disbursement of grantee funds; she spends the remainder of her time performing fiscal functions for the Wellness Block Grant and the Community-Based Family Resource Centers. The Executive Secretary is responsible for providing administrative and clerical support to the CTF, the Wellness Block Grant, and the Community-Based Family Resource Centers.

### *Organizational Function*

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Sections 3109.13 to 3109.18 requires the CTF to develop a biennial state plan that details how it will allocate CTF revenues. This plan describes the types of prevention programs that will be eligible for funding, outlines LAB requirements and duties as well as criteria for the local allocation plans, and includes the grant application form and instructions. Section 3109.18 Revised Code requires the boards of county commissioners in Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit counties each to establish a LAB; all other Ohio counties may voluntarily set up a LAB. The boards of county commissioners in two or more contiguous counties may form a multi-county district served by a multi-county advisory board. As of December 1998, all 88 counties in Ohio had established LABs.

Each LAB consists of an odd number of members from both public and private child-serving agencies that represent the community's collective knowledge of child abuse and neglect prevention in such professions as education, juvenile justice, and medicine. Board membership is voluntary, and LAB members may not belong to an agency which receives funding from the trust fund. The LABs are required to meet on a quarterly basis at a minimum, and all business must be conducted at open public meetings.

The LABs perform certain key CTF functions, including

- performing a needs assessment to determine the community's prevention needs;
- notifying potential applicants about child abuse and neglect prevention funding available for the county;

- reviewing grantee applications and determining which programs should be funded;
- preparing a Local Allocation Plan to identify the community's prevention priorities, its LAB members, and the applicants it will recommend for funding;
- conducting semiannual assessment reports, monitoring grantees, recommending projects for continued funding, and providing technical assistance and training to county grantees.

After the LABs complete their Local Allocation Plans, they forward them to the CTF for review and approval. CTF reviews the plans to ensure they are in compliance with the statutes and rules governing CTF operation; the state board then awards grants based upon the LAB recommendations. After the plans are approved and the awards determined, ODJFS executes a grant agreement between the department and each grantee.

ODJFS is responsible for disbursing grantee payments and monitoring expenditures. Once the grant year has begun, the LABs are responsible for the local monitoring of projects and providing assistance to the grantees. The CTF staff is expected to provide technical assistance, training, and support to the LABs and assist them with grantee monitoring.

### *Program Funding*

Revenue for the CTF comes from a surcharge of two dollars on each birth and death certificate the state issues and ten dollars from each divorce and dissolution decree filed. The fees are forwarded to the Treasurer of State and deposited into a special CTF account. ODJFS allocates CTF monies among all 88 counties according to a formula that is based on the ratio of the number of children in each county under the age of 18 to the number of children state-wide under the age of 18, with the provision that each county receive a minimum of \$10,000 per funding year. Each grantee within a county is awarded a minimum of \$4,500 per funding year. In state FY 2000, the CTF funded 153 grantees at an average of \$15,500 each. The following table contains the most recent five-year history of the children's trust fund state revenues and expenditures.

**Table 6-2: The Children's Trust Fund Five Year Funding History**

REVENUE	State Fiscal Years				
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Birth Certificate/Divorce Fees	\$2,940,265	\$2,851,911	\$2,922,566	\$2,973,320	\$2,925,798
Interest Earnings	158,972	251,433	238,875	316,454	293,473
Prior Refunded Expenditures	27,371	24,487	24,584	34,872	39,188
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,126,608</b>	<b>\$3,127,831</b>	<b>\$3,186,025</b>	<b>\$3,324,646</b>	<b>\$3,258,459</b>
EXPENDITURES	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
County Allocations	\$2,257,414	\$2,378,900	\$2,288,259	\$1,904,392	\$1,849,423
Payroll and Purchase Services	247,843	\$340,867	234,965	289,242	213,900
Transfer to Wellness Grant	0	0	\$500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Maintenance and Equipment	16,350	9,060	7,679	34,457	31,282
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,521,607</b>	<b>\$2,728,828</b>	<b>\$3,030,903</b>	<b>\$3,228,091</b>	<b>\$3,094,605</b>

Source: Financial activity reports received by ODJFS Office of Fiscal

CTF revenues have remained fairly consistent over the past five years. In 1997, however, ODJFS shifted a significant portion of revenue allocations from the Children's Trust Fund to the newly created Wellness Block Grant program. While CTF expenditures have thus declined and the number of grantees funded has decreased from a high of 272 down to 153 for the current funding, the counties have been receiving additional prevention funding through the Wellness Block Grant.

## Processes and Recommendations

We reviewed the following CTF issues and areas:

- C Strategic Planning and Leadership
- C Effects of House Bill 283, including
  - C Board Membership
  - C Distribution of Funds
    - Shifts in Responsibility
- C Monitoring and Program Evaluation, including
  - C Monitoring
  - C Reporting Requirements and Program Evaluation

*Strategic Planning and Leadership*

***Finding 6-1: The current Children’s Trust Fund program suffers from a lack of leadership and direction from the state board and the Bureau of Prevention.***

Section 3109.17 Revised Code charges the 13-member state board with the responsibility of providing oversight for child abuse and neglect prevention programming and with guiding policy formulation and implementation. However, the board meets too infrequently—approximately four times per year—and attendance at these meetings has been only slightly greater than 50 percent. Moreover, the majority of board members do not have a background in prevention programming, and the state plan is prepared by CTF program staff, then reviewed and approved by the state board. Thus the responsibility for developing the state CTF plan and guiding the day-to-day CTF operations has fallen on the five CTF program staff within the Bureau of Prevention.

Since 1989, there have been more than 12 different children’s trust fund executive directors and interim executive directors. In fact, the executive director/bureau chief position was vacant for almost one year when the position was finally filled in June of 2000, and the previous executive director had only held the position for about two years. Moreover, each executive director and acting director has disregarded the majority of the previous director’s work and has implemented his or her own unique ideas on how the CTF should operate and where it should be headed; strategies and action plans have not been developed to guide and direct ODJFS staff in achieving long-term CTF goals and objectives. In effect, each new director has created a new CTF.

***Recommendation 6-1: The Children’s Trust Fund staff and the state board should collaborate on the development of a formal long-term strategic plan to guide the operation and activities of the Children’s Trust Fund.***

*The high turnover in CTF directors and the lack of long-term planning has negatively impacted CTF progress and staff efficiency. A well-thought-out strategic plan could provide both the state board and CTF staff with a clear vision and road map to guide the trust fund’s prevention program and efforts. The plan should assist the state board with future decisions while encouraging accountability and providing a basis for the division of roles and responsibilities between the state board and CTF staff. The strategic plan should clearly state the trust fund’s mission, vision, goals, objectives, strategies, and action plans. The plan should also identify the stakeholders and the performance measures to be used in measuring the trust fund’s*

*progress and should contain an implementation schedule that includes specific dates and milestones. (See the Children’s Justice Act section of this report—under “Grant Management,” —for a list of guiding principles for a strategic plan.)*

### *Effects of House Bill 283*

#### **Board Membership**

***Finding 6-2: A majority of the state board’s 13 members must currently approve the Children’s Trust Fund state plan. Once the H.B. 283’s requirements come into effect, however, only 5 members—only one-third of the new 15 member board —will be required to approve the plan.***

The passage of H.B. 283 increases board membership to 15 members with the addition of an eighth public sector member and the membership of the Director of the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, who will provide the board with an additional resource for dealing with drug and alcohol-related issues affecting the community. But the bill also reduces the number of votes required to approve the state plan. Currently, seven members—the majority of the board—must vote to approve the state plan; on average, in fact, seven of the 13 board members have been present at each meeting for the last four state fiscal years. Under H.B. 283 (effective January 2001), however, only five members—or one-third—of the board must vote to approve the state plan.

Also, in an effort to increase board attendance, the bill includes a provision stating that any board member (with the exception of a member of the general assembly or a judge) who fails to attend at least 60 percent of the regular and special meetings held by the board during any two-year period will forfeit his or her position on the board.

***Recommendation 6-2: It should be required that the state plan be approved by a majority of Children’s Trust Fund state board members.***

*Reducing the number of board votes required to approve the state plan from a majority to a majority of the quorum appears to diminish the board’s authority over CTF decision making, while the attendance provision in H.B. 283 may appropriately increase attendance and diminish the effect of the reduced number of board votes required to approve the state plan.*



*Distribution of Funds*

***Finding 6-3: The draft biennial state plan for state FYs 2002 to 2003 still indicates that the Children’s Trust Fund will establish the criteria to be used in selecting grant recipients through the state plan, even though H.B. 283 has changed that requirement.***

Starting in state FY 2002, the CTF board will no longer award discretionary grants to individual public and private organizations for the purpose of providing child abuse and neglect prevention programs. Instead, the funds will be block-granted to each LAB, and the LABs will be responsible for determining how the funds are used. Subject to the availability of funds, each LAB shall receive a minimum of \$10,000 per fiscal year. Prior to October 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, the CTF board will notify the LABs of the amount it estimates it will award for the following fiscal year.

The new provisions will reduce ODJFS’ administrative responsibilities:

- The CTF board will no longer be responsible for entering into a grant agreement with each entity receiving a CTF award.
- The CTF board will not be required to approve the local allocation plans submitted by the LABs or the individual applicants.
- The board will be responsible for approving an ODJFS budget for CTF administrative expenditures.
- The board will still be charged with the responsibility for developing a biennial CTF state plan. However, the state plan’s focus will shift from how funds will be allocated and used to “comprehensive child abuse and neglect prevention.”

According to the revised statute, the plan will include LAB reporting requirements and criteria for local allocation plans and assessing plan effectiveness. In addition, the board will be required to “provide for the monitoring of expenditures from the children’s trust fund and of programs that receive money from the children’s trust fund.”

H.B. 283 has amended Section 3109.17 Revised Code to require as of January 1, 2001, that the CTF establish a biennial state plan that requires

- development of criteria for county or district comprehensive allocation plans, including criteria for assessing plan effectiveness; and
- the monitoring of CTF expenditures and of programs that receive CTF funding.

ODJFS biennial state draft plan for the state FYs 2002 to 2003 does not contain any information

regarding criteria for evaluating county or district plan effectiveness or how CTF will monitor program expenditures. Historically, CTF has established the criteria to be used in selecting grant recipients through the state plan, and the draft biennial state plan for state FYs 2002 to 2003 still includes these criteria, even though H.B. 283 has changed that requirement. Additionally, Section 3109.18 (F) (3) Revised Code, as amended by H.B. 283, will require the LABs to review all program funding applications they receive using criteria they develop in making grants to child abuse and neglect programs.

***Recommendation 6-3: Children's Trust Fund staff should revise the state plan to reflect all revisions to Sections 3109.13 to 3109.18, Revised Code. The plan should also clearly distinguish the responsibilities of the LABs, the Children's Trust Fund board, and the Children's Trust Fund staff.***

*The state plan plays a critical role in the operation of the children's trust fund, in that it is intended to guide the activities and operation of the program. The draft state plan for the next biennium is not comprehensive; it focuses solely on the block grant process and how it will work. There is no mention of what will be done to encourage collaboration between CTF staff, CTF board and LABs or how the CTF will provide for the education of public professionals for the purpose of child abuse and neglect prevention required Section 3109.17 (B)(9)), Revised Code.*

*The CTF should establish a committee to thoroughly review and revise the proposed state plan. The plan should comply with all changes made as a result of H.B. 283 and should provide a clear understanding of how the CTF will operate in state FYs 2002 and 2003. In addition to describing how the block grant process will work, the state plan should outline*

- C the CTF board criteria for local allocation plans, including criteria to assess plan effectiveness;*
- the monitoring activities that ODJFS staff will perform, including the frequency of assessments, the assessment tools to be used, and LAB reporting requirements; and*
- responsibilities for LABs, the CTF board, and CTF staff.*

*Shifts in Responsibility*

***Finding 6-4: Prior to the passage of H.B. 283, the Children’s Trust Fund staff did not assess the LABs’ ability to determine whether or not they had the resources and knowledge necessary to successfully administer and manage the Children’s Trust Fund block grants.***

H.B. 283 significantly impacts the LABs and imposes additional duties upon them. The new law stipulates that every board of county commissioners must establish a LAB or designate the county Family and Children First Council to serve as its LAB. As a result, counties without a LAB cannot receive a block grant from the CTF. The new statute appoints the county auditor as the auditor and fiscal officer for the LAB; the county auditor will be responsible for distributing funds at the LAB’s request.

The LAB composition requirements also change under the new law. The new law is more specific and requires that each LAB consist of representatives of children’s services organizations, a provider of alcohol or drug addiction services, a mental health services provider, the board of mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and the largest school district in the county. Counties which designate their Family and Children First Council as their LAB are exempt from the above composition requirements.

The move to block grant-type allocation of funds requires the LABs to take on more responsibility and assume additional roles. The LABs will be responsible for determining which child abuse and neglect prevention programs to fund in their counties. Unless inhibited by county procurement procedures, the LABs may establish a noncompetitive collaborative service network that targets specific populations. The LABs will also be responsible for

- determining the community’s prevention needs,
- determining how the funds will be awarded and what minimum grant amounts to set,
- reviewing and approving grant applications based on criteria established by the LAB,
- completing a local allocation plan for the CTF state board,
- awarding grants and authorizing payments to grantees,
- establishing grantee reporting requirements,
- assisting the CTF in monitoring programs that receive CTF funding, and
- completing and filing an annual report with the CTF regarding the local allocation plan.

***Recommendation 6-4: ODJFS should conduct a needs assessment for the LABs to identify technical assistance and training needs to prepare the counties for the transition to block granting.***

*ODJFS should survey the LABs to determine what assistance the counties need in administering the CTF funding awarded to them. Based on the needs the survey identifies, the CTF staff may provide regional or one-on-one technical assistance conferences and training. With the passage of H.B. 283, CTF success will largely depend on the LABs' performance.*

### *Monitoring and Program Evaluation*

#### **Monitoring**

***Finding 6-5: There is no evidence that grantees met with their LABs for the purpose of monitoring grantee activities for the current state FY 2000-2001 biennial CTF period.***

CTF staff rely on the LABs to complete all grantee monitoring activities, though the CTF does not monitor LAB activities. In state FY 2000, the CTF staff did not visit any LABs or grantees or provide them with any training or technical assistance. According to the current state plan for state FYs 2000 and 2001, each year prior to January 15 each grantee must meet with its appropriate LAB to complete a review of its program progress and fiscal systems and to define technical assistance needs and potential program improvements. However, the CTF staff does not know if these meetings ever took place, since contact with the LABs has been minimal and the LABs are not required to document and report their monitoring activities.

***Recommendation 6-5: The CTF staff should be monitoring the LABs and grantees to ensure the CTF awards are being used for authorized purposes in compliance with the grant agreements.***

*Monitoring can determine program effectiveness through document reviews, site visits, telephone calls, and training sessions. LABs should submit semiannual*

reports to ODJFS documenting their monitoring activities and any technical assistance or training they identify as needed. The CTF staff should review these reports and develop a plan to provide these services. The staff should also consider performing random LAB site visits to ensure the LABs are satisfactorily fulfilling their obligations.

***Finding 6-6: The Children's Trust Fund state board has not yet determined how it will monitor Children's Trust Fund expenditures or the programs it finances, or what role the LABs will play in future monitoring activities.***

Section 3109.17 (B) (6) Revised Code, effective January 1, 2001, states the board shall "provide for the monitoring of expenditures from the children's trust fund and of programs that receive money from the children's trust fund." The state board has yet to address this issue.

***Recommendation 6-6: The CTF board should determine how it is going to monitor the children's trust fund expenditures and the programs financed by the fund.***

Through the completion of the CTF state plan, ODJFS should determine the extent of monitoring activities that CTF staff will perform. The board should also determine what role the LABs will play in the grantee monitoring process. The board should establish a monitoring cycle and timetable to help ensure the monitoring process will proceed smoothly. In addition, the board should see to it that standard monitoring procedures and checklists are developed for monitoring activities. The checklists could save time, increase efficiency, and ensure that uniform monitoring procedures are applied to each grantee.

#### *Reporting Requirements and Program Evaluation*

***Finding 6-7: CTF staff do not currently review the required annual reports they receive from grantees to identify successful programs and practices.***

Each grantee is currently required by Section 3109.18 (D) (5) Revised Code, to complete an annual report. This report uses a CTF standard report format and details grantee expenditures and any other

information the CTF board requests. The grantees send a copy of the completed annual report to the LAB and the CTF. Currently, CTF staff do not review these reports.

The statute covering reporting requirements was recently revised. In the future, LABs will be responsible for determining grantee reporting requirements and will be required to file an annual report on their local allocation plan containing information the CTF state board requires.

***Recommendation 6-7: Children's Trust Fund staff should review the annual LAB reports and any grantee annual reports produced to identify effective programs and prevention practices as well as any areas of concern.***

*The CTF staff should create a checklist to make sure they consistently review annual reports for necessary criteria, which should then be communicated to the LABs. Additionally, CTF staff should review grantee annual reports when performing LAB site visits.*

*Performance reports can be valuable monitoring tools. They can be used to monitor compliance and identify program strengths and weaknesses as well as the need for technical assistance. Additionally, it is ODJFS' responsibility to regularly assess the CTF program to identify any functional problems.*

***Finding 6-8: Rather than requiring a report that includes information about performance and outcomes, the new statute requires that the board report only on expenditures.***

The CTF board is currently required by Section 3109.17 (B) (10) Revised Code, to complete an annual written internal evaluation of the functions, responsibilities, and performance of the board. The report is sent each year to the state's Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Though the CTF board has not completed a written annual report since 1995, H.B. 283 changes the CTF board's reporting requirements. Rather than producing an annual report which focuses on program accountability, the revised statute requires the state board to prepare one report for each fiscal biennium; this report will evaluate CTF expenditures. The revised statute, however, would reduce the importance of program assessment and performance.

***Recommendation 6-8: In addition to preparing the required expenditure report each biennium, the CTF should complete and submit to ODJFS management an annual internal evaluation focusing on the functions, responsibilities, and performance of the board in relation to its state plan.***

## Conclusion Statement

There has been a lack of leadership and clear direction in the Bureau of Prevention's administration and oversight of the CTF program. Since 1989, the Bureau has had more than 12 different CTF executive directors and interim executive directors. As a result, the CTF state board has not developed strategies or action plans to guide the CTF program in achieving its goals and objectives. To increase its chances for success, CTF staff and the state board should work in collaboration to develop a formal long-term strategic plan to guide the fund's operation and activities.

The passage of H.B. 283 changes the requirements for grant management. The new provisions affect state board membership and the grant process and alter the duties of the state board and the LABs. But the bill appears to reduce the importance of the state board and decreases the administrative responsibilities placed on ODJFS.

The CTF program office should establish a committee to thoroughly review and revise the proposed state plan. In addition to describing how the block grant process will work, the state plan should include the criteria developed by the CTF board for the local allocation plans, including criteria to determine the plans' effectiveness, a description of the monitoring activities to be performed by ODJFS staff (including frequency and assessment tools), LAB reporting requirements, and a clear explanation of LAB responsibilities and CTF board and staff duties.

H.B. 283 significantly impacts the LABs and imposes additional duties on them. The LABs will be responsible for determining the community's prevention needs, funds awards, and minimum grant amounts; they will also approve grant applications based on LAB-established criteria, establish grantee reporting requirements, and complete an annual report to the state board on the local allocation plan. Prior to the passage of H.B. 283, CTF staff did not assess the LABs' ability to determine whether or not they have the resources and knowledge necessary to successfully administer and manage CTF block grants. Program officials should conduct a needs assessment to identify what technical assistance and training might prepare counties for the transition to block grants. Based on the survey results, the program office should provide technical assistance conferences and training to the LABs. With the passage of H.B. 283, CTF success and effectiveness largely depends on LAB performance.

Currently, ODJFS does not monitor grantee or LAB activities. In state FY 2000, CTF staff did not visit any LABs or grantees or provide them with any training or technical assistance. The CTF staff should be monitoring LABs and grantees to ensure the CTF awards are being used for authorized purposes in compliance with grant agreements. As of June 2000, the board had not determined how it will monitor CTF expenditures or the programs it finances, or what role the LABs will play in future monitoring activities. Prior to the approval of the state FY 2002-2003 plan, the board should decide on how it will handle these very important functions. It should also develop a monitoring cycle and timetable to help ensure that it completes these activities in a timely manner.



**WELLNESS BLOCK GRANT**



# **Wellness Block Grant**

---

## **Background**

### *Overview*

To address the problems of teen pregnancy and child abuse and neglect Ohio created a Wellness Block Grant in state FY 1997 to distribute funds to the 88 county Family and Children's First Councils in the state. Through a separate grant to the Department of Youth Services, it is addressing the particular needs of those incarcerated youth with high instances of teen pregnancy and child abuse and neglect within their facilities. Over the past three state fiscal years, the General Assembly has increased program funding from \$4.3 million in state FY 1997 to \$14.3 million in state FY 1999.

### *Governing Rules*

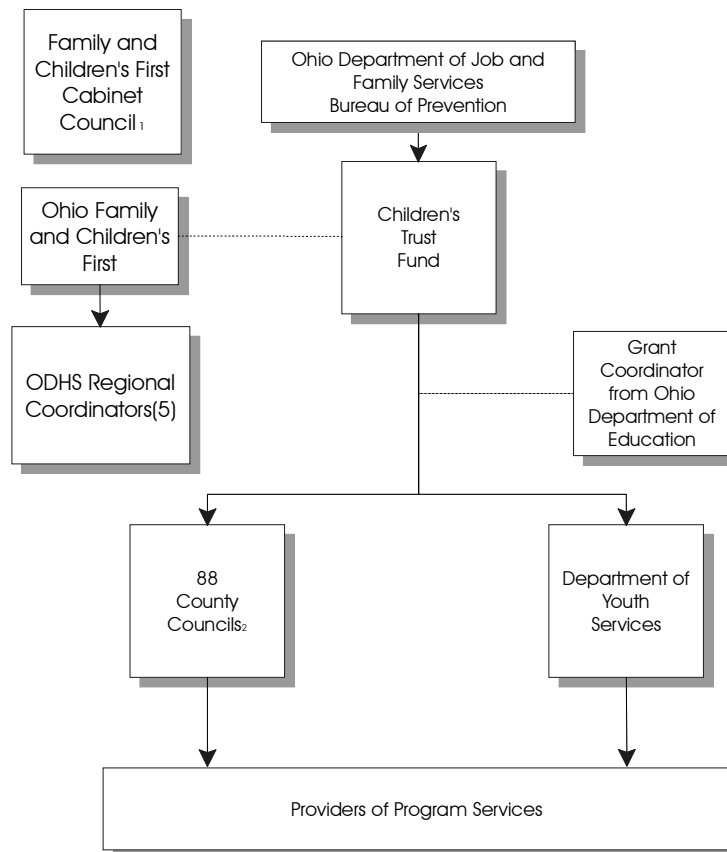
The Wellness Block Grant program is governed by the provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 121.371 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101-6-42. Under Section 121.371, the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council oversees the operations of the grant while the Ohio Children's Trust Fund Board, a part of ODJFS, administers the provisions of the grant. These entities have in turn delegated much of the program's direct administration to the 89 grantees (the 88 councils plus the Department of Youth Services), who are largely responsible for ensuring strong program outcomes. Section 121.371 Revised Code allows the Cabinet Council and Trust Fund Board extensive latitude in determining project types of "broad social concern" that the county councils should be permitted to complete. Nevertheless, state-funded projects must be limited to activities of a preventative nature; funds cannot be used for nonpreventative projects. In addition, Section 121.371 Revised Code stipulates that the state may only use one percent of program funds for program administration.

Furthermore, OAC Section 5101-6-42 establishes specific regulations governing program administration by the county councils. This section expands on Section 121.371 Revised Code directives that establish program and fiscal accounting requirements as requested by the Cabinet Council and Children's Trust Fund Board. These requirements include limiting grant reimbursements to those expenditures incurred within 60 days of the end of state fiscal year, and capping county council administrative expenses to five percent of the total grant award. The section also defines unallowable costs, such as property improvements and the supplanting of federal and state funds.

## Organizational Structure and Function

Chart 7-1 provides an overview of the responsibilities and organizational structure of the Wellness Block Grant administered by ODJFS.

**Chart 7-1: Responsibility and Funding Chart for Wellness Block Grant**



<sup>1</sup>The members of the FCF Cabinet Council are the Department Directors of Health, Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Budget and Management, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, Youth Services and Job and Family Services, Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction. Source: Ohio Revised Code Section 121.37 (A)(1).

<sup>2</sup>The county councils are made up of not less than three individuals who have received services, the director of the county alcohol and drug addition board, the director of the county mental health board, the county health commissioner, the director of the county Job and Family Services agency, the director of the county child support enforcement agency, the superintendent of county board of mental retardation and developmental disabilities, a county juvenile court judge, the superintendent of the largest school district in the county, one school superintendent representing the other schools in the county, a representative of the largest municipal corporation in the county, the chair of the board of county commissioners, a representative of the Department of Youth Services regional office, a representative of the county head start agencies, a representative of the county's early intervention collaborative and a representative of a local nonprofit entity that serves children and families. Source: Ohio Revised Code Section 121.37 (B)(1).

To support the mission of preventing teenage pregnancies and child abuse and neglect, the program created two separate programs within the grant: Indicator I for teenage pregnancy prevention, and Indicator II for child abuse and neglect. Because these indicators are vastly different in function and intent, each indicator functions with a large degree of autonomy from the other.

To participate in the Wellness Block Grant program, county councils must submit an application for each indicator, answering standardized questions about the council's goals, its target population, prevention plan, and planned program accountability. Completed applications are then returned to an ODJFS review committee consisting of Bureau of Prevention staff members and regional coordinators, which determines the validity of each application and, if appropriate, approves proposed expenditures to support the project.

### Funding

ODJFS allocates program funds to each county council based on certain factors; included within each allocation is the administrative allowance for that council. Table 7-2 details the largest and smallest ten program allocations made by ODJFS for state FY 1999.

**Table 7-1: Selected Allocations Made to Recipients for State Fiscal Year 1999**

County	Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Total Allocation
Cuyahoga	\$1,032,554	\$323,256	\$1,355,810
Franklin	\$738,648	\$211,750	\$950,398
Hamilton	\$704,348	\$194,617	\$898,965
Montgomery	\$465,871	\$134,918	\$600,789
Summit	\$417,037	\$102,851	\$519,888
Lucas	\$406,969	\$104,110	\$511,079
Stark	\$320,467	\$102,845	\$423,312
Butler	\$273,563	\$58,291	\$331,854
Lorain	\$268,158	\$54,021	\$322,179
Mahoning	\$240,635	\$46,650	\$287,285
Putnam	\$72,293	\$16,068	\$88,361
Fayette	\$73,496	\$14,598	\$88,094
Meigs	\$70,416	\$16,507	\$86,923
Wyandot	\$70,244	\$13,544	\$83,788
Morgan	\$68,569	\$15,037	\$83,606
Vinton	\$64,649	\$14,397	\$79,046
Harrison	\$64,287	\$14,151	\$78,438
Noble	\$62,044	\$12,580	\$74,624
Monroe	\$59,868	\$13,396	\$73,264
Dept. of Youth Services	\$66,990	\$0	\$66,990
Grand Total <sup>1</sup>	\$12,642,563	\$3,150,000	\$15,792,563

<sup>1</sup> The grand total shown is the total allocated by ODJFS for the entire program to the county councils  
Source: ODJFS Wellness Block Grant Allocation Tables

ODJFS bases its allocations on a set formula for each indicator. Indicator I allocations are based on a guaranteed floor amount of \$50,000 with an incentive portion based on the county's child population and teen birth rates. Indicator II allocations are based on a guaranteed start-up and base amount of \$15,000 with additional portions based on the county's child population and the number of documented child abuse cases in the county. As established by ODJFS, the county council may use five percent of each indicator for allowable administration costs, including telephones, rent, consultants, and administrative support staff.

To allow the program to run efficiently, the Cabinet Council and Trust Fund have determined that funds will be paid in advance to the county councils on a semiannual basis (in July and January of each year). As grant funds are only allocated a year at a time, county councils must spend all grant funds allocated within 60 days of the end of the state fiscal year.

The county councils must also submit annual financial accountability reports to ODJFS. All disbursements made by a county council must be both itemized and summarized for the appropriate grant period and submitted within the annual report. Upon receipt of this report, ODJFS fiscal personnel in the Bureau of Prevention review the information for mathematical accuracy and to ensure that reported administrative expenses do not exceed the amount allocated to the county council.

County councils are responsible for determining which programs best assist them in reducing the two grant indicators, often by using funds to complement other funding sources. This allows county councils to contract and work with local health departments, schools, or other agencies to achieve common program goals. Once a council submits its initial program application, it has the authority to conduct its program as it deems appropriate, within the regulations prescribed by the Section 121.371 Revised Code and OAC Section 5101-6-42, as previously discussed.

## **Processes and Recommendations**

We will focus on the following key components of the Wellness Block Grant program, which we have identified as issues preventing ODJFS from providing certain efficient and effective services:

- Staffing
- Monitoring
- Program Application
- Rules and Regulations, including
  - Internal Management Rules
  - Linking Funding with Outcome Indicators

## Staffing

***Finding 7-1: Since 1997, a consultant on loan from the Ohio Department of Education has been performing the program's essential administrative duties, such as coordinating the work of the county councils and reviewing program applications.***

Staffing for the Wellness Block Grant is essential to the program's success. Current Wellness Block Grant program staffing at ODJFS has evolved continually based on program needs. Before the state created the Wellness Block Grant in 1997, parts of the program existed piecemeal at several state agencies, including the Departments of Health, Education, Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Youth Services, and Job and Family Services. When the General Assembly determined that the Wellness program should be created and that it should be centrally administered by ODJFS, staffing became a critical hurdle in the consolidation of these piecemeal efforts. To solve this problem and to alleviate the resource burden on ODJFS, the pertinent agencies decided that a Department of Education employee should be temporarily loaned out to administer the program. During this time, the Department of Education has continued to pay this employee, despite the fact that she is housed at ODJFS and dedicates 100 percent of her time to the Wellness Block Grant project.

***Recommendation 7-1: ODJFS should consider paying for the services of the Wellness Block Grant Coordinator, currently on loan from the Department of Education, by hiring a permanent Coordinator to replace her.***

*ODJFS' responsibilities include maintaining a staff to administer and coordinate department grants. A full-time Wellness Block Grant Program Coordinator, responsible to appropriate members of the department, is essential to ensuring that the department meets its organizational requirements, goals, and objectives. Currently, the department is eligible under Section 121.371 Revised Code to use up to one percent of grant appropriations (about \$143,000 in 1999) for administrative expenses.*

*Table 7-2 details the personnel costs of the Wellness Block Grant Coordinator currently borne by the Department of Education.*

Table 7-2: Financial Implication of Hiring a Wellness Block Grant Coordinator

Current Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$63,000	30%	\$82,000
Number of Employees to be Hired:		1
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$82,000</b>

Sources: 1 Department of Education, Education Employee Consultant 3  
2 Position Classification Number Roster Analysis, March 2000.

*This change would give ODJFS greater control over major program activities. Currently, the Department of Education employee on loan does not come under the ODJFS organizational structure. Moreover, under the current organizational structure, the department might not be able to address such issues as the Coordinator's untimely review of applications or unresponsiveness to the needs of program participants.*

### Monitoring

***Finding 7-2: Under the block grant method of funding programs, ODJFS has determined that formalized monitoring of Wellness Block Grant recipients would be contrary to program vision. The department believes that the block grant approach to funding allows recipients to determine the best uses for program funds, with minimal interference coming from state regulatory agencies.***

Effective monitoring of a program recipient's progress and accomplishments is critical to determining the success of that program. For the Wellness Block Grant, such monitoring does not take place. Instead, each county council submits annual reports to ODJFS detailing its program expenditures, and ODJFS-supervised agencies (such as county children services boards or County Departments of Job and Family Services) submit their financial information through ODJFS 2820 and 2827 reports, respectively. (If an agency is not directly supervised by ODJFS, the agency submits financial information within a separate annual financial report.) ODJFS uses this financial information to track funding disbursements and to ensure that participants do not exceed the 5 percent administrative expense cap. However, because ODJFS does not require this information to be verified by a third party, reported data could be inaccurate or might lack certain important information. In turn, this could give decision makers at the state and county council levels a false sense of security about



program effectiveness.

As a service to county councils, ODJFS provides technical assistance via five regional coordinators located throughout the state. These people are trained both in the workings of the Wellness Block Grant and other programs administered by county councils. However, during their sporadic on-site visits to county councils, the regional coordinators do not review financial documents, nor do they visit the service providers with which county councils contract for much of their program services.

As indicated by Section 121.371 Revised Code annual performance report requirement, the General Assembly, Governor, and—by extension—Ohio’s citizens have a sincere interest in the Wellness Block Grant Program’s results. As an accountability-driven instrument, block granting requires close monitoring of program recipients to ensure that the program is administered effectively and is achieving the results dictated by the pertinent legislative authority. Without this sort of monitoring, a program may not meet its goals and outcomes and may be subject to program fraud, waste, and abuse.

***Recommendation 7-2: ODJFS should establish formal monitoring procedures for grant funding, including site visits and reviews of program records by department personnel. The monitoring should include, at a minimum, reviews of supporting documentation for reports submitted and expenditures incurred. ODJFS monitoring results should be reported using a standardized review instrument.***

*Given the interest in the Wellness Block Grant shown by the General Assembly and Governor, producing proper program outcomes should be a high priority for ODJFS. To that end, effective monitoring is crucial to ensuring that program funds are targeted appropriately.*

*Because each regional coordinator is located in a different part of the state, use of a standardized review instrument by all should be mandatory for proper and effective program evaluation: ODJFS must ensure that each coordinator is reviewing similar items in a like manner. ODJFS cannot easily summarize and analyze monitoring results when coordinators use different methods of collecting and reviewing data at a local agency. Moreover, ODJFS can draw no conclusions concerning program effectiveness, nor can ODJFS build a strong program, without some consistency among reviewers.*

*Truly effective monitoring results from risk assessment and addressing material issues. Certain risk factors, including new program staff and size of grant awards, increase the chances that the program could be administered outside the parameters*

of the statute regulating program operation. When ODJFS recognizes potential risks, it is important that it be in a position to mitigate problems through effective monitoring.

ODJFS may want to consider a number of different monitoring approaches before it settles on a single one. Generally, combining a review of audit reports from county councils with site visits and desk reviews provides the greatest assurance that councils are using program funds appropriately. Reviews of audit reports make sure that certain material problems get reported while providing an independent assessment of program operations. On-site reviews allow the department a closer look at program operations at greater depth than an audit would allow. An additional benefit of on-site reviews is that the department can determine which risks are most important and prevalent within the program and design relevant tests to alleviate potential problems. Desk reviews utilize information prepared and submitted by the grantee for review at the state agency location. In combination, these three monitoring methods provide significant assurance that a program is meeting its requirements and targets.

Because audit reports may not truly reflect operations of the Wellness Block Grant program at the county council or fiscal agent level due to materiality considerations, ODJFS should conduct on-site reviews as its primary method of assuring proper program operations. Since regional coordinators are already performing on-site technical assistance, on-site reviews should not significantly add to their current workload. On-site reviews by ODJFS personnel should also ensure that all county councils have monitoring systems in place to review program service providers (which provide the majority of services to beneficiaries). Otherwise, ODJFS should also include visits to the program service providers in their on-site monitoring reviews.

### Program Applications

**Finding 7-3: ODJFS requires each county council to submit separate applications for each of the two indicators, even though questions for both are identical based on requirements established by the FCF Cabinet Council and the Children's Trust Fund Board.**

In order to start the Wellness Block Grant funding process, ODJFS sends an application to each county council. The application uses an essay format, and asks each council to outline its proposed uses of funds to reduce teen pregnancy and child abuse and neglect. The proposal may require county councils to conduct program services themselves, or councils may choose to subgrant funds to other entities, such as local health departments. When applying for both indicators, county councils must complete two separate applications, each containing identical questions about the methods they are employing to evaluate the use of funds. For each application, each county council must address certain ODJFS criteria, including

- the immediate and intermediate outcomes they wish to achieve;
- the target populations they will serve and how and why they have identified those populations to be targeted;
- the approach and interventions they will use;
- any connection this program will have with other programs the agency administers, as well as how the program will be broad based (i.e., how it involves many prevention factors);
- the criteria the council will use to select service providers;
- the expected impact of services on the target population (i.e., the resulting changes in attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skill);
- the measure of change the county council will look for in the target population; and
- the role the county council will play in program implementation and in ensuring the desired results.

ODJFS also requires that each application have separate assurances over program administration. These assurances attest that the county councils have performed certain required functions.

Once ODJFS receives an application, the grant coordinator, Children's Trust Fund staff, and regional committees review the application to determine whether each required statement has been answered appropriately and completely. If not, the reviewer indicates on a review instrument which deficiencies exist. The review instrument provides a basis to ensure that the grant request is in accordance with the intent of the program. ODJFS then reports any deficiencies to the county council through its revisions form. This form details specific instances where the county council's original application was deficient—typically, when the county council has not sufficiently explained how its plan meets the program's essential goal of reducing instances of teen pregnancy and child abuse and neglect. Once the county council revises the application, it resubmits it to ODJFS.

While each county needs to determine best use of program funds, the use of two applications requires each county council to spend unnecessary time documenting appropriate answers separately. However, program procedures outlined in the application itself emphasize that block grant funds should be used to complement other programs as well as the indicator, which supports the need for county councils to complete both applications as one effort.

***Recommendation 7-3: ODJFS should streamline its application process for the two indicators by requiring the use of one form with separate indicator response sections.***

*Multiple applications add to the paperwork burden at ODJFS. Currently, 88 county councils participate in both indicators of the program. Therefore, the Wellness Block Grant Coordinator and state and regional staff must review 176 applications for funds. Additionally, streamlining the application process into one form would emphasize that the programs should be integrated whenever efficiencies can be found.*

#### *Program Laws and Regulations*

#### **Internal Management Rules**

***Finding 7-4: Because current regulations effectively delegate daily program authority from the ODJFS to local agencies, these regulations must be updated frequently to ensure that state and local agencies fulfill the General Assembly's intent in creating the program.***

The General Assembly designs Ohio Administrative Code regulations to permit itself to govern programs without having to involve itself in administrative details. Instead, the General Assembly authorizes state agencies to decide what rules need to be implemented to ensure that the program meets its objectives and the spirit and intent of the Assembly. Administrative regulations establish guidance on applications, allowable costs, and local matching of program funds. On the other hand, internal management rules are applicable only to the particular agency in question and establish how programs will be carried out within an agency; these rules cover such topics as the rights and processes for appeal of program decisions.

An internal management rule, as defined by Section 119.01 (K) Revised Code, is any rule, regulation or standard governing the day-to-day staff procedures and operations with an agency. The Wellness Block Grant is regulated by an internal management rule—OAC Section 5101-6-42, established by ODJFS in 1998. In accordance with procedures outlined in Revised Code Chapter 119, the Director of ODJFS established nine provisions governing the Wellness Block Grant program's operations. The regulations specifically note critical program requirements, allowable and unallowable expenditures, the program's period of operation, and the period by and during which funds must be spent by county councils.

The regulations were initially filed with the Legislative Service Commission in October 1996, with modifications made in September 1997 and January 1998. However, during this process ODJFS determined that these regulations actually constituted an internal management rule for the department. As such, this designation has kept the rules from being published in the Ohio Administrative Code.

***Recommendation 7-4: ODJFS should review OAC Section 5101-6-42 to determine whether all current provisions govern program administration as intended. If regulations are not up-to-date, ODJFS should add or delete provisions accordingly and recommend their adoption by the Legislative Service Commission. During this process, ODJFS should determine whether the provisions' designation as internal management rules is warranted, and ODJFS should work with the Legislative Service Commission to effect appropriate changes as necessary.***

*ODJFS has determined that program requirements should be flexible enough to allow county councils the freedom to determine best uses for program funds based on the needs of their particular jurisdictions. This method stimulates creative approaches at the local level. However, ODJFS should still provide the councils' guidelines to operate the program based on current needs. To eliminate any misunderstandings between program parties, these rules should cover such issues as the impact of Indicator II and the need to submit well-thought-out requests for program funding. By allowing each interested party access to information provided by the rules, ODJFS should no longer classify them as internal management rules. This change in status would allow all program participants access to an understanding of the rules by which the program operates.*

### **Linking Funding with Outcome Indicators**

***Finding 7-5: Program regulations allow ODJFS to impose penalties or funding reductions on county councils when outcome indicators do not improve over a specified period of time and they allow ODJFS to establish and reward incentives to county councils who achieve results beyond specified targets. However, ODJFS has not established parameters and criteria by which outstanding or deficient program performance may be measured.***

By not establishing penalties or incentives based on program performance, ODJFS is at a disadvantage when program indicators for a given county do not improve, when a county council does not plan or disburse funds in a manner consistent with the directives of the General Assembly or ODJFS, or when the county council is achieving program successes that ODJFS would like to

replicate in other areas of the state.

In order to provide effective program leadership, ODJFS must establish parameters or targets for county councils along with appropriate penalties for not achieving stated objectives. Additionally, guidelines should continue to be written to allow maximum program flexibility at the local level to promote creative problem solving; this guidance should contain specific targets—for example, a 10 percent reduction in teen pregnancies in a county over a two-year period—which ODJFS can monitor through independently gathered information. The results would drive ODJFS decision making for future county council funding requests.

***Recommendation 7-5: ODJFS should establish performance measures which county councils must achieve in order to maintain current funding levels. Where appropriate, ODJFS should modify OAC Section 5101-6-42 to include additional language relating to the suspension or reduction of funding if a council fails to significantly improve its outcome indicators or to provide incentives for county councils that achieve program success.***

*If no structure is put in place to correct deficiencies in program structure, the potential increases for programs to fail and continue to fail at the county level. ODJFS should also consider the need to establish an incentive funding pool to increase or reduce Wellness Block Grant funding based on achieving specified program goals.*

*It is recognized that ODJFS does not wish to create a bureaucracy that reduces the flexibility of county councils in creating programs appropriate to their jurisdictions; ODJFS would be remiss in its duties if it allowed grant programs which do not have redeeming value to Ohio's citizens.*

## Financial Implications Summary

The following table represents a summary of the implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purpose of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

**Table 7-3: Summary of Financial Implications for the Wellness Block Grant**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Implementation Costs</b>
7-1: Hiring a Full-Time Grant Coordinator.	\$82,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$82,000</b>

## Conclusion Statement

The Wellness Block Grant program is an integral part of Ohio's efforts to prevent and alleviate teen pregnancy and child abuse and neglect. However, problems with program administration continue to be a major obstacle facing ODJFS. Currently, the grant program is administered by a single person loaned to the program by the state's Department of Education; should the loaned executive need to return to the Department of Education, intellectual capital may no longer be available to administer this program. This loss of knowledge could cripple program effectiveness and cause an abatement in the progress the program has made thus far.

The issue of program accountability also poses certain risks to program success. While it is important to allow local entities great flexibility in determining best uses for program funds, it is equally important that ODJFS establish and enforce concrete benchmarks to evaluate program progress. To that end, ODJFS should undertake on-site monitoring of program participants to provide necessary technical assistance as well as to ensure that county councils meet program regulations and objectives. On-site monitoring would also serve as a visible acknowledgment of the department's commitment to reduce instances of teen pregnancy and child abuse and neglect in the state.

For the Wellness Block Grant to achieve its full potential, ODJFS must continually modify and review program objectives and benchmarks while simultaneously ensuring that program participants have the tools to make the program succeed. In doing so, ODJFS must strike a delicate balance between the needs of the department and the needs of the county councils while continuing to meet the mandate of the General Assembly.





**CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT**



# Children’s Justice Act Grant

---

## Background

### *Overview*

Since its inception in Ohio in 1986, the purpose of the Children’s Justice Act (CJA) grant has been to provide federal assistance to states to reform how the states investigate and prosecute cases of child abuse and neglect—particularly in child sexual abuse cases. Such reform would involve many systemic components and stakeholders, such as Ohio’s juvenile court system, professionals serving children, and the children and their families themselves; thus years may pass before effective change can be brought about.

Each state is responsible for its own program development and implementation. Although states are required to update federal administrators annually on their progress, the CJA program is largely self-monitored. In Ohio, the Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is responsible for CJA program administration, development, and implementation.

Recommendations for system reform are developed by the Governor’s Task Force on the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Cases, a multi-disciplinary, governor-appointed task force that seeks ways to improve system efficiency and effectiveness. Task Force focus has been on reducing duplication of court efforts, improving the professional expertise of attorneys and judges in this area, and eliminating the stress imposed on families and children by the court system.

### *Governing Rules and Regulations*

The federal government makes Children’s Justice Act Grant funds available to states that qualify under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The purpose of the grant is to assist states in developing, establishing, and operating programs designed to improve 1) the handling of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim; 2) the handling of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect-related fatalities; and 3) the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Additionally, in order to be eligible for the Grant, states must

- establish a state task force to study these issues;

- perform a task force study before initial award and every three years thereafter; and
- report annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

States must also adopt task force recommendations prior to receiving federal grant monies.

*The Governor's Task Force on the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Cases*

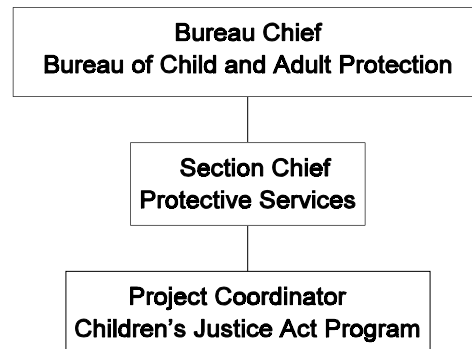
Under the chairmanship of Judge W. Don Reader, the Governor's Task Force on the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Cases is charged with the review and evaluation of the state's investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse cases—particularly child sexual abuse—and with making recommendations to the Governor. The Task Force was first appointed in 1986 by Executive Order of the Office of the Governor of the State of Ohio, and in accordance with applicable federal law. Governor Taft appointed the most recent task force on June 1, 2000, with the term ending May 31, 2003.

The task force has traditionally been subject to a three-year term. It consists of individuals representing law enforcement, judges, and attorneys involved in child abuse and neglect cases (both civil and criminal), as well as child advocates, health and mental health professionals, representatives of child protective service agencies, individuals experienced in working with children with disabilities, and parent representatives. Ohio's Task Force consists of five subcommittees, each charged with the review and evaluation of one or more interrelated system components (see Chart 8-2). The Task Force convenes twice a year to allow subcommittees to report their findings, update the task force on subcommittee activities, and propose recommendations for system reform. The task force then summarizes approved recommendations, and with the assistance of the Project Coordinator, prepares a report (*The Governor's Task Force on the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Cases*) and sends it to the Governor at the end of each three-year term.

*Organizational Chart*

Chart 8-1 provides an overview of the organizational and reporting structure for the CJA grant program. ODJFS administers the grant under the direction of the Office for Children and Families, Bureau of Child and Adult Protection.

## Chart 8-1: Children’s Justice Act Reporting Structure



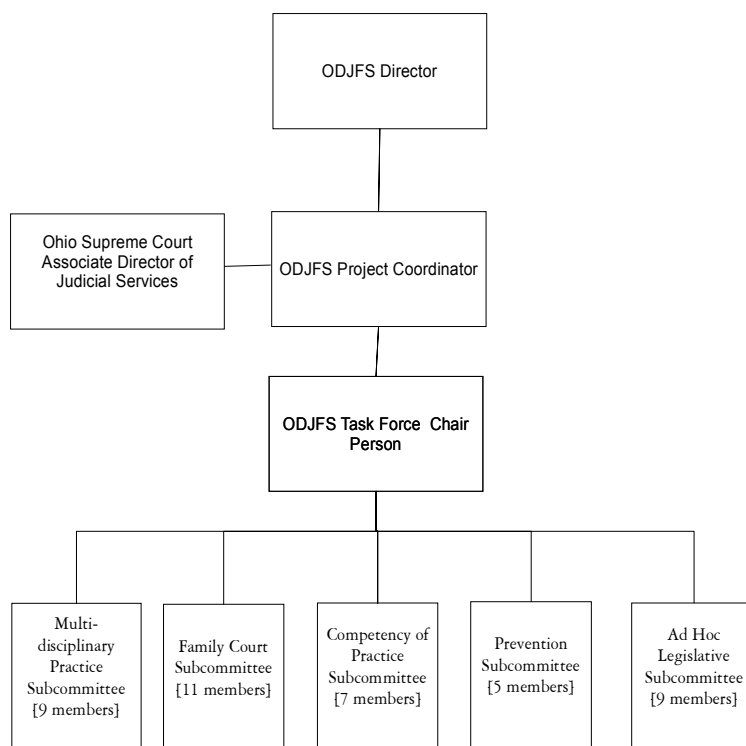
Since the inception of Ohio’s CJA grant program, one employee—the Project Coordinator—has worked to carry out program responsibilities. The Project Coordinator works with the Task Force chair on a monthly basis, oversees subcommittee work, and communicates with subcommittee chairs. The coordinator also works with various vendors that provide products and services related to the grant, and attends and conducts program seminars and conferences as well as performing miscellaneous correspondence and invoicing duties.

### *Organization Function*

ODJFS works with the Ohio Attorney General, the Supreme Court of Ohio, and Ohio Criminal Juvenile Services as a grant facilitator while coordinating a comprehensive review of the laws, policies, and procedures affecting the investigation of child physical and sexual abuse and exploitation. The grant program addresses a broad range of issues and a variety of systemic obstacles to the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse cases.

In collaboration with the Task Force, the grant Project Coordinator is responsible for developing an annual program plan to facilitate and implement Task Force recommendations, which is reassessed every three years. Grant funds are assigned to specific program activities; the cost of these activities is estimated during program development. The Project Coordinator’s supervisor and the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection Chief approve the annual plan, which is then sent on to HHS as part of the grant application.

**Chart 8-2: Membership, the Governor's Task Force on the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Cases**



As indicated in Chart 8-2, the subcommittees currently include

- C a *Multi-disciplinary Practice Subcommittee*, which examines ways to improve and coordinate service delivery through multi-disciplinary collaboration;
- C a *Family Court Subcommittee*, collaborating with the Supreme Court of Ohio and the National Center on Juvenile Justice on court reform issues, the Family Court Initiative, and pilot sites;
- C a *Competency of Practice Subcommittee*, examining levels of competency expected of professionals who are providing services to child victims and their families;
- C a *Prevention Subcommittee*, developing a technical assistance package and evaluation

- C methodology for prevention programs; and an *Ad Hoc Legislative Subcommittee*, focusing on legislative work arising from Task Force activities and the Family Court Initiative.

Some Task Force results have been very substantial:

- Through the joint efforts of the Supreme Court of Ohio and ODJFS, the Judicial College in Ohio created the position of Family Law Specialist to develop family law training for Ohio's judges and other court personnel.
- For the newly created Ohio Family Court Feasibility Study and Court Improvement Project, four Ohio counties have been selected as pilot sites to explore the feasibility of family courts in Ohio.
- The state has implemented its Court Mediation in Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Hearings; and the Office of Dispute Resolution has been created within the Supreme Court of Ohio, along with pilot site staff, to further improve existing child protection mediation programs.

### *Federal Funding to States*

Since 1988, Ohio has been awarded \$4,394,599 in CJA funding; it has spent \$3,523,866 on program activities through federal fiscal year 1998. Initially, the state focused these funds on reforming Ohio's courts by introducing new legislation and improving court technology. Due to the long-term nature of these activities, encumbered funds were extended beyond the normal grant term of two years. More recently, grant funds have been focused on professional training, feasibility studies, and research aimed at court reform, as well as at family court pilot projects.

HHS systematically determines the grant allocation to each state. In federal FY 1999, Ohio received \$278,312 in grant funding. Other states with similar populations and program structures have included Michigan (which received \$251,458), Pennsylvania (\$280,359), and Illinois (\$305,303). HHS provides the federal funding, and the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect is responsible for administering the grant to the states.

### *Procurement*

ODJFS disburses grant funds through contracts or interagency agreements as a result of task force recommendations. ODJFS has entered into an interbranch agreement with the Supreme Court of Ohio to carry out the recommendations of the Family Court Feasibility Study and develop court-connected mediation programs for abuse, neglect, and dependency cases in Ohio's courts.

Our analysis of grant expenditures indicates the majority of the expenses are the result of the Family Court Feasibility study, which deals with the overall reform of the current court system (which is different in all 88 of Ohio’s counties) into one family court system. The Family Court Feasibility Study is a constellation of activities aimed at improving both the interaction between child welfare and judicial systems and the effectiveness of intervention in cases involving families that require judicial action.

Annually, as part of the application process, ODJFS prepares and submits a program performance report to the HHS Administration for Children and Families. The report focuses on the outcomes of grant projects and includes a description of the activities supported with grant funds as well as a description of how the activities address the recommendations of the task force.

## **Processes and Recommendations**

The following are areas of focus within the CJA program:

- C Grant Management, including
  - C Strategic Planning and
  - C Program Development;
- C Monitoring, including
  - C Program Reporting,
  - C Expenditures, and
  - C Performance Measures; and
- C Staffing, including
  - C Workload Analysis and
  - C Employee Expectations.

### *Grant Management*

#### **Strategic Planning**

***Finding 8-1. ODJFS has not created a strategic plan for the Children’s Justice Act program that would describe how, in collaboration with other state agencies and vendors, its goals and objectives would be achieved.***

Strategic planning is a process that management uses in developing its vision of a program’s future, establish primary objectives, and translate them into action plans. The strategic planning process should encourage strategic thinking and action and bring about key staff alignment in support of



goals. The State of Maryland offers examples of best practices in the strategic planning area. In 1997, the Maryland Governor's Office published its *Managing for Results Guidebook* in response to the state's implementation of its *Managing for Results* initiative. The publication offers descriptions of best practices that have been designed to assist state agencies through "a clearly articulated planning process aimed at efficient, effective, and quality services and products." In addition to providing "how-to" tools, the guidebook offers consistent terminology for planning, performance measurement, budgeting, and reporting.

ODJFS has no mechanism in place to ensure its staff and contractors work together to achieve desired outcomes. It also has no indicators to show that program activities and projects focus on common goals and priorities, or that the department communicates the progress of its CJA program to all essential stakeholders. As a result, participants have no way of knowing whether the various actions and priorities of multiple stakeholders function together to maximize the program's effectiveness.

***Recommendation 8-1: ODJFS, in collaboration with the Governor's Task Force, should develop a written strategic plan for the CJA program that includes objectives, definitions of desired outcomes, and realistic time lines for implementation.***

*The department should enact a comprehensive planning process that involves key grant stakeholders, including ODJFS leadership (the Section Chief, Bureau Chief, Deputy Director and Director), the Task Force, ODJFS grant program staff, and the state Supreme Court.*

*The purpose of the strategic planning process should be to*

- *provide an ongoing framework for action that decisions can be based on;*
- *create a consensus regarding the program's goals and ways to achieve desired outcomes;*
- *provide a basis for the allocation of tasks, including roles and responsibilities of each party;*
- *assess the program's current and past successes to keep necessary parties informed;*
- *identify resources required—both human and material—to achieve these desired outcomes as well as the plan and capital to acquire these resources;*
- *improve project performance by monitoring and eliminating activities that do not contribute to desired outcomes; and*
- *increase accountability so that stakeholders and management understand what is being accomplished and how resources should be allocated.*

*The strategic plan should*

- *establish the overall mission, vision, goals, objectives, and strategies of the grant program, and develop the means (such as an action plan) to meet these goals and objectives;*
- *establish mechanisms for coordinating projects among the different contracted agencies and vendors;*
- *address issues that are common to all program projects;*
- *prioritize projects;*
- *create a link between the strategic plan and the budget;*
- *require realistic time frames within an implementation plan;*
- *describe interagency coordination and project leadership; and*
- *establish monitoring procedures to ensure project accountability.*

*For example, for the first of these strategic plan objectives, requirements for each element would include the following:*

<b>Mission</b>	<i>A brief, comprehensive statement that defines the reason the program exists.</i>
<b>Vision</b>	<i>A brief and compelling description of the preferred, ideal future.</i>
<b>Goals</b>	<i>The general ends toward which the program directs its efforts. Goals clarify the mission, provide direction, but do not state how to get there.</i>
<b>Objectives</b>	<i>Specific and measurable targets for accomplishment of a goal.</i>
<b>Strategies</b>	<i>A specific course of action that will be undertaken to accomplish goals and objectives. A strategy reflects budgetary and other resources.</i>
<b>Action Plan</b>	<i>A detailed description of how a strategy will be implemented.</i>

*It is important to note the keys to successful strategic planning lie not only in the final document, but with strategically aligned interaction and communication among the parties involved.*

### **Program Development**

***Finding 8-2: The current workload for administering and coordinating the Children's Justice Act program cannot be effectively managed by one part-time project coordinator.***

In recent years, ODJFS has committed significant resources to family court reform. However, only one part-time project coordinator manages the many and varied duties and responsibilities necessary to run a successful program.

Family court reform is a long-term project. Because of this, project time frames often exceed the designated federal grant period of two years, and ODJFS has typically requested program funding extensions. An HHS representative from the Children's Bureau on Child Abuse and Neglect, which is responsible for approving grant program extensions, indicated a similar trend exists for other states: many request extensions of from two to three years.

ODJFS enters into contracts with various parties to address the actions set out by the task force. Currently, the program contracts with the Supreme Court of Ohio for the majority of the grant's financial resources. From state FY 1996 through state FY 1999, the grant program was awarded approximately \$2.4 million; the Supreme Court was allocated approximately \$1.7 million, or 71 percent, of that amount. While the Court's involvement in contracting and monitoring programs has been crucial in achieving the desired program changes, ODJFS' continued reliance on the Court for these functions reduces ODJFS administration of the grant.

In essence, task force program direction dictates that most program objectives be carried out by the Court or its vendors; ODJFS handles only the program's administrative duties. In states such as Texas, on the other hand, the CJA program is administered solely by a judicial agency (Supreme Court) since CJA program objectives are primarily focused on reform through investigation and prosecution.

***Recommendation 8-2: ODJFS should implement value-added procedures within its administrative role for the Children's Justice Act program. If ODJFS is unable to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the CJA program, it should consider transferring the program to another state or judicial agency.***

*If ODJFS elects to maintain control of the program, it should increase grant program staffing levels (see recommendation 8-6). One part-time project coordinator cannot effectively manage the current program administrative workload. ODJFS should make an effort to improve program management and monitoring (as per our recommendations 8-4 and 8-5), increase technical assistance, improve communication, and strengthen working relationships with its vendors. The department needs to make its administrative function more dynamic to produce and communicate desired results to parties that need this information.*

*ODJFS should also require certain deliverables (including consistency of reported data, reimbursement requests to ODJFS, and outcome measures) and establish time frames with contractors that satisfy Task Force recommendations. This should provide better accountability and control over project management and reduce the need to request program extensions as well as the risk of jeopardizing federal funding.*

*The department should also work closely with the Supreme Court of Ohio to develop a standardized approach to achieving their mutual objectives in a timely manner. Because the Court is involved in many important tasks throughout the state, the department's close association with the court could prevent project delays within the CJA program. ODJFS may also want to consider whether other state agencies or vendors can assist them in completing certain desired changes instead of relying too heavily on the Court for program changes. It should also consider contracting with outside consultants to manage the project, directing that consultant to make use of the Court's expertise. If such were the case, the department would need to be very specific in itemizing its contract deliverables and time lines.*

*On the other hand, if ODJFS decides to transfer the program to another state agency, it would be logical to move it to the Supreme Court of Ohio, since 71 percent of program disbursements are currently managed by the Court. Additionally, because the Court operates within the judicial court environment, it is already in alignment with the grant's primary objectives, namely reducing child abuse through reform.*

*Financial Implication: If the Department decided to move the CJA program to the Supreme Court of Ohio, ODJFS could reduce its operating expenditures by approximately \$41,000 in salaries and \$12,000 in benefits for a total annual savings of \$53,000.*

## Monitoring

### **Program Reporting**

***Finding 8-3: The Children's Justice Act program has no formal procedures in place requiring staff to report periodically on the status and activity of the program, nor is there a procedure in place to require external parties involved in the program to report their status to ODJFS. This lack of reporting increases the likelihood that ODJFS could be unaware of the activities, status, and significant issues of the grant, hindering its ability to act on these issues.***

High-performing organizations make good use of performance measurement systems to assess the status and success of their programs. These systems can help the organization to

- keep appropriate management and staff keyed in to financial and performance information;
- provide periodic written or verbal status reports;
- conduct regular meetings with key personnel; and
- communicate information to appropriate management at agreed-upon intervals to elicit management's thoughts about program direction and vision.

***Recommendation 8-3: ODJFS should adopt a standard reporting process for the Children's Justice Act program that involves current data from all components depicting the existing state of the project.***

*CJA program personnel should design a report format that describes the comparative progress and status of the program at certain intervals of development. It should generate the report based on information and data received from all parties involved, including the Task Force and the Supreme Court. It should collect and maintain information to support and document program development. The report should contain relevant performance measures and be directed to ODJFS leadership and other stakeholders at agreed-upon intervals—perhaps quarterly.*

*Examples of information that might be included in this type of report might be*

- *Task Force and subcommittee meeting dates and highlights;*
- *Task Force initiatives and achievements;*
- *research results;*
- *trend analyses, such as the number of child abuse and neglect court cases, by county;*
- *outcome data on children in the system;*
- *actual (versus budgeted) program expenditures; and*
- *the progress the CJA program is making on outstanding service contracts.*

## **Expenditures**

***Finding 8-4: Children's Justice Act funds are not always used in a timely manner. ODJFS has consistently filed extensions with the federal government because it cannot accomplish all it needs to do in a grant period of only two years. This increases the risk that federal funding could be forfeited without ODJFS having an opportunity to make use of these funds.***

Each year, the Project Coordinator applies for federal CJA grant funds through the program plan, which the coordinator prepares based on Task Force recommendations. As of September 30, 1999, the cumulative funds unspent for the past three federal fiscal years was \$754,479.

**Table 8-1: Available Revenue Has Increased in the Last Three Federal Fiscal Years**

Federal Fiscal Year	Funds Awarded	Funds Expended	Available Revenue
1996	\$ 353,967	\$ 253,369	\$ 100,598
1997	333,694	-0-	333,694
1998	320,187	-0-	320,187
Totals	\$1,007,848	\$253,369	\$ 754,479

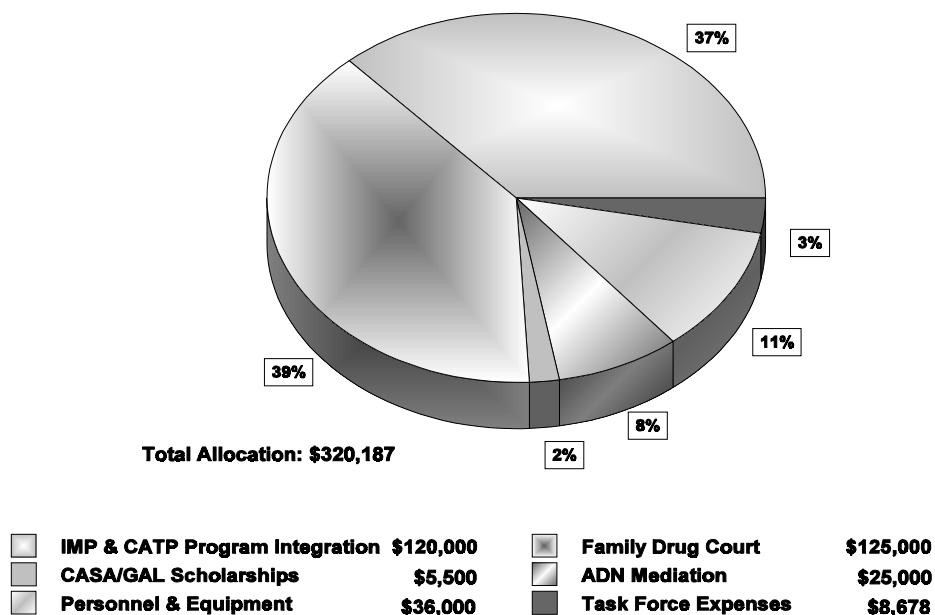
Source(s): ODJFS Fiscal Analyst, Grant Awards

As Table 8-1 indicates, the department does not always use funds in a timely manner. During our review, we noted that other states have also experienced delays in expending funds for the program.

Further analysis of 1997 and 1998 funding indicates that the CJA program had allocated a significant amount of funds to the family court reform project. This project is comprised of several interrelated phases, and the allotments for 1997 and 1998 cannot begin until the initial phase, which began in 1996, is completed.

Chart 8-3 depicts the CJA revised budget for federal FY 1998, as submitted in the CJA federal plan. The programs and initiatives funded by the grant provide a wide range of training and guidance to the parties involved. The department is integrating the Investigative Mentor Program and the Child Abuse Team Planning (IMP & CATP) Program as a training program that it will combine with the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. It will offer this training to law enforcement, child welfare, and court-connected personnel throughout the state. The Family Drug Court allocation was planned to assist families in the early stages of substance abuse and to establish a Family Drug Court (similar to a Reno, Nevada, model). The department budgeted Court-Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian Ad Litem (CASA/GAL) scholarships to provide funding and training to those individuals who work with families affected by child abuse issues. The department targeted its Abuse, Dependency, and Neglect (ADN) Mediation funding to sponsor forums on abuse, dependency, and neglect, and to prepare additional teams to train staff at Ohio courts interested in implementing such efforts. In addition, CJA costs for personnel and equipment, as well as Task Force expenses and CJA administrative costs, are included in this funding.

Chart 8-3: Funding Allocation - Federal FY 1998



Source: 1998 CJA Federal Plan

The program has delayed spending due to several factors:

- ODJFS depends on the Ohio Supreme Court to submit bills for payment, based on their Inter-branch Agreement. Those bills have sometimes been delayed.
- The department's plans contained two large-scale projects of \$100,000 or more; because of the amount of money involved, project funds have taken longer to expend. A majority of other states fund their projects on a smaller scale, so that money can be spent in a more timely manner. (Please refer to HHS' *Update of State Activities Conducted under the Children's Justice Act* for more information.) However, Ohio's more recent federal FY 1999 grant included smaller projects, which should reduce the impact of spending for large projects.
- ODJFS has not established a process to assess and monitor CJA expenditures.

***Recommendation 8-4: ODJFS should establish a mechanism that monitors program activities and compares Children's Justice Act program plan expenditures with actual expenditures.***

*As part of the status report we suggest in recommendation 8-3, CJA staff should submit bills for any expenses incurred for the CJA program each reporting period. The status report should also include information on program monies that are planned to be expended in the coming year.*

*While ODJFS has been further diversifying its grant projects each year, and by doing so, promoting the timely spending of funds, we note that this greater number of programs and activities will require more oversight and intensive monitoring on the part of the department. Moreover, as a part of the strategic planning mentioned in recommendation 8-1, ODJFS leadership should decide what type of role they wish to take in administering the CJA Grant. In recent years, most of the responsibility for carrying out program functions has resided with the Supreme Court of Ohio.*

### **Performance Measures**

***Finding 8-5: There is no evidence that ODJFS has a performance measurement system in place for the Children’s Justice Act program activities and expenditures. Moreover, ODJFS does not require external parties, such as project service providers, to report on the progress of their work. Currently, information on program status is shared only informally among the service providers, Project Coordinator, Task Force, and ODJFS management.***

Performance measures are defined as a system of customer-focused, quantified indicators that let an organization know if it is meeting its goals and objectives; they are management tools that measure work performed and results achieved. These same measures are a tool which managers can use to plan, budget, structure programs, and control results. A successful planning process always builds in accountability for results. Performance measures help ensure that a project or program is providing efficient and effective government services.

Currently, the CJA program does not use measures and indicators to determine how effectively the program is operating. Therefore, ODJFS is unable to track daily operations, link operations to objectives, or determine overall program performance.

***Recommendation 8-5: ODJFS should develop performance measures for the Children’s Justice Act program in order to establish a method for evaluating and improving its operations.***



*ODJFS management should designate an individual to be responsible for obtaining and analyzing the results of internal and external performance measurements. It is important that performance measures be aligned with program objectives to effectively evaluate the progress of the program. A number of different types of performance measures can be used to gauge programs, the most common to government being*

- **inputs:** resources used (what will we need?)
- **outputs:** activities completed (what will we produce?)
- **outcomes:** results achieved (what results will we achieve?)
- **efficiencies:** how well resources are used (how well will we use our resources?)
- **quality:** effectiveness (how much will we improve?)

*Each of these measures can answer a different question and must often be used in combination with other measures to analyze program results. It is not always necessary to use all the types of measures to determine if an objective(s) has been achieved.*

*Measures can go a long way toward evaluating and improving operations. The following scenario is one example.*

<b>Objective:</b> ODJFS should adopt an internal process to report project and program progress.	
<i>Input</i>	<i>External program data from vendors, cost information on projects and program, and staffing to compile and analyze data.</i>
<i>Output</i>	<i>A monthly progress report.</i>
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Senior management is aware of program status; decisions and direction regarding program are more readily offered; barriers to program implementation are removed; program has increased likelihood for success.</i>
<i>Efficiency</i>	<i>Measured against the Task Force members' expectations, federal grant award requirements, and terms contained in the contract. Also, how well management receives timely and useful information to make decisions.</i>
<i>Quality</i>	<i>A system to inform shareholders (ODJFS management, Task Force) and to use as a financial tracking device for monitoring program expenditures.</i>

*Good performance measures need to be specifically defined and identified. General terms must be defined by specific actions, procedures, and computations so they will not become personal or generalized interpretations. Clear explanations define what is being measured, the source of the information, and how value is calculated.*

*ODJFS management should be vigilant in developing, updating and reporting performance measures. The stakeholders should be kept in mind at every step of the process. Implementation of a performance measurement system is an evolutionary process in which results and use will likely improve with experience. The steps in developing quality performance measures can be used for big and small projects alike within the CJA program.*

## *Staffing*

### **Workload Analysis**

***Finding 8-6: The current workload for the Program Coordinator is too great for one employee. Based on our recommendations, the number of hours a Program Coordinator would have to devote to the program would increase to more than a full-time position.***

The CJA Project Coordinator, although working only part-time, is the only person responsible for administering the CJA Grant. The coordinator's duties include

- program planning;
- developing performance measures and outcomes and monitoring program activities;
- establishing performance measures for interagency contracts and monitoring for compliance;
- coordinating communication of services (at a website);
- arranging for training seminars and conferences;
- interpreting federal legislation;
- increasing upper management's awareness of the program;
- preparing annual reports;
- coordinating interagency collaboration; and
- preparing, developing, completing, and submitting the grant applications.

Due to the scope and breadth of these responsibilities, the coordinator may only be able to perform some duties marginally and, in some cases perhaps, not at all. Table 8-1 provides an illustration of the hours we estimate the Project Coordinator would have to work given the job's current tasks as well as our estimate of hours to complete new tasks recommended or identified in this report. The total hours estimated in Table 8-2 exceed that of one part-time or full-time employee.

**Table 8-2: Hours the Project Coordinator Would Work to Manage Current and Proposed Children's Justice Act Tasks**

Responsibilities/Tasks	Frequency of Task	Estimated Hours	Estimated Annual Hours
<b>CURRENT TASKS PERFORMED</b>			
• Developing and submitting grant application to HHS	1/yr	25 hr	25
• Program plans	1/yr	25 hr	25
• Miscellaneous correspondence	12	4 hr/mo.	48
• Reports (Annual Performance)	1/yr	10 hr	10
• Federal meeting	1/yr	4 days	32
• Collaborate with Task Force Chair	12	4 hr/mo	48
• Supervise researchers' work	52	2 hr/wk	104
• Oversee subcommittee work and respond to chairs	12	2 hr/mo	24
• Full membership meetings: prep/post, meeting times	3/yr	16 hr	48
• Miscellaneous correspondence and invoicing	12	2 hr/mo	24
• Child Abuse Team Planning/Investigative Mentor	12	10 hr/mo	120
• Family Court Feasibility Study	52	15 hr/wk	780
• Mediation	12	1 hr/mo	12
• CASA programs/Financing/Standards	12	2 hr/mo	24
• Family Court Subcommittee meetings, prep time, logistics, & participation	5/yr	8 hr	40
• Prevention, Multi-disciplinary & Competency subcommittees initiatives	12	3 hr/mo	36
• Joint planning and presentations	12	2 hr/mo	24
• Court Improvement Project federal meetings	2/yr.	4 days	64
• Correspondence and reports	1/yr	10	10
• Court Improvement Project implementation	12	2 hr/mo	24
Subtotal Hours			1,522
<b>TASKS TO BE PERFORMED (Estimated Hours)</b>			
• Reconciliation of program expenditures and program expenditure tracking (budget to actual); implementing a strategic plan; tracking performance measures, indicators and outcomes; receiving, analyzing, and compiling external reports/feedback from all involved parties; submitting internal progress reports.	Varies	Varies	600
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>2,122</b>

Source: CJA Project Coordinator's estimated time analysis, 1999.

***Recommendation 8-6: To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the Children's Justice Act grant program, ODJFS should perform a critical work analysis and develop an updated staffing plan to determine whether additional staff might be necessary.***

*It is important for management to develop a work analysis schedule to ensure staffing levels are sufficient to effectively reach program goals. ODJFS management and the CJA Program Coordinator must determine the delineation of roles and responsibilities. Clarification of roles and responsibilities will provide a model for assessing personnel needs and required skill sets. Without this information, ODJFS increases that risk that program objectives will not be met.*

*Currently, ODJFS upper management does not have a mechanism in place for evaluating use of time by its employees. A system to monitor the time employees spend at particular tasks would be essential in determining whether the CJA program uses current resources effectively. ODJFS' Office of Management Information Systems could develop such a monitoring system.*

*Once it has this data, ODJFS management will have a clearer picture of employee responsibilities, which, in turn, would assist them in determining whether staffing is adequate. The information could be further analyzed to identify significant concentrations of employee time, to develop staffing comparisons or ratios with similar programs, to evaluate the adequacy and benefits derived from activities such as training, and to modify employee duties to make more effective use of time spent.*

*Financial Implication:*

*Since we estimate the annual task hours needed to manage the CJA program adequately at 2,122 hours (see table 8-2), and since state payroll records indicate the total state FY 1999 staff hours used for the CJA program was 1,500 hours, staffing would have to be increased by 622 hours at a minimum to satisfy all position requirements. Many of the current tasks and new tasks appear to be administrative in nature and could be completed by a part-time employee. Table 8-3 estimates the total annual cost of hiring a part-time administrative assistant to pick up the extra hours necessary to perform the additional tasks.*

**Table 8-3: Financial Implication of Hiring an Additional CJA Employee**Part-Time Administrative Assistant

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$21,400	30%	\$28,000
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		1
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$28,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Salary and Classification Booklet, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

**Employee Expectations**

***Finding 8-7: Departmental management has not established its expectations for the CJA Project Coordinator position.***

When management develops and communicates formal written job expectations to an employee, that employee is better able to carry out the roles and responsibilities of that position. At the same time, the employee is providing management with a standard upon which to measure the employee's performance. Formal expectations also ensure that the organization uses its human resources efficiently and effectively in meeting program goals and objectives.

Moreover, it should be noted that the CJA position description on file during the majority of our field work was last updated in February 1989. In January 2000, we received a copy of an updated position description that was awaiting formal approval. As of June 2000, it still had not received that approval.

***Recommendation 8-7: Management should establish and communicate formal written employee expectations for the Project Coordinator position, making sure they are linked to the Children's Justice Act grant program's strategic plan.***

*To set out formal written expectations, management must*

- *develop an updated position description with project specifics;*

- *develop formal written expectations linked to the strategic plan;*
- *prepare regular comprehensive performance evaluations, assessing how the employee has met these expectations; and*
- *create an individual development plan.*

## Financial Implications Summary

In the following table, we summarize the implementation costs for the recommendations we have included in this section of the report. For the purposes of this table, we include only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts.

**Table 8-4: Summary of Financial Implications for Children’s Justice Act Grant**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Costs Savings</b>	<b>Annual Cost Implementation</b>
8-2: Annual savings if ODJFS transfers program to another agency	\$53,000	
<b>OR</b>		
8-6: Hire a part-time employee to provide administrative assistance to the Program Coordinator.		\$28,000

## Conclusion Statement

The Children’s Justice Act (CJA) program has resulted in a number of efforts aimed at reforming the way the state investigates instances of child abuse and exploitation. Since the role of ODJFS is primarily administrative by design, our efforts have focused on program planning, reporting, and management, with an emphasis on grant monitoring.

We recommend that ODJFS develop a strategic plan with specific goals and objectives for the CJA program. Once this is done, ODJFS management should develop a prioritized listing of program

needs. Our review has also indicated that the department should focus attention on certain aspects of its fiscal management and monitoring. These areas might include developing project time lines, reporting program progress, tracking program expenditures, and measuring program performance.

In its administrative role, ODJFS should focus on implementing value-added procedures within the CJA program. ODJFS must dedicate the appropriate staffing, improve program management and monitoring, increase technical assistance, improve communication, and strengthen working relationships with its vendors; otherwise, ODJFS should consider transferring the CJA program to another state or judicial agency.

ODJFS could also improve CJA performance by adopting formalized program planning policies and procedures. Formal procedures should specify the individuals who should be involved in the planning process, the criteria that should be used to prioritize grant fund activities, and the approval process that should be used to select program activities.

ODJFS should develop written policies and procedures for monitoring and reporting expenditures and measuring desired program outcomes. Department management and CJA personnel should be involved in identifying specific reporting components and outcome measures. Grant personnel should identify all potential users of reporting information and develop a method for communicating this information to these parties on a regular basis. By designing effective reporting and monitoring tools, ODJFS should be able to react quicker and better to emerging issues and trends and allow the department to keep users informed of program status at all times.

CJA grant management ranges from funding programs to measuring the effectiveness of program outcomes. While the state's grant program has made extensive progress in program development and other changes within the last few years—particularly in the area of family court reform—further changes are necessary. For instance, the family court reform project is being handled through a large interbranch agreement with the state's Supreme Court. Large projects such as family court reform tend to be long-term; because of this, some projects have already resulted in Ohio's having to request program extensions; however, we have no guarantee that HHS will approve extensions on future funding, which could jeopardize the outcome of the program. Also, our analysis of recent program disbursements has indicated that a significant portion of funding—about 71 percent—has been distributed to the state Supreme Court. Distributing such a large percentage of program funds to another agency has shifted much of the direct program administration away from ODJFS, and hinders the timely monitoring and reporting of the program by ODJFS.

Staffing for the CJA program currently consists of one part-time Program Coordinator, who manages a wide spectrum of activities. As a result, the Program Coordinator can only focus attention on developing and enhancing program issues, while giving less emphasis to program monitoring and fiscal management. Hiring an additional staff person to handle many of the current position's administrative tasks would reduce the burden placed on the Program Coordinator while greatly

improving program monitoring and overall effectiveness.

Management should continue to communicate job expectations to program personnel to assist them in understanding their job responsibilities. Management should continue to work toward developing a current position description for the Project Coordinator and any additional personnel the department may choose to hire. Setting out explicit expectations and staff responsibilities will assist management in measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of personnel.



## **ADOPTION SERVICES**



# Adoption Services

---

## Background

### *Overview*

In the United States, more than 100,000 children are currently awaiting adoption; Ohio's waiting children account for more than three percent of this total. With the passage of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) in 1997, which was intended to decrease the amount of time a child spends in foster care, the number of children awaiting adoption has been growing at a rapid pace. The number of Ohio children in permanent custody with a goal of adoption increased by 172 in federal FY 1999.

The launching of Adoption 2002: A Response to the Presidential Executive Memorandum on Adoption on February 14, 1997 intended to reduce barriers to adoption for waiting children by providing federal financial incentives to those states that double their number of adoptions by 2002. Within Ohio, the number of adoptions in federal FY 1999 increased by 11 percent to 1,577 children. Ohio will need to increase its rate of adoptions to nearly 18 percent over the next three years to meet its Adoption 2002 target of 2,574 adoptions by federal FY 2002.

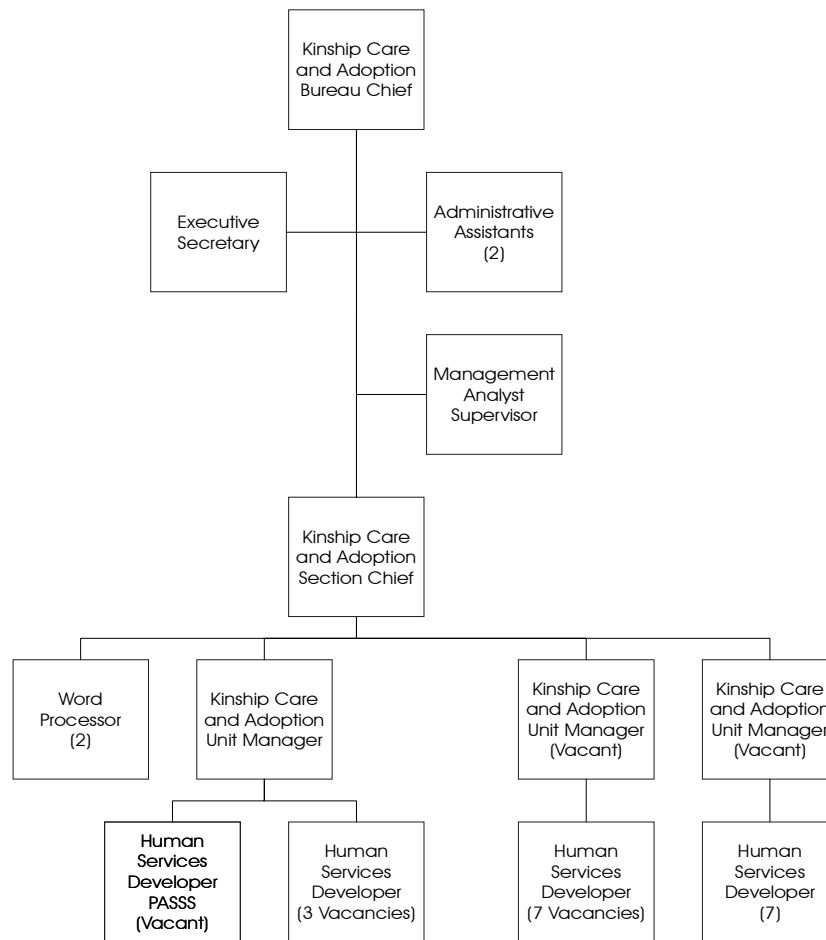
### *Organizational Chart*

Until recently, Adoption Services for Ohio were located within the Department's Office for Children and Families under the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection. Effective February 28, 2000, the Adoption Services section was moved from the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection to the newly-created Bureau of Kinship Care and Adoption, which is still under the Office for Children and Families. ODJFS Adoption personnel assist Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) and Private Child Placing Agencies (PCPAs) by providing federal and state funding, assistance with program implementation, training with state and federal regulations, and technical assistance on laws, policies, and procedures. Currently there are 88 public and approximately 150 private child placing agencies in Ohio.

ODJFS created the new Bureau of Kinship Care and Adoption after having to address certain adoption issues such as depleted state funding for the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy program (PASSS) and alleged noncompliance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act and the Inter-Ethnic Placement Act at the county level. ODJFS realigned its organizational structure in order to focus more on adoption issues and has posted several position openings to be filled by the early part of state FY 2001. These postings include hiring two unit managers, ten human service developers, and an additional human services developer who will deal solely with PASSS duties and

responsibilities. The section will now maintain three regional units that will service all aspects of adoption and kinship care. The Bureau of Kinship Care and Adoption organization is shown in Chart 9-1.

**Chart 9-1: Kinship Care and Adoption Organizational Chart**



Source: ODJFS Organizational Chart, June 30, 2000

## *Governing Rules and Regulations*

### **Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)**

The ASFA was signed into federal law on November 19, 1997 to improve the safety of children, to promote adoption and encourage the placement of children into permanent homes, and to support adoptive families. Over the past few years, a major focus of adoption at the state level has been to

coordinate adoption activities, including those of public and private adoption agencies, and implement the Act's requirements.

The law makes changes to and clarifications on a wide range of policies established under the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, the major federal law enacted in 1980 to assist states in protecting and caring for abused and neglected children. In summary, the ASFA

- continues eligibility for the federal Title IV-E Adoption Assistance subsidy to children whose adoption is disrupted;
- authorizes adoption incentive payments for states;
- requires states to document their efforts to adopt;
- expands health care coverage to adopted children with special health care needs who are not eligible for Title IV-E benefits;
- authorizes new funding for technical assistance to promote adoption;
- addresses geographic barriers to adoption;
- establishes a new time line and conditions for filing termination-of-parental-rights;
- sets a new time frame for permanency hearings;
- requires states to check prospective foster and adoptive parents for criminal backgrounds;
- requires that foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relatives be provided with a notice of court reviews and an opportunity to be heard;
- directs states to establish standards to ensure quality services; and
- requires an assessment of state performance in protecting children.

### **Multi-Ethnic Placement Act and Inter-Ethnic Placement Act**

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 and the Inter-Ethnic Placement Act (IEPA) of 1996—also referred to as MEPA/IEPA—are federal regulations that prohibit the denying or delaying of the adoption of a child due to the child's race or ethnicity. MEPA/IEPA encourages transracial adoptions and emphasizes that too many minority children are waiting in foster care.

### **Adoption 2002**

Adoption 2002 is a federal initiative developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); it outlines a new action plan to help states set and meet urgent new adoption targets. HHS also offers financial incentives to states to help increase adoptions and permanent placements and to provide technical assistance to states, courts, and communities to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes.

As part of the Adoption 2002 initiative, HHS has established a system of annual baselines to be used in assessing states' progress in meeting each state's goal of doubling permanent placements by federal FY 2002. Initially, HHS required each state to submit an initial baseline for federal FY 1997 based

on an average of the number of permanent placements in that state in federal FYs 1995, 1996, and 1997. The baseline for Ohio turned out to be 1,261 permanent placements. From federal FY 1997 forward, the baseline was to be revised annually to reflect the highest number of permanent placements made to date, including the initial baseline year of federal FY 1997.

In October 1999 it was determined that ODJFS would not receive federal adoption incentive funding for adoptive placements in federal FY 1998 due to the number of adoptions in Ohio being less than the federally established baselines. In response, ODJFS has increased its efforts to promote adoption and improve the reporting and gathering of adoption data. More specifically, ODJFS has increased the number of reports for agencies to use when monitoring adoptions and providing more technical assistance. In federal FY 1999, ODJFS has reported that Ohio's number of adoptions exceeded that of the baseline; however, the amount of incentive funding that Ohio could receive is uncertain at this point.

### **House Bill 484**

In 1998, the Ohio legislature passed Amended Substitute House Bill 484, which will continue to be a primary focus of the state and its adoptive agencies over the next few years. A few highlights of House Bill 484 include

- making Ohio's laws and regulatory procedures consistent with the ASFA, thus avoiding the loss of existing federal funds;
- requiring a court to consider whether it is in the best interests of a child to return the child to the child's parents when the court is asked to modify or terminate certain types of dispositional orders;
- mandating that a court to give notice of the filing of a petition to adopt a child and of the time and place of the hearing on the adoption petition to any guardian, custodian, or other party who has temporary custody or permanent custody of the child;
- requiring the health and safety of children be the main priority of everyone concerned, as well as requiring agencies to make a reasonable effort to return children to homes if at all possible;
- defining circumstances (mostly involving offenses of a sexual or violent nature) in which a PCSA would not be required to make reasonable efforts to prevent removal of a child from home;
- directing the PCSAs and PCPAs to speed the placement of such abused and neglected children into a permanent setting, such as with an adoptive family; and
- requiring boards of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services to give priority to addicted parents, guardians, and custodians of children and the children who are at imminent risk of being abused or neglected.

*AdoptOHIO*

AdoptOHIO is a statewide program designed to increase the number of adoptions of children in permanent custody of the PCSAs. Strategies to achieve this goal include the use of private agencies to place children who are awaiting adoption; incentive payments to both the public and private adoptive agencies for meeting specific goals; and use of a website and photo listing to facilitate statewide access to the waiting children. ODJFS has contracted with vendors to provide services to public and private placing agencies and develop a marketing and recruitment campaign to attract more adoptive families.

*Program Funding*

Adoption Services utilizes one federal grant (the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance subsidy, which includes a maintenance payment and a nonrecurring payment) and three state grants (a State Adoption Maintenance Subsidy, a State Special Services Subsidy, and the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS)). ODJFS was unable to compile data in state fiscal year 1997 due to a lack of data availability stemming from a change in accounting systems.

**Table 9-1: Adoption Funding History**

	State Fiscal Years		
REVENUE	1997	1998	1999
Federal * (County Level Direct Services and Subsidies to Families)	data unavailable	\$94,409,000	\$106,378,000
State *(County Level Direct Services, Subsidies to Families, and Ancillary Costs)	data unavailable	28,092,000	33,031,000
Local (Titles IV-E, IV-B, XX & AdoptOhio)	data unavailable	20,029,000	30,181,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>data unavailable</b>	<b>\$142,530,000</b>	<b>\$169,590,000</b>
EXPENDITURES	1997	1998	1999
County Level Direct Services	data unavailable	\$91,317,000	\$104,084,000
Subsidies to Families	data unavailable	50,168,000	62,099,000
Ancillary Costs (Adopt Ohio Fee Payments, OAPPL Publication)	data unavailable	1,045,000	3,407,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>data unavailable</b>	<b>\$142,530,000</b>	<b>\$169,590,000</b>

Source: ODJFS fiscal analyst, various internal and external reports

\* - Revenues include direct services provided to counties and adoption amounts are imputed based on the ratio of adoption caseload to the total foster care and adoption caseload.

## Processes and Recommendations

We will focus our review on the following areas within Adoption Services:

- Program Administration, including
  - Staffing,
  - Technical Assistance, and
  - Training (ODJFS & District); and
- Monitoring - Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) Program

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

#### *Staffing*

***Finding 9-1: A number of positions within the Adoption Section have become vacant in the past two years, and several have been outsourced. These staff vacancies, combined with an already-existing shortage, have significantly hindered the section's ability to perform its functions effectively.***

For several years now, the Adoption Section has experienced serious staffing shortages that have resulted in assignment backlogs. Two Adoption employees retired in late 1998, and the position of Adoption Section Chief was vacant from November 1999 to March 2000. More recently, the Adoption Section has been overburdened with issues such as alleged PCSA noncompliance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Act, expenditures exceeding budget for the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy program, and the establishment of a new program known as the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, all of which have drained resources within the Adoption Section.

In March 1998, ODJFS attempted to shed some light on why Section-related tasks had increased so dramatically over the past few years, requesting that the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development complete a functional program review of the Adoption program. Upon its completion, this analysis detailed major functions performed by adoption staff, inputs for each function, major tasks associated with each function, estimated hours of completion, and the frequency of each task on an annual basis. However, no staff changes resulted from this analysis. We reviewed this analysis, however, and found that the Section may be marginally performing or may not be performing some adoption duties. Table 9-2 illustrates the estimated hours associated with current program tasks and our estimate of the hours it would take to complete new tasks identified by Adoption personnel.



**Table 9-2: Adoption Services Staffing Analysis**

<b>Major Functions</b>	<b>Responsibilities/Tasks</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Hours</b>
<b>CURRENT TASKS PERFORMED</b>		
Direct and administer AdoptOHIO	Mediate disputes between agencies, contracting with agencies, and amend contracts with agencies	550
AdoptOHIO adoption congresses	Plan and organize adoption congress, conduct congress	300
Putative Father Registry	Respond to calls and requests for application, enter application data, maintain tables and send notices, generate monthly report, father and mother registration searches, father requests for applications	1,900
AdoptOHIO Assessor Training	Assessor Training review committee, Ohio Child Welfare Training Program Steering Committee Meeting	150
Administrative rules training	Prepare mailing, train district office personnel, conduct training sessions for agencies	625
Liaison for statewide adoption organizations and meetings	Monthly meetings	100
Support the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children	Consulting services, review cases, and international adoptions	225
Search and Public Information Requests	Receive telephone calls from constituents, mail search packets	400
<b>TASKS TO BE PERFORMED (Estimated Hours)</b>		
Kinship Care and Adoption Support - Human Services Developers	Monitoring, training, and technical assistance associated with all aspects of Kinship Care and Adoption (including MEPA/IEPA) duties at regional locations	25,500 <sup>1</sup>
Kinship Care and Adoption Support - Unit Managers	Supervise all aspects of Kinship Care and Adoption including MEPA/IEPA, monitoring, training and technical assistance duties at the regional locations	4,500
Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy program - Human Services Developers	Monitoring, fiscal administration and technical assistance associated with PASSS program	1,500
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>		<b>35,750</b>

Source: Developed using ODJFS Office of Workforce Development Staffing Analysis, March 6, 1998.

As a result of staffing shortages or the specialization required to complete certain tasks, the Section contracts with outside vendors to perform those duties. We have not included these duties in the above task analysis. However, if ODJFS decides to reacquire these functions as part of its own functions in the future, they should evaluate the impact those duties will have on their staffing. For

<sup>1</sup> Number calculated by estimating an average of 100 hours per adoption agency (88 PCSAs and 150 PCPAs) plus an additional 300 hours for each metro PCSA.

instance, the requirements associated with maintaining the AdoptOHIO web page is estimated at 4,500 hours, administration of the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing at 2,100 hours, and the Help Me Grow Help Line at about 600 hours; these functions are currently outsourced.

To estimate staffing for the Kinship Care/Adoption Section, we divided the estimated total of 35,750 hours by the standard number of full-time equivalent hours—1,600—and calculated an estimated number of 22 full-time non-administrative positions for the section. Since the section currently employs nine employees, the section would need to hire a total of 13 new employees to complete all adoption tasks.

***Recommendation 9-1: ODJFS should fill the vacancies for the eleven Human Services Developer positions and the two Unit Manager positions within the Adoption Section.***

*In order to maintain the number of Kinship Care and Adoption Section employees sufficient to effectively provide program services, ODJFS should periodically perform a critical work analysis for the Kinship Care and Adoption Section. Since the 1998 adoption functional analysis, the Section has had to take on additional adoption tasks and responsibilities. Moreover, due to continual changes in state and federal laws and initiatives, the Section has had to reevaluate whether it has sufficient staff to remain in compliance with its required tasks and duties. In recent months, ODJFS has taken an active role in posting and interviewing candidates to fill the vacancies listed in Chart 9-1.*

*In order to justify the need for additional staff and continually assess if staffing levels are appropriate, ODJFS should regularly track and document the time that Section employees spend on required tasks. Section employees currently track their daily tasks, but submit this information only in a high-level format to the Bureau Chief on a monthly basis; however, the current format appears to be an inefficient method for monitoring and evaluating time use. Developing an efficient system to monitor tasks may require the involvement of the Office of Management Information Systems, or might simply require a database spreadsheet update on the employees' personal computers. This will give ODJFS management access to information it could use to*

- C identify significant concentrations of employee time,*
- C develop staffing comparisons or ratios with similar programs,*
- C evaluate the adequacy and benefits derived from items such as training, or*
- C modify employee duties to make more effective use of employees' time.*

*Financial Implication:***Table 9-3: Financial Implication of Hiring Additional 13 Employees**

## Human Services Developer

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$40,706	30%	\$53,000
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		11
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$583,000</b>

## Unit Manager

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Annual Cost
\$45,677	30%	\$60,000
Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:		2
Total Estimated Annual Cost:		<b>\$120,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Management Analyst Supervisor 2, Step 1, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

*Technical Assistance*

***Finding 9-2: ODJFS has not delivered efficient technical assistance services in relation to its adoption programs.***

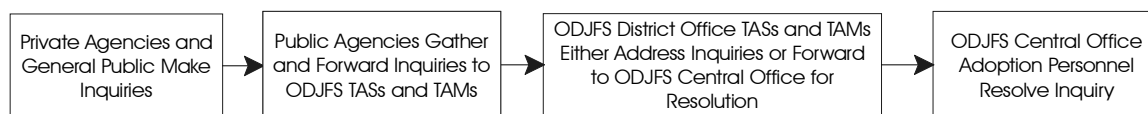
Technical assistance is a term used to describe the act of providing guidance on a specific topic to others based on legal requirements, procedures, and practices employed by users, as well as the prior experiences of the technical assistance expert. Providing accurate, reliable technical assistance ensures that policies and procedures are administered in a consistent manner throughout an organization.

The recent changes in laws and guidelines governing adoption has increased the need for public and private adoption agencies to obtain consistent and dependable technical assistance. Misinterpretation of information may result in delays in the placement of children into permanent homes, in sanctions, or the loss of federal dollars.

ODJFS has assigned a majority of the child welfare technical assistance responsibilities to its regional technical assistance specialists and technical assistance managers. However, instead of using the technical assistance specialists that work out of ODJFS' regional Office of County Operations, Adoption Section personnel have themselves been directly providing technical assistance to the Public Children Services Agencies. Since Section staffing is already limited, this practice has placed an additional burden on Adoption staff and has increased the risk that agencies would have to independently address their technical assistance needs, which could potentially result in inappropriate and inconsistent methods of resolving technical concerns. This practice has also limited or perhaps eliminated communication and technical updates between the technical assistance specialists and Adoption Section staff.

***Recommendation 9-2: ODJFS should streamline their technical assistance process to ensure that timely and effective technical guidance is provided to the public and private adoptive agencies.***

*Technical assistance for kinship care and adoption-related issues should be provided as follows:*



*After the public agencies gather inquiries from the general public and public and private agencies, they should forward the questions to the ODJFS District Office TAS and TAM. Most inquiries will be addressed by the ODJFS District Office's TAS or TAM; however, if a TAS or TAM is uncertain about how to address a public agency's concern, they should contact ODJFS' Central Office Adoption Section staff for direction.*

*As a way of improving any technical assistance process, those individuals responsible for providing technical assistance should track and document the types of questions they receive and the guidance they provide. Technical assistance personnel should then provide periodic updates to Adoption Section staff to make*

*sure the staff are aware of needed improvements to written policies and procedures.*

*Moreover, during this period of procedural transition (and thereafter, if necessary), if public agencies contact Section staff directly for technical assistance, Section staff should remind the agencies of the appropriate procedure. If Section staff provide the technical assistance, they should let the appropriate technical assistance specialist or manager know what occurred.*

*It is possible that ODJFS' merger with the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services may result in an increase in regional departmental staffing. Also, the need for Adoption personnel, of whom many will be new employees, to provide specific guidance for Kinship Care, MEPA/IEPA compliance and private placement agencies could result in confusion as to who provides what type of technical assistance to the PCSAs. In order to coordinate duties and ensure proper customer service and consistency, ODJFS will need to clearly distinguish the technical assistance expectations of its human service developers and unit managers as well as its technical assistance specialists and technical assistance managers.*

## Training

***Finding 9-3: Training on new adoption laws, policies, and regulations for ODJFS and county employees who work with adoption has been developed and provided by self-taught ODJFS adoption section employees with no outside guidance or support.***

In the past several years, adoption has been affected by three new federal laws (the ASFA of 1997, MEPA of 1994, and IEPA of 1996), one new state law (H.B. 484) and one new statewide program (AdoptOHIO). Adopting children to achieve permanency of placement is an important goal of these laws and initiatives, and it is imperative that staff who work in adoption programs have current, timely knowledge on specific changes in adoption law and policy in order to perform their jobs effectively.

Under current ODJFS procedures, certain employees involved in adoption services are responsible for reading and interpreting new legal guidelines on their own, in addition to other duties; it is also their duty to instruct ODJFS district employees responsible for adoption-related technical assistance. After these district personnel are trained, one district employee in each region then must train agencies in all 88 counties. However, these district staff receive only the training provided by the adoption services employee, which is itself based on the adoption services employee's own understanding of the new guidance; district trainers are rarely provided with any additional guidance or materials on the subject, or with any assistance from an outside professional. We do commend ODJFS on the development of its upcoming comprehensive one month training for all adoption employees, which was recently developed in conjunction with its training department. ODJFS is also

preparing a detailed training manual to be distributed to employees to provide structured guidance on policies and procedures.

However, with topics as complex as the MEPA/IEPA and H.B. 484, and by relying on a few adoption employees to procure and interpret legislation, ODJFS is increasing the risk that it will overlook, misinterpret, or incorrectly apply new federal and state mandates. ODJFS is also risking financial and/or legal penalties if they do not properly comply with federal or state laws.

***Recommendation 9-3: ODJFS should provide timely, consistent adoption training to ODJFS and county employees who work with adoption that includes specific job guidance, information on new federal and state regulations, and departmental policy updates.***

*This training program should be modified to address any new federal and state regulations that govern adoption. Training enhances the accuracy and consistency of adoption practices and responses to technical questions, as well as provides reference materials that are up-to-date. Training activities must be directly related to the Bureau's goals and objectives and may involve a variety of activities, including ODJFS in-house classes, outside professional seminars and conferences, training by professional consultants, other government training courses, self-study, and computer-based training.*

*A training plan is also essential to successful training. A training plan might consider*

- the communication of changes in adoption-related laws and regulations to those responsible for training;*
- a periodic review of the training curriculum to ensure that it remains current;*
- a list of annual training dates and locations;*
- a list of those employees and consultants responsible for providing training;*
- periodic analyses of ODJFS policy changes and how they affect adoption practices;*
- monitoring of technical assistance questions to ascertain whether those providing such assistance need additional training;*
- resources available on the preparation of a training curriculum and the frequency of updated training; and*
- the frequency and level of training curriculum review by supervisory personnel.*

*Financial Implication:*

The financial implication associated with providing adoption training courses to ODJFS' adoption personnel and appropriate county employees is estimated to be \$65,300 annually and \$101,800 in one-time costs. Calculation is as follows:

*Annual Training Costs:**Post-Adoption Services training for county employees and others (annual training costs)*

Total budget amount for vendor training contracts	\$ 607,255
Divided by number of total participant hours	<u>÷ 1,507</u>
Equals cost of providing training per hour	\$ 403
Divided by number of participants per workshop	<u>÷ 25</u>
Equals cost of training per contract hour	\$ 16
Multiplied by number of hours recommended per provider per year	<u>x 12</u>
Equals cost per participant per year	192
Multiplied by estimated number of providers	<u>x 300</u>
Equals total estimated cost of training	<u>\$ 57,600</u>

*Adoption trends and practices for ODJFS adoption employees (annual training costs)*

Total budget amount for vendor training contracts	\$ 607,255
Divided by number of total participant hours	<u>÷ 1,507</u>
Equals cost of providing training per hour	\$ 403
Divided by number of participants per workshop	<u>÷ 25</u>
Equals cost of training per contract hour	\$ 16
Multiplied by number of hours recommended per provider per year	<u>x 12</u>
Equals cost per participant per year	192
Multiplied by estimated number of providers	<u>x 40</u>
Equals total estimated cost of training	<u>\$ 7,700</u>

Total Annual Training Costs \$ 65,300

*One-time Training Costs:**Broad-based adoption training for ODJFS adoption employees (one-time training costs)*

<i>Total budget amount for vendor training contracts</i>	\$ 607,255
<i>Divided by number of total participant hours</i>	<u>÷ 1,507</u>
<i>Equals cost of providing training per hour</i>	\$ 403
<i>Divided by number of participants per workshop</i>	<u>÷ 25</u>
<i>Equals cost of training per contract hour</i>	\$ 16
<i>Multiplied by number of hours recommended per provider per year</i>	<u>x 24</u>
<i>Equals cost per participant per year</i>	384
<i>Multiplied by estimated number of providers</i>	<u>x 40</u>
<i>Equals total estimated cost of training</i>	<u>\$ 15,400</u>

*Post-Adoption Services training for county employees and others (one-time training costs)*

<i>Total budget amount for vendor training contracts</i>	\$ 607,255
<i>Divided by number of total participant hours</i>	<u>÷ 1,507</u>
<i>Equals cost of providing training per hour</i>	\$ 403
<i>Divided by number of participants per workshop</i>	<u>÷ 25</u>
<i>Equals cost of training per contract hour</i>	\$ 16
<i>Multiplied by number of hours recommended per provider per year</i>	<u>x 18</u>
<i>Equals cost per participant per year</i>	288
<i>Multiplied by estimated number of providers</i>	<u>x 300</u>
<i>Equals total estimated cost of training</i>	<u>\$ 86,400</u>

*Total One-Time Training Costs* \$101,800



*Monitoring - Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) Program*

***Finding 9-4: Spending for the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy program has exceeded budget, which has resulted in funding interruptions to counties and reduced services provided to special needs adopted children and their families.***

In July 1992, ODJFS implemented the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) program with an annual budget of \$3.7 million; this amount remained unchanged until state FY 2000. The fundamental goal of this state-funded, county-administered program was to prevent disruption to families with special-needs adopted children. By providing the adoptive family of a special-needs child with additional financial resources, it is believed that family emotional distress can be reduced or prevented. The primary service categories for which families can use PASSS include therapeutic residential treatment, outpatient mental health services, physical health care, and educational services; however, an adoptive parent must exhaust all other funding sources before applying for PASSS funds.

At the inception of the PASSS program, the state allocated PASSS funding to each county. This approach was not completely successful since some counties underutilized their allocated funds while other counties exceeded their allocation. Moreover, ODJFS placed the burden of tracking PASSS expenditures on the counties, which were expected to notify ODJFS when they had spent close to 100 percent of their allocation. In state FY 1997, to prevent funds from being underutilized, ODJFS supported the counties' requests for more money beyond their allocated amounts. Since the PASSS funds were only 70 percent utilized in state FY 1997, as well as in previous years, the funds were returned to the state's General Revenue Fund.

In the Spring of 1997, a workgroup consisting of ODJFS Adoption and Fiscal personnel was convened to develop an alternative way of providing PASSS funding to the counties. The workgroup submitted a recommendation that PASSS should be administered by the state and that the counties should submit their requests on ODJFS Form 2820 for reimbursement; this process was approved and remained in effect through March 2000. This process would allow counties that needed PASSS funds to request them on a first-come, first-served basis, as well as the counties utilizing most, if not all, of the PASSS funding; funding would no longer be based on an allocation formula.

However, ODJFS implemented this new PASSS process without adding a monitoring function; in addition, counties no longer had to report or track allocations, and adoption staff had no systemic mechanism in place to alert them when PASSS expenditures approached the total amount appropriated for funding. As a result, ODJFS placed a freeze on state FY 2000 PASSS funding in January 2000 once county requests exceeded the budget. This freeze forced counties to either continue PASSS services at their own cost or discontinue the services to the families of special needs adopted children.

In state FY 2000, the Adoption Section convened another committee of representatives, this time from public agencies, private agencies, and adoptive families, to review these PASSS program issues and the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rule, and to develop a framework for a more timely financial tracking system. To effectively monitor the PASSS program, the Adoption Section proposed revisions to OAC Rule Section 5101:2-44-071 based on the recommendations of the PASSS committee; these revisions were effective June 2000.

For state FY 2000, ODJFS requested that PASSS funding be increased to \$5.7 million in order to honor the numerous PASSS payment request applications from the counties. ODJFS also filed an emergency rule, effective March 6, 2000, that reduced the maximum annual amount of PASSS funding per child from \$20,000 to \$15,000 in order to increase the total number of PASSS recipients.

***Recommendation 9-4: ODJFS should add a monitoring and tracking function to their current Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy program expenditures process.***

*ODJFS should assign a person in the Adoption Section to perform this function. This person would be knowledgeable about PASSS, be able to accurately monitor and track PASSS expenditures, and be the liaison between the Office of Fiscal Services and the Adoption Section to obtain needed information regarding the PASSS program. In state FY 2001, ODJFS plans to hire a new full-time employee to develop an automated tracking system which would continually monitor and track PASSS program expenditures (See Recommendation 9-1).*

*Currently, no communication mechanism has been put in place between the Adoption Section and the Office of Fiscal Services to monitor PASSS expenditures. The Office for Children and Families has been making major changes to improve the PASSS program, but without proper communication and sharing of information between the two offices, it will be difficult to measure the results of the changes.*

*The Office for Children and Families is currently working with the Office of Management Information Systems to develop a system to capture and retain PASSS expenditure data. This data is currently being obtained from the Office of Fiscal Services in hard copy form and must be manually entered into a spreadsheet.*

## Financial Implication Summary

The following table represents a summary of the annual implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purposes of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed:

**Table 9-4 Summary of Financial Implications for Adoption Services**

Recommendation	Annual Implementation Costs	One-Time Implementation Cost
9-1: Estimated Staffing Increases - Hiring of eleven human services developers.	\$583,000	
9-1: Estimated Staffing Increases - Hiring of two unit managers.	120,000	
9-3: Annual training costs associated with adoption personnel and county employees.	65,300	
9-3: One-time training costs associated with adoption personnel and county employees.		\$101,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$768,300</b>	<b>\$101,800</b>

## Conclusion Statement

Adoption Services within ODJFS has continued to be redefined by recent legislation. Key among the adoption reform efforts are the federal ASFA, state House Bill 484, and the creation of the AdoptOHIO program. House Bill 484 is designed to modify Ohio's regulatory procedures to make them conform with provisions included within ASFA, and a major focus of the AdoptOHIO program is to address the ASFA provision requiring that the number of adoptions in Ohio double between federal FY 1998 and federal FY 2002. These changes, combined with related costs and services, continue to increase demands placed on Adoption Services personnel.

In addition to the increased responsibilities associated with these initiatives, ODJFS needs to provide additional appropriate staffing to address anticipated consent decree requirements for monitoring MEPA/IEPA compliance. To address staffing shortages, ODJFS should consider hiring eleven human services developers and two unit managers. As adoption needs change, ODJFS should develop a monitoring tool which enables them to continually reevaluate the adequacy of its staffing.

It will be important for ODJFS to be a leader in providing value-added services to its customers. As a leader, ODJFS must develop a training plan and maintain regular training on current laws and procedures in order for Adoption Section personnel to keep current on their job duties. This training would also benefit adoption personnel at the public and private placing agencies and would better ensure compliance with ODJFS adoption policies.

It is vital that accurate, reliable technical assistance be provided to PCSAs as well as private placing agencies in order for policies and procedures to be applied in a consistent manner. The Adoption Section has not followed the standard ODJFS technical assistance procedures intended for child welfare in that they are providing the technical assistance themselves as opposed to utilizing ODJFS' technical assistance specialists and managers. The Adoption Section should utilize the technical assistance personnel to lessen their job burdens as well as increase the possibility of agencies consistently and appropriately applying technical guidance.

Recently, the PASSS program has received significant attention and scrutiny, much of it negative. Expenditures have exceeded budget, and funds were then frozen so that some families did not receive the services needed for their special needs adopted child. ODJFS should monitor and track PASSS expenditures in order to provide funds for needed services and should continue to analyze the adequacy of its current funding formula while seeking alternatives to that formula. Moreover, any monitoring system that ODJFS puts in place should be designed to allow Adoption Section personnel to identify patterns and funding issues prior to the disbursement of all PASSS funds.

**CHILD PROTECTION OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION  
QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**



---

# **Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation Quality Assurance System**

---

## **Background**

### *Overview*

The Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) quality assurance system is ODJFS' method of accumulating data and calculating percentages for the purpose of measuring and improving child protection, permanency, and reunification services provided by Ohio's county Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs). The CPOE process is accomplished through a cooperative relationship between ODJFS and the PCSAs. The Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS) is the automated information source from which the outcome indicators are derived. ODJFS uses these outcome indicators to measure the PCSA's performance relative to their own historical performance and those of other counties with similar population sizes.

CPOE began as the result of a class-action lawsuit—*Roe v. Staples*—filed against the Department in 1983. The plaintiff alleged that the Department failed to properly monitor the Hamilton County Department of Human Services' compliance with the provisions of Public Law 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980. In 1986, the Department entered into a consent decree as a result of the lawsuit. Through the consent decree settlement, ODJFS committed to comply with a set of conditions pertaining to issuing administrative rules, monitoring and assessing the children protective services system, and developing a statewide needs assessment.

Initially, the Department's review of the PCSAs consisted of monitoring compliance with applicable state and federal laws. In July 1997, the Department implemented the current CPOE review process, which is designed to focus on key deliverables and essential client outcomes within a continuous quality improvement framework.

Every 18 months, ODJFS participates in a joint review with each PCSA on the reported outcome indicators for that particular county. During the review, a sample of the PCSA's case records is analyzed, and a hypothesis is developed for each indicator that attempts to explain the data contained in each case. The information from the analysis and verified hypotheses is used by the county to develop a quality improvement plan (QIP). ODJFS' Office of County Operations' regional office personnel are responsible for approving and ensuring the QIP is implemented by the PCSA, as well as for providing ongoing assistance to the PCSA throughout the CPOE cycle. After on-site activities have been completed, the CPOE coordinator distributes the final stage report, with the results of the review, to each respective county.

## *Governing Rules and Regulations*

### *Public Law 96-272*

Public Law 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, stresses the need for permanency for children in foster care and the importance of permanency planning and timely decision making for these children. This law mandates increased protection for children in foster care by requiring a written case plan be created for each child; the plan must include a description of the child's placement and its appropriateness, as well as a plan for services to facilitate the child's return to home or to another permanent placement.

Public Law 96-272 requires the following data be gathered:

- an inventory/demographic data for all children in placement;
- the custody status of children in substitute care;
- placement goals for all children;
- a case review system;
- a case plan listing services planned or provided;
- a statewide information system;
- permanent planning;
- preplacement preventative services;
- a reasonable-efforts statement concerning efforts to avoid substitute care; and
- monitoring of the county children services board or County Department of Job and Family Services which would provide services to the children in a particular county

### *Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Section 203*

ASFA requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop, in collaboration with states, a set of outcome measures that can be used to assess states' performance regarding child protection and child welfare programs. In August 1999, HHS published Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Section 203, which is the most current list of child welfare outcomes and measures that will be used to assess a state's performance.

### *Pending Changes to Federal Monitoring Procedures*

The Social Security Amendments of 1994 mandated changes in federal monitoring procedures for state child and family service programs funded under titles IV-B and IV-E. More recently, HHS commissioned a team to redesign and restructure the federal monitoring process, and in January 2000 it issued proposed changes within the federal regulations. HHS is planning to shift from the traditional rules-based reviews to increased focus on outcome reviews. Section 45 CFR 1355 provides detailed descriptions of the federal review procedures and the corresponding expectations to be implemented by the states.



The proposed model developed by HHS is very similar to the current requirements contained within ODJFS' CPOE framework document. Some of the more common similarities include

- C required site visits;
- C interviews with process shareholders to generate high-quality outcome indicators;
- C technical assistance to service providers;
- C needs assessment reviews; and
- C the development of quality improvement plans.

At this point, the changes in federal regulations are general in nature, though HHS is expected to release a final set of specific outcome indicators in calendar year 2000.

#### *Roe v. Staples Consent Decree*

A few of the key provisions contained within the consent decree include

- C *Monitoring* - ODJFS is required to perform on-site monitoring of the PCSAs at least once every eighteen months. ODJFS' monitoring activities consist primarily of performing a review and analysis of six core and 10 optional outcome indicators, and the results are included within stage reports issued to the PCSA. The six core outcome indicators reviewed at each PCSA's CPOE engagement are linked to child safety and permanency outcomes, as outlined in the following table.

**Table 10-1: Core Outcome Indicators Reviewed by ODJFS**

<b>Outcome Indicator</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Emergency incident assessments initiated within one hour of acceptance of report.	To calculate and assess the percentage of all emergency incidents in a given six month time frame that had an assessment initiated and those whose assessment was initiated within one hour.
Receipt of subsequent child abuse and neglect report with case resolution or disposition.	To examine the extent of repeat case resolutions or dispositions for child abuse or neglect reports on six month cohorts <sup>1</sup> of children.
Proportion of child abuse and neglect report cases in which children are removed from their homes.	To indicate the percentage of children who were not able to remain in their current environment due to a report for investigation.
Number of days a child remains in out-of-home placement.	To illustrate the length of stay for children who enter an out-of-home placement.

<sup>1</sup> "Cohorts" is defined as children with similar characteristics or needs.

Number of moves a child experiences in an out-of-home placement episode.	To determine the number of moves that children experience in an out-of-home care placement episode.
Length of time between the date of permanent custody and the date of adoptive placement agreement.	To examine the length of time between a child's entering permanent custody <sup>2</sup> to its being placed in an adoptive home.

The purpose of these county reviews is to determine whether the PCSA is in compliance with the provisions of Public Law 96-272. Additionally, ODJFS reviews some of the optional outcome indicators or conducts extensive discretionary reviews on a selected topic.

*C Periodic Needs Assessment* - The consent decree also requires the Department to develop and implement a method for completing a statewide needs assessment once every three years. (A private contractor conducted the most recent needs assessment in November 1998.) The needs assessment is designed to

- determine the services needed to prevent a child's removal from their home and promote reunification with their family;
- determine if these services were provided;
- identify whether these services were sufficient and available;
- provide a listing of unmet service needs;
- identify the barriers to delivering these services; and
- describe the demographic characteristics of the client population

A few procedures employed in the most recent needs assessment included

- C case readings of approximately 1,000 children in foster care for less than 12 months, to describe client demographics,
- C characteristics of the foster care children and services received;
- C interviews with and questionnaires received from parents, caseworkers, service providers, and children to determine the child's needs; and
- C surveys of services available.

---

<sup>2</sup> Permanent custody is when the child has officially been removed from the home of the parent or guardian.

*Ohio Administrative Code*

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Section 5101:2-57-02, which was created due to the consent decree, outlines the requirements for the oversight and evaluation system. According to the Section:

- C ODJFS and the PCSA shall engage in systematic and focused problem-solving activities as they analyze data to determine achievement of outcomes;
- ODJFS, in collaboration with the PCSA, shall conduct at least one on-site structured quality assurance review of the PCSA child protection and permanency program and data measures every eighteen months;
  - ODJFS shall provide on-site technical assistance as part of its ongoing evaluation and quality assurance review; and
  - ODJFS shall monitor PCSA implementation of the quality improvement plan.

*Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation Framework Document*

In 1999, the CPOE coordinator developed the CPOE Framework Document, which serves as a guideline for ODJFS personnel performing CPOE reviews. The document sets out requirements for

- an overview of 18-month on-site review activities;
- a description of the activities preceding the on-site review;
- procedures for data backup and sampling;
- specific information pertaining to on-site review activities;
- specific information about activities following the on-site review; and
- the format and template for the CPOE on-site stage report.

Prior to the development of this document, there were no written policies and procedures for the CPOE review. The participants based their reports on what information they surmised they needed to obtain, and the reports were written however the author saw fit.

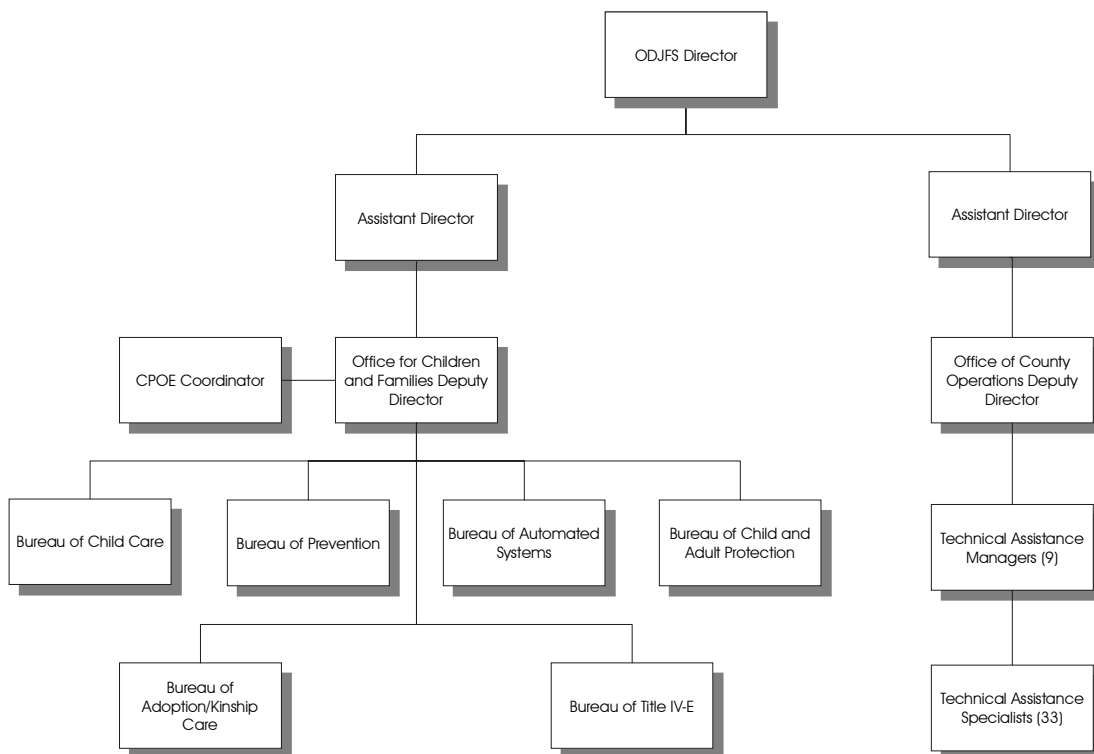
The CPOE Framework Document, however, is far more explicit about the expected results of the CPOE process; the report now must

- provide PCSAs with documentation resulting from the review process for use in local planning and quality assurance activities; and
- inform ODJFS administrators on child protection services and practices for use in statewide program planning, policy development, and addressing system-wide technical assistance needs.

*Organizational Staffing and Function*

CPOE is currently under the direction of a temporary CPOE Coordinator until a permanent position is filled within the Office for Children and Families.

**Chart 10-1: CPOE Organizational Chart**



Source: May 2000 ODJFS Table of Organization

Child welfare technical assistance staff from the Office of County Operations perform the CPOE on-site reviews and provide technical assistance to the PCSAs in their particular region. Four of the nine Technical Assistance Managers (TAMs) and 14 of the 33 Technical Assistance Specialists (TASs) focus exclusively on child welfare system duties and work with PCSA staff to accomplish CPOE objectives; two of the TAMs work with both child welfare and public assistance issues. The remaining TAMs and TASs focus exclusively on public assistance technical issues and do not perform CPOE duties.

TASs generally review the PCSA outcome indicators and perform the discretionary reviews. The TAMs are responsible for reviewing the information that is gathered by the TASs and reporting the results to the PCSAs.

Several areas within the Office for Children and Families play a role in the CPOE process:

- the Bureau of Automated Systems is responsible for managing the FACSIS, which processes the PCSAs' data and calculates the outcome indicators for the CPOE reports.
- personnel within the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection use information gathered during the CPOE review to conduct county comparisons in order to make policy decisions about foster care issues.
- the CPOE Coordinator schedules PCSA entrance conferences, arranges and facilitates meetings to update the TAMs and TASs on current and subsequent stage cycles, and distributes the final CPOE review reports to the PCSAs.

Other bureaus within Office of Children and Families include Prevention, Adoption/Kinship Care, Child Care, and Title IV-E Administration. While these bureaus all provide services to children, the integration of CPOE into the activities of these bureaus has yet to occur.

#### *Court-Appointed Expert Panel*

In 1991, the U.S. District Court appointed an expert panel to assist the Department in complying with the *Roe v. Staples* consent decree. The panel's membership consists of three individuals with expertise in the areas of program design and development, research, and child welfare administration.

The panel was assembled in response to a joint request made by the plaintiff and defendant that the court appoint an expert panel of consultants to provide advice and assistance. The panel would evaluate and provide status updates on the Department's quality assurance system in order to determine whether the system complied with the consent decree. The panel would also advise the Department on the development and implementation of a permanent, comprehensive plan for the quality assurance system. The plan would incorporate the needs assessment and monitoring functions described in the consent decree into a comprehensive, efficient, and effective system integrated with sound child welfare practices at the service delivery level. The Panel was authorized to review issues necessary to achieve an effective and comprehensive solution that was consistent with the consent decree.

The existence of the panel would be limited; the panel would be advisory in scope and would serve until the permanent, comprehensive plan to monitor PCSA compliance and conduct the needs assessment had been implemented. The panel chairperson would decide when the Department had fully applied the terms of the consent decree to its CPOE process.

On February 14, 2000, the panel issued a progress report on the extent to which the Department had complied with the *Roe v. Staples* consent decree. In the process of conducting this progress review, the panel attempted to gather qualitative and quantitative data from numerous sources. Two of the desired outcomes of the panel's progress review were to determine the level of Departmental compliance with the consent decree and analyze the degree to which the current outcome measures provide adequate statewide information for preplacement preventive and reunification services.

To conduct this review, the panel had to

- develop detailed interpretations of the intent of the consent decree's requirements and assess the level of ODJFS' compliance with these requirements;
- perform extensive reviews of the outcome indicators and assess whether these have been adequately designed to meet the objectives of the consent decree;
- conduct numerous meetings and site visits to discuss the CPOE framework with the CPOE Coordinator and ODJFS personnel responsible for providing CPOE technical assistance;
- review a sample of CPOE county (stage) reports and quality improvement plans to determine the level of quality assurance;
- initiate a discussion forum with the county executive directors and administrators; and
- issue a written survey to each of the counties.

The panel acknowledges that significant work by ODJFS has resulted in successful achievements thus far. With respect to monitoring, it is the panel's belief that the concept and design of CPOE sufficiently address both the requirements and intent of the consent decree. However, the panel stated that "CPOE does not adequately provide a substitute method for complying with the consent decree... and specific refinement related to implementation remains necessary for a judgement of full compliance to be reached concerning monitoring requirements set forth in the decree. ODJFS is out of compliance with respect to the needs assessment, specifically with respect to the requirement associated with identifying unmet need." The panel's intention now is to focus its attention on the development of a permanent plan and to ensure satisfactory compliance with the needs assessment approach.

### *Expenditures*

Total CPOE expenditures in state FY 1999, including the cost of ODJFS personnel involved in the CPOE process, were approximately \$1.7 million. This includes panel-incurred expenses of \$85,000, as well as the following salaries: Technical Assistance Managers, \$460,000; Technical Assistance Specialists, \$1,050,000; and the CPOE coordinator, \$75,000. These salaries also include payroll expenditures for tasks other than CPOE; however, an analysis of hours spent on the various duties was not available. The needs assessment performed by an outside consultant every third year is an additional CPOE-related expense not exceeding \$100,000. CPOE is not a revenue-generating process; thus the above expenditures are supported by state appropriations.

## Processes and Recommendations

The following are areas of focus for the Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation section:

- Leadership and Direction;
- Staffing, including
  - CPOE Management and
  - Technical Assistant Specialists;
- Training, including
  - Internal Training for CPOE Personnel and
  - County Self-Monitoring;
- Needs Assessment;
- Data Validation;
- Outcome Indicators.

### *Leadership and Direction*

***Finding 10-1: The lack of consistent leadership and financial commitment are key factors which have inhibited CPOE from becoming an integral part of the child welfare system.***

It appears that the Department has strived only to meet the minimum requirements of the CPOE consent decree, its actions being reactionary to panel concerns rather than active in integrating CPOE into the overall child welfare system framework. Clearly the CPOE system has provided, and can continue to provide, numerous benefits over the previous monitoring system. A few of the potential recognizable benefits identified in the Panel's progress report indicate that a fully-functional CPOE process can

- better target problem areas;
- analyze the reasons for findings;
- identify barriers impeding effective service delivery;
- provide a less intrusive mechanism to participants in the process;
- measure and evaluate outcomes on a continuous basis; and
- alert PCSA staff to the importance of entering data in a timely and accurate manner.

Without the proper direction and financial commitment by ODJFS, the CPOE process may not fully realize the potential benefits available to its users. CPOE has the potential to meet and even exceed the requirements of the consent decree; by doing so, it can become a vital management tool in policy development, planning, decision making, and resource allocation at the state and local levels. CPOE implementation is, in reality, only in its infancy at ODJFS; the Department's senior management needs to critically evaluate how to integrate this tool into all areas of the child welfare system.

Although CPOE may be seen as an improved monitoring process, county concerns over the future direction of CPOE were emphasized in the results of a survey conducted by the panel in September 1999. The results indicated that ODJFS now produces some worthwhile processes and reports to assist the counties; however, the counties share a common concern about the true nature of the Department's ongoing dedication to serve the counties when the terms of the decree have finally been met.

CPOE is naturally driven by its participants and their willingness to develop and mature within the system. The level of county involvement and commitment will deteriorate if the counties continue to believe the CPOE process is a temporary aspect of their job that will disappear in a few years once the decree is lifted. The future of CPOE will be driven by the ODJFS' financial and leadership commitment to the process.

***Recommendation 10-1: ODJFS should take a leadership role in developing and implementing the CPOE process into all aspects of the child welfare system.***

*Rather than basing its commitment to CPOE on the panel's review and approval process, ODJFS must proactively develop an information and evaluation system that provides reliable, timely, and consistent information—one that is continually evolving to meet the needs of its users.*

*ODJFS should develop a strategic plan with clearly defined goals, objectives, and timetables which will be monitored on an ongoing basis. To enable the CPOE process to achieve its full potential, ODJFS must first decide upon the appropriate staffing and organizational structure that would integrate the CPOE process with other ODJFS functions. (See below, under Staffing, for further information.)*

*After the proper organizational structure is established, ODJFS should focus on fine-tuning the current processes and outcome measures. Once an established model for review and reporting is implemented, ODJFS should expand CPOE reviews to encompass all aspects of the child welfare system (Prevention, Foster Care, Child Care, Adoption/Kinship Care, Independent Living, Protection, Title IV-E).*

*Information reporting for CPOE is derived from data contained within the FACSIS, which is maintained by the Bureau of Automated Systems. CPOE administration must form a strong partnership with this bureau to assist it in enhancing current and future monitoring capabilities. The consistency and accuracy of reported information are critical to this process. (See below, under Data Validation, for further information). In addition, the bureau should be involved in integrating CPOE within the design and development of the new FACSIS 4.0 model, and of SACWIS and other relational databases.*



*ODJFS should establish a CPOE committee to ensure CPOE develops into a fully integrated process which is flexible to meet the ongoing needs of its users. Currently, a “Mega Team” is in place and functions in a capacity similar to a CPOE steering committee. This team addresses issues such as future CPOE cycle reviews, adequacy of core indicators, and discretionary review topics for ODJFS consideration. This “Mega Team” would serve as a good starting point for the development of a CPOE committee. ODJFS will need to serve as leader of this committee and should consider establishing meetings on a bimonthly basis or as needed.*

*Members of this committee should include, at a minimum, the Deputy Director of the Office for Children and Families; the Deputy Director of the Office of County Operations; the CPOE Coordinator; the CPOE Assistant Coordinator (See our comment on Staffing-CPOE Management, below); representatives of the Technical Assistance Managers and Technical Assistance Specialists; and representatives from various sizes of counties (metro, large, medium, and small) responsible for CPOE activities.*

## **Staffing**

### *CPOE Management*

***Finding 10-2: ODJFS has not employed a full-time CPOE Coordinator, and until recently, ODJFS had not taken the initiative to immediately replace the Coordinator position, which was vacant for six months.***

According to the panel, inadequate staffing is one of the principal barriers preventing CPOE from becoming truly instrumental in initiating child welfare reform. More specifically, “the CPOE quality assurance system requires additional resources to implement the operational framework created to guide child welfare quality assurance,” according to the panel.

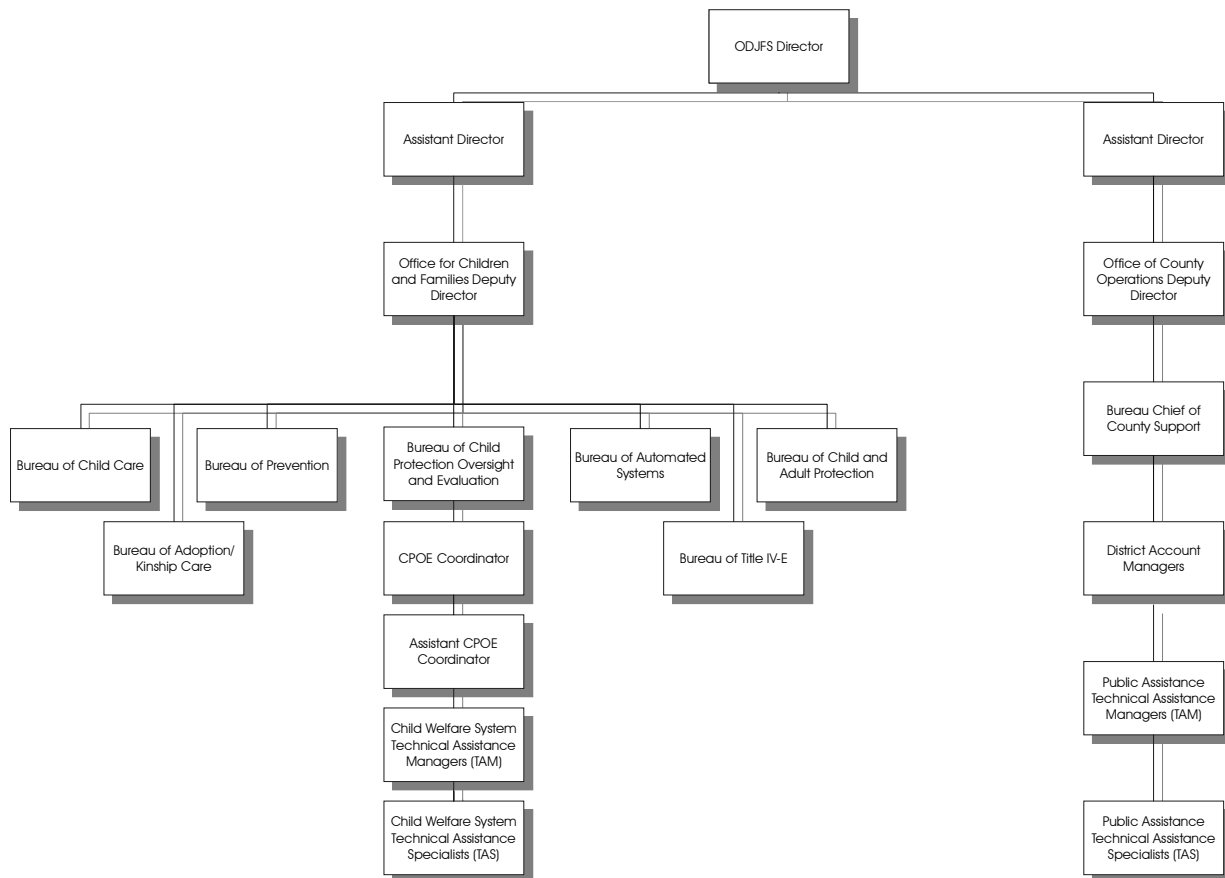
The current organizational structure of the CPOE process at ODJFS further complicates the effective and efficient delivery of services and results in a lack of ownership and control over the CPOE process. Within the next year, the panel would like to see the implementation of a permanent plan for CPOE. The permanent plan would be used to properly design the organizational structure to administer the plan.

A full-time CPOE Coordinator is necessary to establish the CPOE’s mission and lead the effort. The ODJFS Fiscal Analyst is the current Acting Coordinator, and will remain in that position until a replacement is selected. However, a limited, part-time CPOE Coordinator is unable to effectively

address the needs of the CPOE system and its users.

To provide structure and control over the CPOE process, Chart 10-2 illustrates a proposed ODJFS organizational chart for CPOE.

**Chart 10-2: Proposed CPOE Organizational Chart**



Significant changes between the current staffing (Chart 10-1) and the proposed CPOE organization (Chart 10-2) include the establishment of a Bureau of CPOE with a full-time Bureau Chief of CPOE (currently, the CPOE Coordinator) and a CPOE Assistant Coordinator within the Office for Children and Families.

Another major shift involves reassigning certain Technical Assistant Managers and Technical Assistant Specialists to service the Bureau of CPOE. Establishing a separate Bureau of CPOE within the Office of Children and Families will create a structured reporting hierarchy on CPOE matters for the TAMs and TASs that currently service the child welfare system. Realigning the TAMs and TASs would provide better continuity of service to children. This realignment would make the CPOE

organizational structure similar to the structure already in place for Child Care Licensing within the Office of Children and Families.

In general, the TAMs and TASs are divided into two separate service support functions: the child welfare system and public assistance. In practice, the TAMs and TASs with the child welfare system designation administer to the needs of children and CPOE matters, while the remaining TAMs and TASs provide public assistance service to the adult population. We will focus here on the former.

In its report, the panel also echoed a need to provide technical assistance. The Panel “found little to no indication that technical assistance is requested of the district office staff by PCSAs. In cases where technical assistance was requested, there is no indication that the district office would provide the support.”

***Recommendation 10-2: ODJFS should hire a full time CPOE Bureau Chief (a CPOE Coordinator) and a full time CPOE Assistant Coordinator to properly administer the CPOE process.***

*Assessing, identifying and communicating the future needs of CPOE users will be essential to achieving the desired success of the CPOE process. The CPOE Coordinator should, at a minimum,*

- *have an extensive knowledge of the state and local components of the child welfare system;*
- *develop excellent lines of communication with key process shareholders;*
- *have strong information technology skills;*
- *exhibit a strong sense of leadership and direction for a CPOE committee which is comprised of various users and key stakeholders in order to enact timely process improvements;*
- *maintain continuous communication with the Bureau Chiefs and other personnel within the Office for Children and Families to assist in the development of key outcome indicators and issues which may impact policy decisions; and*
- *develop working relationships with the FACSIS-related personnel to assist in tailoring current and future information needs requirements.*

*Hiring a full-time CPOE Assistant Coordinator is also essential to the CPOE’s success. Responsibilities the CPOE Assistant Coordinator could assume include*

- *resolving issues related to statewide technical matters;*
- *providing a coordinated effort and direction on CPOE matters for TAMs and TASs;*

- *developing increased lines of communication between child welfare system policy makers in the Office for Children and Families and county personnel;*
- *creating a centralized oversight function to review county CPOE reports for consistency;*
- *establishing an internal framework for conducting CPOE reviews which is compliant with any applicable laws and regulations; and*
- *providing annual training and ongoing technical assistance to the counties on the uses and benefits to be realized by CPOE. (See our discussion, below, on Training and Technical Assistance Provided to Counties.)*

*The CPOE Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator should both be involved in the informal TAM meetings with key Office of Children and Families personnel. Since these meetings only occur once a month, it may be beneficial for the CPOE Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator to also participate in the weekly Office of Children and Families Council meetings. Increased involvement with the TAMs, TASs, county personnel, and members of Office of Children and Families Council will improve the level of communication and integration of CPOE into the child welfare system.*

*Financial Implications:*

*Table 10-2 and Table 10-3 estimate the total annual cost for acquiring a Bureau Chief for CPOE (CPOE Coordinator) and a CPOE Assistant Coordinator:*

**Table 10-2: Annual Financial Implications of Hiring a Bureau Chief for CPOE**

<b>Beginning Annual Rate<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Benefits<sup>2</sup> Employer's Share</b>	<b>Total Estimated Annual Cost</b>
<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>\$91,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Bureau Chief, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

**Table 10-3: Annual Financial Implications of Hiring a CPOE Assistant Coordinator**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits <sup>2</sup> Employer's Share	Total Estimated Annual Cost
\$65,000	30%	\$85,000

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Account Manager, January 5, 2000.  
2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

### Technical Assistant Specialists

***Finding 10-3: There has been a steady decline in the staffing levels of child welfare system TAS positions—those responsible for CPOE duties—without corresponding replacements.***

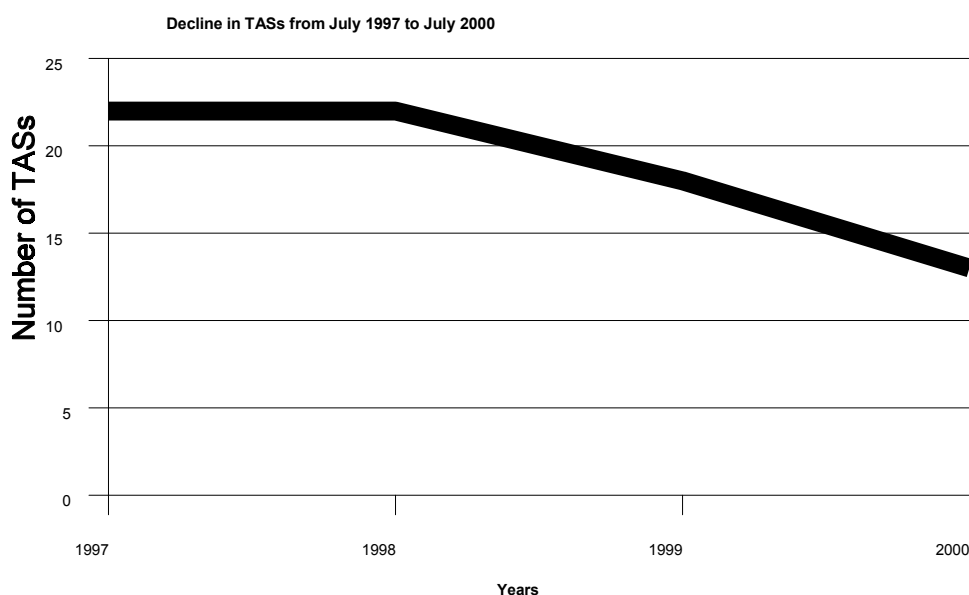
The TAS is an integral part of the CPOE review process. The TAS is the initial point of contact for the PCSAs and the primary resource for information gathering. The TAS exercises significant judgment in determining areas in need of further review and the extent of information needed to effectively solve a problem. The procedures performed during these reviews often vary based on a TAS's professional judgment and experience. The results of the research and analysis that a TAS performs are included in the county report with the corresponding recommendations for change, along with the county quality improvement plan (QIP).

The issuance of timely county reports is a defined measure within the CPOE framework; however, equal importance and emphasis should be placed on the quality and depth of the review performed. The panel performed sample reviews of the county CPOE (stage) reports and made the following observations regarding the quality and timeliness of the ODJFS reviews.

- 95 percent of the county stage reports and quality improvement plans appeared superficial; they showed limited creativity in finding solutions to improving operational, systemic, and service delivery issues.
- Quality improvement plans appeared to be brief, simplistic, and overly general in nature, and presented limited challenges to the counties to change practices and processes to produce improved outcomes for children and families.
- Inconsistencies in documentation, including the dates of site visits, stage reports, and exit conferences, made it difficult to determine whether the ODJFS reviews were conducted in a timely manner.

The panel's report further stated that, "ODJFS must hire and/or train staff to provide quality technical assistance and data support to the counties." Quality and timeliness can be attributable to many factors, including organizational structure, adequacy of data available, and training; however, inadequacy of staffing can also affect compliance with set time lines. Further analysis indicates a steady decline in the staffing levels of child welfare system TAS positions—those responsible for CPOE duties—without corresponding replacements. Decreased staffing levels, illustrated in Chart 10-3, is a contributing factor in the quality and timeliness of CPOE reports issued to counties.

**Chart 10-3: Staffing Levels for the Child Welfare System TAS Positions has Decreased Nearly 35 Percent in the Last 3 Years**



Sources: ODJFS organizational tables, interviews with ODJFS personnel

Currently, CPOE is only a part of TAS responsibilities, and the position description form makes it difficult to assess the TASs' actual time spent on CPOE duties. As a result, we surveyed TASs to determine the average percentage of time they spent on CPOE-related tasks. The results of our survey indicated that TASs devoted about 45 percent of their workload, on average, to CPOE-related tasks. According to ODJFS personnel, that average should only be about one-third; however, inadequate staffing has resulted in increased time spent on CPOE activities. Travel time and the continued development of the CPOE process will only increase the demand and requirements placed on TASs in the future.

We calculated TAS staffing levels required to perform necessary functions. For our calculations, we assumed that

- county reviews are conducted for all 88 counties;
- county review times averaged about 285 hours (based on our survey results, above);
- county reviews must be completed in 18 months (based on the consent decree requirements);
- approximately 40 percent of a child welfare TASs' workload is devoted to CPOE reviews (based on our survey and ODJFS input); and
- TASs currently number 14.

We also adjusted the period for CPOE reviews to 12 months (an annual basis) in order to calculate proper staffing levels (12 months / 18 months = 67 percent). We also rounded some figures for ease of calculation, as follows:

88 counties  
x 285 hours per review  
 25,000 total hours (18 months)  
x 67 % annualizing factor  
 16,750 total hours (12 months)

2,080 annual hours per employee  
x 40% CPOE time  
 850 annual CPOE hours per employee

16,750 total hours / 850 hours per employee = 20 TASs projected

20 TASs projected  
- 14 TASs actual  
 6 additional TASs needed

***Recommendation 10-3: ODJFS should maintain adequate TAS staffing levels in order to complete county CPOE reviews within the required 18 month periods of review. To accomplish this, ODJFS should hire an additional six child welfare TASs to improve the quality and timeliness of county CPOE reviews. ODJFS should also implement a process to analyze and monitor the timeliness of review procedures to improve the efficiency of county reviews.***

*ODJFS should allocate the new child welfare TAS positions throughout the state based on the greatest areas of need, considering factors such as county size, workload, and review cycle time (18 months). Currently, an informal pooling approach is used to assist in areas most in need of a timely review; ODJFS should consider incorporating a similar procedure into their review scheduling.*

*ODJFS should develop a standard planning document format to be used in all county reviews. Prior to starting fieldwork, the planning document should be completed by the TAS and approved by the TAM. A planning document should help to provide direction and structure to each county review.*

*Also, a standard budget and time analysis should be developed and monitored throughout the engagement. This will serve as a good monitoring tool for ODJFS management in identifying the status of an engagement at any point in time, as well as identifying areas to improve upon in future reviews. For instance, travel time would likely be a large item in the budget; ODJFS could analyze factors impacting travel and adjust accordingly. Efficiencies may also be realized by assigning TASs to repeat county review engagements. This would reduce the amount of time spent trying to understand an individual county's system and controls; TASs could then better spend their time on in-depth review procedures and technical assistance.*

*Reallocation of the TAMs and TASs will require close collaboration between the Office for Children and Families and the Office of County Operations. Employee skills and background should be considered to determine which employees are best suited to meet the needs of the child and adult populations served.*

*Increased staffing will be geared to meeting current demands of CPOE; however, ODJFS should reevaluate the adequacy of staffing as it expands into other areas of the child welfare system. ODJFS may want to establish a staffing benchmark level (such as maintaining a ratio of 40 percent of the TASs hours for CPOE reviews) which it would then monitor continuously.*

*Financial Implications:*

*Table 10-4 estimates the total annual cost for acquiring six child welfare system Technical Assistant Specialists:*

**Table 10-4: Annual Costs of Hiring Six Technical Assistance Specialists**

<b>Beginning Annual Rate<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Benefits<sup>2</sup> Employer's Share</b>	<b>Total Annual Cost</b>
<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>
<b>Number of Additional Employees to be Hired:</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Total Estimated Annual Cost:</b>		<b>\$390,000</b>

Sources: 1 Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Human Services Specialist 3, January 5, 2000.

2 PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.



## **Training**

### *Internal Training for CPOE Personnel*

***Finding 10-4: Many of the CPOE weaknesses reported by the panel appear to result from issues which can be corrected with an effective training program and proper organizational structure.***

Training employees is a process employers use to promote the development of skills necessary to meet and maintain the professional demands placed on their employees. The training process is intended to develop employee skills to adequately address the demands of normal daily operations and provide opportunities for further professional growth and development. ODJFS has no formalized CPOE training curriculum or policy in place that would include a comprehensive training program that addresses all aspects of CPOE for the TASs and TAMs who carry out the CPOE process.

The duties associated with administering the CPOE process range from providing technical assistance to conducting regularly scheduled site visit reviews of counties in which the TASs and TAMs evaluate, assess, recommend, and resolve performance problems that impact county operational effectiveness. County reviews are usually summarized in a report that also includes a county-prepared quality improvement plan (QIP) that addresses report comments.

The 88 county reviews are currently divided among six TAMs, and in the absence of a centralized control function, practice and reporting results vary. The panel reported several weaknesses in these reviews during their inspections of the county reports and the QIP responses. Panel comments focused on

- the reviews' lack of consistency with ODJFS regional procedures and reporting guidance;
- limited hypothesis-setting when indicator data results were substantiated;
- a lack of creativity, substance, or analysis in developing solutions to barriers that impact effective service delivery;
- vague QIPs that did not create process improvements; and
- little indication that either counties or district staff dig deeper than the surface for explanations to problems they find.

***Recommendation 10-4: ODJFS should provide a professional development training program for personnel involved with the CPOE process to ensure that they meet the demands of their job duties and have opportunities for further growth and development.***

*ODJFS should develop a training policy and a curriculum of training needs for the CPOE Coordinator, CPOE Assistant Coordinator, TAMs, and TASs. Training should be appropriately tailored to include both general and level-specific courses. ODJFS should identify training needs on an ongoing basis by using various sources, such as employee performance evaluations, customer needs surveys, and external CPOE reviews (by the panel). Based on the most recent panel review and on other issues discussed throughout the report, courses that might be offered include*

- problem-solving and data gathering techniques;*
- report writing skills;*
- comprehensive quality improvement plans;*
- FACSIS reporting procedures and options;*
- effective outcome measures;*
- structure and consistency in a decentralized environment;*
- new employee orientation training; and*
- developing an effective best practices manual.*

*As improvements are made in the types of data collected and analyzed, it will become increasingly important for CPOE personnel to be adequately trained to be able to properly inform the counties of CPOE developments. Continual training will be essential for increasing client confidence in the CPOE process and establishing ODJFS as a value-added service provider. It will be important for the TAMs and TASs to be continually updated in all areas of child welfare, since the role of TAMs' and TASs' will continue to evolve into that of a business advisor.*

*The training program should be evaluated continually to keep it updated on emerging issues and modified accordingly. Once a training process has been established, management should also develop a method of monitoring to ensure each employee receives the appropriate amount and type of training. We estimated that each employee should receive between 40 to 60 hours of training annually.*

*A cost-effective training option would be to consider two- or three-day seminars semiannually to cover a broad range of needs for all TAMs and TASs. For instance, when ODJFS began the CPOE process, a two-day retreat for TAMs and TASs was conducted with an outside consultant on issues such as self-assessments, roles of advisors, and benchmarking.*

#### *Financial Implications:*

*The Bureau of CPOE will need to coordinate with ODJFS' Office of Professional Development and Quality Services when arranging any consulting or training courses. Based on the prior consulting contract (which allows for consultant fees,*

*overnight lodging and inflationary costs) and other specialized training courses, it is estimated the annual training cost should be approximately \$20,000.*

### *County Self-Monitoring*

***Finding 10-5: The counties want more involvement and control over CPOE-related data and reporting.***

In a recent panel survey, PCSA directors communicated the need for certain CPOE services from ODJFS.

- ODJFS should be reporting data more frequently to counties, and should be using more current data.
- ODJFS should make it possible for counties to generate their own reports.
- CPOE report data should be more useful to counties.

An ODJFS goal should be to enable counties, through training and technological advancements, to increase their role in the ownership, generation, reporting, and detailed monitoring of CPOE data. Shifting certain monitoring responsibilities to the county level would enable ODJFS to focus more of its attention on value-added technical assistance.

***Recommendation 10-5: ODJFS should provide the counties with read-only access rights to CPOE information. Also, ODJFS should increase the training provided to county personnel on the capabilities of the CPOE system to enable the counties to perform ongoing self-monitoring.***

*Read-only access will enable the counties to internally monitor CPOE data on a “real-time” basis, which can be useful in day-to-day decision making, resource allocation, and planning. ODJFS would enable the counties to independently develop data expectations and perform enhanced data analysis by making this management tool available. In turn, the counties would develop a more favorable environment of control, which may reduce the extent of ODJFS testing and data gathering required for site visits.*

*Additional computer training for the counties will be critical to increasing the counties’ understanding and use of information systems and capabilities. Counties have long awaited an opportunity to generate their own reports; the degree of their creative analysis should increase once they accept this function as a viable management tool.*

*ODJFS and the counties will both benefit from this process change. ODJFS should be able to reduce the time it requires for county CPOE reviews, focusing more of its attention on providing customer service to the counties. Additionally, counties could increase their data monitoring, provide more useful analysis on outcome measures, and receive more technical assistance from ODJFS. Disseminating this information to the counties will also serve to better support the overall goals of CPOE, such as evaluating the levels of child placement prevention and reunification.*

*ODJFS will need to take a leadership role in providing counties with training and technical assistance to monitor and ensure the success of the CPOE process. A shift in monitoring responsibilities to the county level will require ODJFS to*

- assess current hardware and software capabilities at the county level;*
- provide funding for hardware and software upgrades and installation, if needed;*
- identify the individuals responsible for providing training to the counties;*
- perform increased training to counties on current and future system capabilities;*
- conduct an annual training seminar for county CPOE personnel based on elements from users (through a user survey) and results from ODJFS site visits;*
- produce a county training manual for accessing and using CPOE data based on information needed at the county level;*
- develop an annual best practices book that includes comparative data for counties and some of the procedures currently employed by the TAMs and TASs to be included in county monitoring procedures;*
- establish and closely monitor the FACSIS 4.0 and CPOE Navigator software developments to ensure these are available to the counties as soon as possible; and*
- assess the adequacy and use of county monitoring during ODJFS on-site monitoring visits through procedures such as reperformance and observation.*

*A county training curriculum should be developed by ODJFS to provide structure and promote consistency in the services it provides. Evaluation tools, such as annual client satisfaction surveys, could monitor these services and be adjusted, as necessary, to changes in the client's ongoing needs. An internal survey should also be in place to enable the CPOE personnel to evaluate the services provided and identify any future training needs.*

*A few of the projects which ODJFS is developing include FACSIS 4.0 and CPOE Navigator. These software packages, once implemented, will increase the usefulness*

*and timeliness of data at the counties. FACSIS 4.0 will be designed to provide the counties with more detailed information for further analysis, as well as incorporating relational database capabilities. However, FACSIS 4.0 will not be available for use until approximately 2004 and though CPOE Navigator, which is in the test stage, is viewed as a good substitute until FACSIS 4.0 is available. The CPOE Navigator system is a topic-based information retrieval tool which can be used to sort and look up information based on certain criteria. CPOE Navigator can assist in providing detailed analysis or summaries of information to identify trends. Eventually, the SACWIS project will replace FACSIS 4.0 and serve as the long-term solution to ensuring a statewide information system for all counties.*

#### *Financial Implications:*

*Any future costs related to the training or installation of hardware and software at the counties have already been incorporated into the FACSIS/SACWIS project's budget by ODJFS. ODJFS' Office of Professional Development and Quality Services will be responsible for organizing training and any future software upgrades for use by the counties.*

#### **Needs Assessment**

***Finding 10-6: The Panel determined that, "ODJFS is out of compliance with respect to the needs assessment, specifically with respect to the requirement associated with identifying unmet need."***

ODJFS must address a formal needs assessment in order to move closer to complying with consent decree requirements. The needs assessment refers to the statewide process used by ODJFS to identify the types of services needed for Ohio's abused, neglected, and dependent children and their families. The needs assessment will vary widely by county; however, a comparison of child or family needs with actual services provided would result in the identification of either an unmet need or an ineffective service.

Since most of needs assessment information is maintained at the county level, ODJFS contracted with an outside consultant to provide a comprehensive statewide needs assessment. The consultant's research involved extensive interviews with parents, service organizations, and case workers. The consultant's report provided a list of the services most frequently needed (requested) to prevent removal of a child from their home and included items such as transportation; monitoring of case progress; case planning; individual counseling/therapy; access to parenting classes; psychological/mental health services; drug/alcohol assessment; medical/physical examinations, information, and referral; and family counseling/therapy.

Based on a recent panel survey of counties, the “majority (80%) of those responding to the survey indicated that they have a method for identifying service gaps and 85% indicated that they have a method for developing service resources.” This suggests that counties are comfortable with their internal procedures for identifying major unmet needs, as well as the resources to address these needs. Furthermore, county survey results pointed out that approximately 55 percent of counties were not satisfied with ODJFS’ efforts in providing assistance in identifying service gaps and obtaining funding to address these gaps.

The consent decree states that when a significant need is identified, “ODJFS shall initiate appropriate steps to seek appropriations of additional funds from the Ohio General Assembly...which shall be incorporated into the state’s program of preplacement preventive and reunification services.”

ODJFS identifies county needs via surveys, needs assessment reviews, on-site visits, or other external methods. ODJFS is attempting to generate internal systems to provide enhanced needs assessment monitoring by integrating certain needs assessment events into the upcoming FACSIS 4.0 model. Within FACSIS 4.0, ODJFS is planning to capture data such as services planned, services provided, duration of services, and specifics about the nature of the services. FACSIS 4.0 data will be programmed to link certain logical events (similar in design to current case flow practice) and generate program edits and alerts. In the future, it is anticipated that SACWIS will provide a more useful and relational-based management tool for implementing the statewide needs assessment.

The panel suggests that integrating the needs assessment into SACWIS appears to be a good concept in achieving a statewide needs assessment. However, the panel also realizes there is significant work yet to be done relative to designing the statewide needs assessment component into SACWIS. The panel further believes the implementation of SACWIS lies well into the future.

***Recommendation 10-6: ODJFS must develop a comprehensive permanent plan with measurable time frames and outcomes that incorporates the statewide needs assessment into the CPOE framework. Additionally, ODJFS should provide counties with increased technical assistance and review to empower counties to independently develop individual county needs assessment plans.***

*It will be imperative that ODJFS continue to pursue the timely development of systems such as FACSIS 4.0 and SACWIS, which will greatly aid in capturing needs assessment data on a statewide system. Properly designed programming and controls within SACWIS will enable ODJFS to create a proper monitoring environment to identify service gap needs on a timely basis (and not just every three years, as currently happens). This will increase customer satisfaction by allowing ODJFS to request and receive funding for service gap needs in a more timely manner.*

*An outside consultant should still be utilized every three years when evaluating statewide unmet needs, especially for certain unprogrammed information or interactive data which can only be obtained through interviews with service organizations, parents and case workers.*

*Counties are best equipped to assess their own internal needs; ODJFS should assist the counties in developing a structured approach for conducting needs assessments while allowing flexibility. Counties should also be trained on procedures for tracking, gathering, and entering needs assessment information into the system, especially since the counties have a vested interest in receiving funding for these unmet services.*

*According to the TAM position description, a TAM should “develop technical assistance services where needs are not being met.” While conducting site visits, the TAMs and TASs can review the adequacy of a county’s needs assessment approach. As the users become more sophisticated, and as technology is enhanced, TAMs and TASs may consider publishing a best practices manual to be distributed as reference to the counties.*

### **Data Validation**

***Finding 10-7: During the Panel’s review of several on site county reports, the Panel concluded that serious problems existed with the validation of data in most jurisdictions. Additionally, the Host to Micro-FACISIS validation process was not considered viable.***

As stated in the panel report, “the whole concept, intent and process of CPOE hinges on the extent to which the data that drives the outcome indicator reports is accurate and valid.” Data validation involves procedures which verify the accuracy and completeness of automated information from the source document to the final outputs that users rely on.

The initial source of information usually consists of case records, which are the paper copies that social workers complete when documenting casework. The county personnel input the data from these case records into the local network (Micro-FACISIS in most counties) maintained at the counties. Counties are instructed each day (per OAC 5101:2-33-05) to transmit information to ODJFS Host-FACISIS. Host-FACISIS has programmed code which generates quality assurance edits and alerts, as well as other reports which are remitted to the counties for monitoring and improvement. Data from larger metro counties are not maintained on the Micro-FACISIS system; these counties instead convert data from their internal systems into the acceptable FACISIS event and element structure prior to transmitting data to Host-FACISIS.

The panel's study revealed that data contained within the county information system did not always coincide with a corresponding paper case record. To measure the accuracy of data entered into FACSIS, ODJFS examined several key FACSIS events between a sample of case records and the Micro-FACSIS system. The test results were provided in each county's final CPOE stage report, which was given to the panel, and were reported in the CPOE annual Comprehensive Assessment Report.

Over a 12-month period, two samples were reviewed consisting of nearly 1,500 intake/investigation cases and over 1,200 placement cases from 49 counties. The events validated were selected based on their ability to contribute to creation of the outcome indicator measurement. The sample measured two criteria for the events: a validation rate, which is the percentage of agreement between the case record and FACSIS data; and the percent of counties tested that achieved a validation rate match over 90 percent (an ODJFS internal goal). These results were designed to provide an indication of the accuracy of data entered by the counties from a case record into their local information system, as well as whether errors were isolated or widespread within counties.

A total of 14 events were selected to compare the FACSIS data to the selected cases. Of the 14 events tested, the validation rate results ranged from 73 percent to 96 percent, with an average of approximately 86 percent. Furthermore, the test results indicated the percentage of counties with a validation match rate above 90 percent was only 62 percent for all events tested, which suggests that data validation weaknesses were not an isolated issue.

Another weakness noted by the panel involved the lack of an ODJFS monitoring system. ODJFS has recently made available a wide area network (WAN) to support system operations. The WAN operates in the following manner:

- counties input data from case records into Micro-FACSIS;
- counties send the data through the WAN to Host-FACSIS;
- a backup is made of the local Micro-FACSIS database through the WAN;
- ODJFS personnel extract data from Host-FACSIS to be used in reporting;
- ODJFS can then access data from the WAN.

The WAN is a voluntary participation program for counties, though the network is currently accepted by all counties, particularly the metro counties. The WAN will eventually operate FACSIS 4.0; planning is currently under way for the full implementation of this system. FACSIS 4.0 will be a client-server network which eliminates the separate county and state databases, thereby avoiding data conversion or transmission errors. FACSIS 4.0 is the first step toward the state's SACWIS system; the eventual capacity and improvements within SACWIS will be a significant enhancement for the counties. ODJFS currently anticipates that all counties, including metros, will be integrated into SACWIS. This will achieve one of the panel's major goals: a single statewide CPOE system.



***Recommendation 10-7: ODJFS must take special action, giving high priority to addressing and correcting the current problem associated with data accuracy.***

*Over the course of time, technological improvements should help to limit the problems associated with data accuracy from human input errors. More specifically, the design of one centralized statewide system (SACWIS) will eventually serve as a database that the state and county can both access and should reduce accuracy and completeness problems associated with current data downloading and transmission.*

*In the interim, ODJFS should*

- implement a system which provides timely matches of data between Host- and Micro-FACSYS;*
- ensure original case record data is accurately recorded on the Micro-FACSYS system;*
- develop an improved method for the metro counties (which do not operate on the Micro-FACSYS system) to integrate data with ODJFS' Central Office via the WAN;*
- increase training of county personnel to improve the accuracy of data and to emphasize the overall importance to the CPOE monitoring process;*
- design and distribute a sample training booklet which will serve as a guide to counties on consistent and accurate data input and verification;*
- develop and program additional edit alerts into the computer input process which can assist counties in identifying data inconsistencies;*
- increase procedures performed during the county on-site reviews to reinforce the importance of timely and accurate data entry;*
- continue to improve upon the system integration between the WAN and FACSYS 4.0 to maintain data accuracy and assist the users during the transition period;*
- strive to remove barriers which prevent counties from fully utilizing the WAN's capabilities; and*
- continue to develop a user feedback tool, such as a survey, to identify methods which can improve data accuracy and completeness.*

*Currently, the Bureau of Automated Systems is comparing data contained in the Micro-FACSYS and Host-FACSYS systems and generating an exception report for any differences to be investigated. The Bureau could only compare data from the Micro-FACSYS system (which includes data from most counties except for the metro counties). Although the information has not been reviewed and verified, the FACSYS/SACWIS personnel who performed the comparisons indicated the preliminary results contained few differences in the data contained in the Micro-*

*FACSIS and Host-FACSIS systems. ODJFS should continue to pursue efforts and methods such as these that increase controls over data validation.*

*Financial Implications:*

*Any future costs associated with data accuracy (software improvements, county training, ongoing maintenance) have already been incorporated into the FACSIS/SACWIS project's budget by ODJFS.*

**Outcome Indicators**

***Finding 10-8: The opinions expressed by the counties suggest a lack of reliance on CPOE as a monitoring tool and further indicate that CPOE is unlikely to be used by the counties to change practices or processes to improve outcomes for children and families.***

The CPOE quality assurance system was designed as a continuous process improvement effort that uses outcome indicators to assess performance. Counties are the end users of the outcome indicators, but it is important for the counties to understand the original purpose and intent of the indicators to assess whether the indicators have been effective. This understanding will lead to enhancements in the current outcome indicators and the development of new indicators.

The current FACSIS system has limited capabilities; information is maintained in an aggregate format, which hampers detailed analysis by county and ODJFS personnel. Moreover, this aggregated data can mislead users or lead them to draw incorrect conclusions because of the lack of detailed data or of relational databases available for review. For instance, a child having a high number of moves out of a foster home may indicate a potential problem; however, the outcome indicator excludes the child safety circumstances considered by the case worker.

When CPOE was implemented, the FACSIS system was so limited that ODJFS selected very broad outcome indicators to address child safety and child permanency measurements. The historical data and programmed information fields within FACSIS provide limited data and do not provide relational data which could be used for further analysis. As a result, the selection of general outcome indicators provided little value to users and often resulted in the need for additional research in order to understand the reasoning for the measurement value. As a result, most counties have generated little interest in the CPOE outcome indicator results. A recent panel survey of counties further emphasized the lack of effectiveness of current outcome indicators in preventing placement or measuring reunification. The panel reported that

- Only two of the 18 CPOE outcome indicators were considered an appropriate measure of preventing placement, and seven of the 18 outcome indicators provided little support.

- Only three of the 18 CPOE outcome indicators were considered an appropriate measure of reunification and four of the 18 outcome indicators provided little support.
- The average county satisfaction level for all 18 outcome indicators was 56 percent for measuring placement prevention and 60 percent for measuring reunification.

The counties' concerns that some indicators do not have a relationship to preventing placement or timely reunification led the panel to recommend that the current set of indicators should undergo "further refinement to address the need for qualitative aspects of social work practice. The indicators database should also be relational."

***Recommendation 10-8: ODJFS should perform an extensive review of the current CPOE outcome indicators to assess whether the measures are meeting their intended purposes and the needs of the users.***

*Until the current FACSIS system is upgraded, the CPOE outcome indicators will only provide limited analytical capabilities. User involvement in determining the ideal outcome indicators that can be incorporated into the design of new information systems will become increasingly important. As the panel mentioned, the integration of relational databases will be an important step toward enhancing the degree of analysis that can be performed by the counties and ODJFS. Moreover, qualitative factors should be integrated into the outcome indicators to avoid a strict focus on the quantitative aspects of the outcome indicators.*

*Based on the results of the panel survey of the counties, ODJFS will need to reevaluate whether current outcome indicators are effectively designed for measuring placement prevention and reunification. In calendar year 2000, HHS will issue new federal regulations regarding child welfare outcomes and measures. Therefore, ODJFS will need to determine whether the current CPOE outcome indicators adequately address the new compliance requirements, and develop any new outcome indicators, if necessary.*

*ODJFS should include the newly formed CPOE Committee in this process as a means of getting users involved in the outcome indicator development process. The CPOE Committee meetings, coupled with customer satisfaction surveys, should provide an ongoing basis for assessing the adequacy of current outcome indicators.*

## Financial Implications Summary

The following table represents a summary of the implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purpose of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

**Table 10-5: Summary of Financial Implications for Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Annual Implementation Costs</b>
10-2: Hiring a Bureau Chief of CPOE (CPOE Coordinator)	\$91,000
10-2: Hiring a CPOE Assistant Coordinator	\$85,000
10-3: Hiring an additional six technical assistance specialists	\$390,000
10-4: Annual training for CPOE personnel	\$20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$586,000</b>

## Conclusion

CPOE has the potential of becoming a comprehensive management tool which can benefit users at all levels; however, ODJFS has not committed substantial attention or resources to CPOE. Consistent leadership and direction are key factors in creating process improvements. Many individuals affected by the CPOE have expressed a concern that interest in CPOE will fade and CPOE will become a lost and forgotten tool within the child welfare environment once ODJFS complies with the minimum requirements of the decree.

Since agreeing to the terms of the consent decree, ODJFS has made progress within CPOE by utilizing data, outcomes, and indicators to create system reform. In order to take advantage of CPOE's potential, ODJFS must switch from being driven by the expert panel's recommendations to taking the initiative in improving the current CPOE system and eventually expanding CPOE into other areas of child welfare.

Currently, the concepts of self-assessment and system improvements are built into the framework of CPOE to create a continuous quality improvement process. While the framework and design of the CPOE process may look good on paper, the development of a permanent implementation plan will be critical for the future of CPOE. The initial step in implementing CPOE will be to require a restructuring of the current organizational chart, since CPOE is fragmented across many divisions of ODJFS, and therefore is under limited management oversight and direction. As a result, ODJFS

should create a separate bureau to provide the structure necessary to handle CPOE matters in a consistent manner.

Once a structure is designed, ODJFS will need to provide the financial resources necessary to hiring a full-time Bureau Chief (CPOE Coordinator) and a CPOE Assistant Coordinator. It will be important to properly identify the roles and responsibilities of these positions, since these individuals will likely set the tone and direction for CPOE. The on-site reviews and technical assistance to the counties is performed by the child welfare system TAMs and TASs and these employees should be moved to the newly created Bureau of CPOE. Creating a centralized reporting structure for the TAMs and TASs should help alleviate some of the concerns over reporting inconsistencies and the lack of a formalized training program for CPOE-related employees.

The current level of credibility and reliance on the data contained within the CPOE system varies among the counties. It will be important for ODJFS to continue to pursue the timely implementation of the SACWIS system to increase the quality of data, thereby enhancing user confidence in the CPOE system as a viable management tool. In the interim, ODJFS will need to increase technical assistance it provides during on-site county reviews to verify the accuracy and consistency of data between the county and state CPOE data.

Increasing county computer system capabilities will enable ODJFS to focus more of its attention on technical assistance. This shift will occur as technology is made available to the counties, thereby allowing the counties to assume more self-monitoring duties. Computer upgrades will also work to address the statewide needs assessment weaknesses which are a crucial factor in keeping ODJFS out of compliance with the consent decree requirements.

The evolution of CPOE will not occur overnight; ODJFS will need to work closely with the users of the CPOE system and the panel members to develop a system which is flexible and meets the needs of its users. After the current system becomes a part of the overall management process at the county and state levels, ODJFS may begin to assess the use of CPOE in other areas of child welfare, as well as other areas of the Department.



**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CENTRAL REGISTRY**





# **Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry**

---

## **Background**

### *Overview*

Ohio established its Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry in 1966. The Central Registry is a centralized computer database of child abuse and neglect investigation records. The type of information contained in central registries and department records varies from state to state, but usually includes a child's name and address; the name of the child's mother, father or guardian; the names of any siblings; the nature of the harm the child suffered; the name(s) of any alleged perpetrator(s); and the findings of the particular investigation. Even though several states allow or require Central Registry checks (screenings) for individuals applying to be child or youth care providers, foster parents, or adoptive parents, Ohio does not permit such Central Registry use; however, state and local agencies and other private organizations can bypass this restriction by asking individuals to obtain their own Central Registry verification as part of the application process.

The original purpose and intent of Ohio's Central Registry was to track alleged child victims and perpetrators, to establish a history of child abuse and neglect, and to aid caseworkers in helping these children and their families. Central registries and the systematic record-keeping of child abuse and neglect information help authorities identify and protect abused and neglected children. Reports generated from central registries are typically used to aid social service agencies in the investigation, treatment, and prevention of child abuse cases, and to maintain statistical information for staffing and funding purposes.

While most states have implemented statutes authorizing the establishment of a central registry (forty-two states, including Ohio, have statutorily-created central registries), several mandate only that individual agencies—usually public social service agencies—collect and maintain child abuse and neglect records. Some states, such as Ohio and Missouri, maintain all investigated reports of abuse and neglect in their central registries, while other states, such as Colorado, only maintain substantiated reports. Access to information maintained in registries and department records also varies among states. Typically, persons authorized access include researchers, police, judges, and other court personnel if such information is necessary to helping them carry out their child protection functions. But such functions must be carried out within the confidentiality guidelines mandated by law. Ohio limits Central Registry access to certain Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) and ODJFS personnel, as well as to the alleged perpetrator upon request.

### *Governing Rules and Regulations*

The Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421 states “The public children services agency shall report each case [of child abuse and neglect] to a central registry which the state department of human services shall maintain in order to determine whether prior reports have been made in other counties concerning the child or other principals<sup>1</sup> in the case.” In addition, the Ohio Administrative Code Sections 5101:2-35-16 to 5101:2-35-20 detail the submission, expunction, and confidentiality of Central Registry reports and information. The Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-1-01 defines key terms regarding the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry. The Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421 (H)(1) states, “Ohio must preserve the confidentiality of all child abuse and neglect reports and records to protect the privacy rights of parents or guardians except in certain limited circumstances.” The Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-20 states that records can be made available only to

- individuals who are the subject of the report;
- PCSAs;
- appropriate ODJFS Staff;
- ODJFS-authorized studies of data; or
- any person engaged in a research project approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or ODJFS.

### *Organization Staffing and Function*

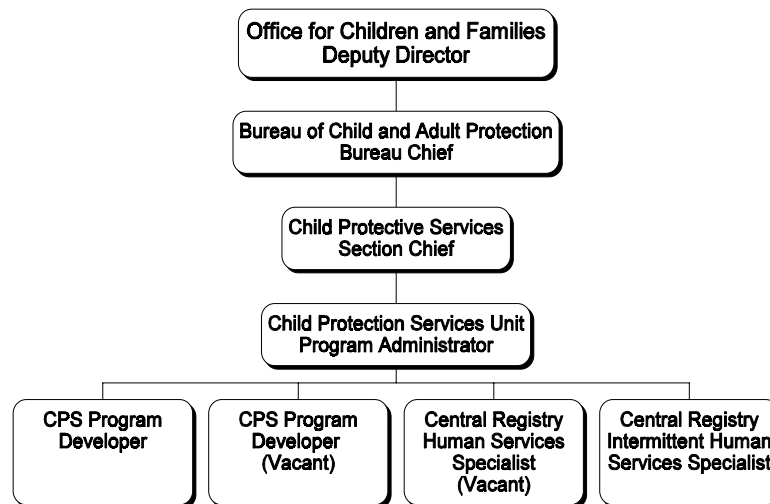
#### *Staffing*

The Central Registry is located in the state’s Office for Children and Families, in the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection. The Registry’s organizational structure and staffing levels are outlined in Chart 11-1.

Personnel within the Bureau’s Child Protective Services (CPS) Section at ODJFS serve as the link between the Central Registry, the PCSAs, and the public. A CPS Human Services Specialist, Program Administrator, and—at times—Section Chief process verification requests, contact the PCSAs to confirm validity of Central Registry information, and answer various questions from individuals regarding the Central Registry. If necessary, CPS Program Developers assist in the processing of verification requests and other duties normally performed by the Human Services Specialist. A temporary Human Services Specialist was hired in May and is performing the duties of the Human Services Specialist until CPS can fill the vacant position.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Principals of the report or case” are the alleged child victim, the parent or caretaker, and the alleged perpetrator.

**Chart 11-1: Central Registry Reporting Structure***Function*

The recording of information within the Central Registry begins with allegations of child abuse or neglect, which PCSA caseworkers enter at the county level into a computer system known as FACSIS (Family and Children Services Information System), then upload into ODJFS' mainframe each day.

The PCSA must investigate each report entered into the Central Registry. One of three designations of reports results from these investigations:

- **Substantiated** - Confirmation deemed valid by the PCSA that the alleged perpetrator committed the alleged abuse or neglect;
- **Indicated** - When circumstantial or other information may indicate the alleged perpetrator committed the alleged abuse or neglect, but no confirmation has taken place;
- **Unsubstantiated** - When the investigation determines that no child abuse or neglect took place or that the PCSA could not conduct an investigation

One of the principal uses of the Central Registry is to respond to requests for verification. A verification request seeks to find out whether or not an individual's name appears in the Central Registry and, if so, the status of the case involving that individual. Due to the confidentiality of the Central Registry, individuals may only request verifications on themselves; personnel at PCSAs and ODJFS could not typically access information on an individual without the individual personally requesting the information.

As to the use of information in the Central Registry, the Child Protective Services Section only processes verification requests from individuals for certain specific purposes, including

- application for international adoptions,
- application for employment with day-care facilities and schools,
- applications for foster parenting, and
- general knowledge for the individual.

In addition to requests from individuals, ODJFS processes verification requests from other states that are attempting to track alleged perpetrators of child abuse or neglect when these individuals move from state to state. ODJFS is required to expunge (remove) records from the Central Registry according to regulations set out by the Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-19. (See *Expunction of Individuals' Records from Central Registry*, below, for further details.)

## Processes and Recommendations

We focused our review on the following specific topics related to the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry:

- Staffing
- Central Registry Practices
  - Purpose and Intent of Central Registry
  - Confidentiality of Future Central Registry Database
- Due Process
  - Grievance Policy
  - Notification of Case Resolution or Disposition
- Information Searches
  - Determination and Documentation of Critical Information
  - Barriers to Obtaining Information from Principals
- Expunction of Individuals' Records from Central Registry

### *Staffing*

***Finding 11-1: The Central Registry currently suffers a shortage of staff needed to fulfill all required duties. This shortage has increased the risk that verification delays may occur, specifically in the processing of international adoptions through the U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services.***

The effective and efficient processing of verification requests requires that the Central Registry maintain an appropriate level of trained staff. Without timely processing, international adoptions through the U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services will be delayed, as well as domestic adoptions, foster care placement, and employment. Since December 1999, the number of verification requests that the CPS section has received each month has increased from 113 to a high of 281. Due to the size of this increase and the inconsistency of CPS staffing levels, a backlog of verification requests has developed, resulting in verification delays and customer dissatisfaction. As an added liability, backlogs also increase the risk that CPS may give preferential treatment to the verification requests of certain entities. This staff shortage has also prevented CPS staff from assisting PCSAs with training, consulting, policy development, and other services.

Current CPS staffing includes a Human Services Program Administrator, a Human Services Program Developer, and an intermittent Human Services Specialist; the unit also has positions open for another Developer position and a full-time Human Services Specialist.

Despite its demands, the processing of Central Registry verification requests does not take up the major portion of this section's work. Section staff perform a variety of other functions, including

- planning, developing, writing, coordinating, and implementing child welfare program rules and regulations;
- consulting to others who require their expertise, and acting as liaison to other ODJFS units; and
- writing reports and position papers and giving presentations at workshops.

For example, the Human Services Specialist processes requests for Central Registry information and consults on activities such as child abuse and neglect, runs training sessions, and prepares reports and manuals (see Table 11-1). Others in the section perform a similar variety of functions.

**Table 11-1: Roles of the Human Services Specialist**

Role	Duties Performed
Central Registry Searches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under general supervision, conducts paper reviews (e.g., confidential computer searches for Central Registry inquiries involving child abuse and neglect) and some data collection;</li> <li>• Coordinates and implements central registry searches and protective service alerts, along with all related activities;</li> <li>• Contacts and obtains information from county children service agencies to complete confidential computer searches for Central Registry child abuse and neglect inquiries;</li> <li>• Prepares and sends written responses to Central Registry inquiries;</li> <li>• Responds to general inquiries (e.g., telephone, correspondence, or in-person inquiries regarding child protective services) and provides timely processing and maintenance of the filing system for protective service alerts and other correspondence;</li> <li>• Monitors the progress of assignments (e.g., keeps database of correspondence and other work).</li> </ul>
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathers information and handles general inquiries (from the public, legislators, others) for child abuse and neglect inquiries;</li> <li>• Conducts training for state and county staff (e.g., for Central Registry, protective service alerts process, and child protective services rules staff), including but not limited to training on the Central Registry, interstate, and intrastate protective service alerts;</li> <li>• Reviews and processes complaints and forwards appropriate complaints to ODJFS Regional Offices;</li> <li>• Maintains and updates manuals;</li> <li>• Prepares written monthly reports and other programmatically required statistical and narrative reports;</li> <li>• Assists in the research for and preparation of position papers;</li> <li>• Operates personal computer and word processing equipment to generate various types of documents.</li> </ul>

Source: ODJFS Position Description, February 2000

In March and April, CPS employed two Program Developers. One Developer, however, was new to the position, and because the Human Services Specialist position was still vacant, the experienced Developer had to perform the majority of Central Registry duties. Combine these factors with the increasing number of verification requests each month and a large backlog of verification requests has resulted, as illustrated in Table 11-2.

**Table 11-2: Cumulative Backlog of Verification Requests**

Month (1)	Number of Central Registry Verification Requests	Number of Searches (3)	Responses Mailed (4)	Cumulative Backlog (# of Requests minus # of Responses Mailed)
December 1999	113	66	0	113
January 2000	234	265	0	347
February 2000	264	68	68	543
March 2000	281	213	213	611
April 2000	250	351	351	510
May 2000 (2)	193	603	452	251
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1335</b>	<b>1566</b>	<b>1084</b>	<b>251</b>

Source: ODJFS Child Protective Services Monthly Status Reports

(1) – ODJFS did not track verification requests before December 1999.

(2) – Temporary Human Services Specialist was hired in May 2000.

(3) – The number of searches is expected to be greater than the number of responses mailed due to multiple searches performed for some individuals, as well as the time lag of receiving information from the PCSAs.

(4) - Responses mailed in December and January related to prior months' requests. This conclusion was drawn from AOS visual observation of a two month backlog in March 2000.

Based on this data, we estimate that ODJFS is one to two months behind in processing verification requests. While the number of requests decreased and the number of searches increased in April and May, this appears to be a deviation from normal processing. In May, ODJFS hired an intermittent Human Services Specialist to address verification requests and help reduce the backlog. The number of searches performed each month is contingent upon other projects ODJFS is currently undertaking as well as the current demand for international adoptions by Ohioans.

To add to the problem, the experienced Developer transferred to another agency in May; therefore, the less experienced Developer is now responsible for the workload of two Developers and the permanent Specialist position's duties. While the Administrator and the Section Chief are absorbing some of the experienced Developer's workload in addition to their own, all vacant positions need to be filled to guarantee that future operations can keep up with workload. ODJFS has recently posted the Specialist position.

**Recommendation 11-1: ODJFS should fill the vacant Human Services Specialist position so Central Registry verification requests and other assigned duties can be completed in an effective and timely manner. ODJFS should also fill the vacant Developer position to help reduce the backlog at that position and to allow the Section Chief, Program Administrator, and current Developer to focus on their own assigned duties.**

*ODJFS should*

- *fill the Specialist position quickly;*
- *strive to reduce the backlog of verification requests to five percent of monthly requests, especially given the time-sensitive nature of most requests;*
- *make the Human Services Specialist available to request processing on an as-needed basis after it reduces the backlog to a desirable level; and*
- *prepare a weekly backlog monitoring report for review by both the Section Chief and the Bureau Chief.*

*Financial Implication:*

*We estimate that hiring an additional Human Services Specialist would cost ODJFS \$44,000 annually, and an additional Human Services Developer would cost \$53,000.*

**Table 11-3: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring an Additional Human Services Specialist**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits Employer's Share <sup>2</sup>	Total Annual Cost
\$34,000	30%	\$44,000

<sup>1</sup> Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Hum Svc Spec 2, January 5, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

**Table 11-4: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring a Human Services Developer**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits Employer's Share <sup>2</sup>	Total Annual Cost
\$41,000	30%	\$53,000

<sup>1</sup> Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Hum Svc Dev 2, January 5, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.



## **Central Registry Practices**

### *Purpose and Intent of Central Registry*

***Finding 11-2: Ohio Revised Code Section 1347.08, which requires the release of Central Registry information in certain instances, is not consistent with the purpose and intent of the Central Registry as described in Revised Code Section 2151.421(H) and Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-20.***

In recent months, Ohio's Central Registry verification requests have increased in volume. As Table 11-2 shows, the number of requests has more than doubled since December 1999. Based on interviews with ODJFS personnel, approximately eight out of ten requests are related to individuals applying for international adoptions; the U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services requires these requests through 8 CFR §204.3 (e)(2)(iii)(A)(iii), which states

“If the State will only release [Central Registry] information directly to each of the prospective adoptive parents and directly to the adult member of the prospective adoptive parents' household, those individuals must secure such information and provide it to the home study preparer. The home study preparer must include the results of these checks in the home study.”

Section 8 CFR §204.3 (e)(2)(iii)(A)(iii) provides vague language which could be interpreted that the Central Registry may be used for screening. However, Revised Code Section 2151.421 explicitly requires the Central Registry information to be maintained on a confidential basis. Revised Code Section 2151.421, specifically states

“A report made under this section is confidential. The information provided in a report made pursuant to this section and the name of the person who made the report shall not be released for use, and shall not be used, as evidence in any civil action or proceeding brought against the person who made the report...”

While Ohio is not required to release Central Registry information to prospective adoptive parents, individuals do have the right to obtain their own Central Registry verifications due to Revised Code Section 1347.08, which requires ODJFS to

“Inform the person of the existence of any personal information in the system of which the person is the subject; inspect all personal information in the system of which the person is subject; and inform the person about the types of uses made of the personal information, including the identity of any user usually granted access to the system.”

**Recommendation 11-2: ODJFS should review and determine the legislative intent regarding the establishment of the Central Registry and adopt policies and practices in accordance with that intent.**

*This review should include, but not be limited to*

- *an examination of all applicable laws, rules, and revisions; if necessary, Revised Code Sections 2151.421 and 1347.08, Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-20, or ODJFS policies should then be revised, as appropriate, to ensure consistency of state and federal laws with the intent of the Central Registry, per the U.S. Privacy Act of 1974;*
- *development and implementation of formal written policy, to include the processing of verification requests;*
- *development and implementation of formal written procedures that specifically identify the required authorization level at ODJFS for processing verification requests; and*
- *development and implementation of formal written procedures which specifically identify CPS employee responsibilities regarding verification requests, which should then be communicated to employees and used as a basis in performance evaluations.*

#### *Confidentiality of Future Central Registry Database*

***Finding 11-3: ODJFS is in the process of updating FACSIS and a SACWIS-equivalent system; however, no decision has been made with regard to the confidentiality of the statewide database.***

Based on current FACSIS programming, the information on alleged child abuse and neglect which the PCSAs enter into the county mainframe (referred to as “Micro-FACSIS”) is case file information. The information becomes part of the Central Registry when the PCSAs upload it into ODJFS’ FACSIS system (referred to as “Host-FACSIS”). When ODJFS implements FACSIS 4.0, the new system will replace the current Micro- and Host-FACSIS systems and become one large, statewide database. As a result, there will no longer be a distinction between case file information and the Central Registry. ODJFS is also currently planning for the development and implementation of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (called SACWIS; no implementation date has yet been set). FACSIS 4.0 will be an upgrade of the current FACSIS 3.2 and will provide an increase in functionality until SACWIS is implemented.

**Recommendation 11-3: When designing FACSIS 4.0 and SACWIS, ODJFS should create the necessary access controls to ensure that confidential Central Registry information is only accessible to authorized users.**

*ODJFS should develop a statewide database that provides sufficient information to aid in the investigation of child abuse and neglect incidents or case plans, and that ensures confidentiality of Central Registry information. ODJFS should conduct a thorough legal examination of what information would be required for investigations and case plans, and survey users to determine their Central Registry information needs. ODJFS should then evaluate this information for any legal constraints on its use in the Central Registry database.*

*Additionally, ODJFS should form a cross-functional team that includes employees from the Office of Legal Services, the Office of Management Information Systems, and the Office for Children and Families to define the Central Registry reporting structure. A system should then be designed to capture and report agreed-upon Central Registry information to users. Users will need to be trained on gathering and reporting information consistently, as well as on appropriate use of this information.*

*ODJFS should also consider restricting user access by establishing security levels that restrict counties to read-only access to information not entered by them. The users should also be restricted to viewing the name database in counties other than their own.*

*Financial Implications:*

*ODJFS is currently developing FACSIS 4.0 and SACWIS. The costs to incorporate this recommendation will be absorbed into costs to develop FACSIS 4.0 and SACWIS.*

## **Due Process**

### *Grievance Policy*

**Finding 11-4: ODJFS currently has no centralized formal grievance policy for appeals at the local or state level. Moreover, PCSA policies are not consistent regarding the investigation or assessment process.**

Due process of the law is the administration of justice according to established rules and principles and includes the right to appeal or grieve certain decisions or determinations. Currently, the PCSAs are required to have a grievance policy per Administrative Code Section 5101:2-33-04 which establishes the following guidelines for PCSA grievance review policies:

- (A) The PCSA shall develop and implement written policies for receiving, reviewing and resolving:
  - ...
  - (2) Appeals by alleged perpetrators who disagree with the PCSA disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect.
- (B) PCSA grievance policies shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:
  - (1) Operational procedures for conducting grievance reviews;
  - (2) Independent parties involved in conducting the grievance review;
  - (3) Reasonable time frames for conducting the grievance review and issuing a decision;
- (C) When an appeal of a PCSA disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect is heard and the PCSA changes the original disposition/resolution, the PCSA shall update the central registry information according to procedures contained in rule 5101:2-35-16 of the Ohio Administrative Code.
- (D) Copies of the PCSA grievance review policies shall be made available to all individuals upon request.

However, PCSA grievance policies are not consistent with investigation and assessment procedures. The Auditor of State submitted a survey to all 88 PCSAs asking for information on the use of the Central Registry. Fifty-six (56) PCSAs responded, though some did not respond to all of our questions. Based on responses we did receive, fourteen of 54 PCSAs, or 26 percent, of those responding to this question, did not have formal grievance policies in place. Moreover, PCSAs are only required (per Administrative Code Section 5101:2-33-04) to present the grievance policy to alleged perpetrators upon request. When asked whether PCSAs informed alleged perpetrators in writing about the grievance process and these alleged perpetrators' options, only 18 of 55 PCSAs (or 33 percent) responding to this question stated they gave alleged perpetrators written information on the grievance process. According to the survey, less than 0.5 percent of alleged perpetrators grieve (i.e., appeal) the disposition or resolution of an incident of child abuse or neglect (see Table 11-5).

**Table 11- 5: Grievance Rates by County (1)**

COUNTY PCSA	# of Incidents in FY 1999	# of Grievances in FY 1999	Grievance Rate (2)	PCSA Has Grievance Policy	Alleged Perpetrators Informed About Appeal Process
ADAMS	795	1	0.13%	Y	N
ALLEN	813	1	0.12%	Y	Y
ASHTABULA	128	0	0.00%	N	N
ATHENS	294	0	0.00%	Y	Y
BELMONT	314	0	0.00%	N/A	N
BUTLER	2,537	6	0.24%	Y	Y
CARROLL	267	0	0.00%	N	N
CHAMPAIGN	168	0	0.00%	Y	N
CLERMONT	1,826	1	0.05%	Y	Y
COLUMBIANA	800	1	0.13%	Y	N
COSHOCTON	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y
CUYAHOGA	17,000	0	0.00%	N	N
DARKE	225	1	0.44%	Y	N
DEFIANCE	195	0	0.00%	Y	N
DELAWARE	400	0	0.00%	N	N
FRANKLIN	12,077	9	0.07%	Y	Y
FULTON	113	0	0.00%	Y	N
GALLIA	212	1	0.47%	Y	Y
GEAUGA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N
GREENE	685	0	0.00%	Y	N
HAMILTON	6,625	22	0.33%	Y	Y
HANCOCK	420	0	0.00%	Y	Y
HARRISON	119	0	0.00%	N	N
HIGHLAND	261	0	0.00%	Y	N
HOCKING	643	0	0.00%	Y	N
HOLMES	165	0	0.00%	N	Y
JEFFERSON	117	0	0.00%	Y	Y
KNOX	479	2	0.42%	Y	N
LAWRENCE	661	0	0.00%	Y	Y
LICKING	1,309	0	0.00%	Y	N
LOGAN	351	0	0.00%	N	N
LORAIN	1,210	0	0.00%	N	N
LUCAS	3,904	220	5.64%	Y	Y
MARION	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N
MERCER	207	0	0.00%	Y	N
MIAMI	1,745	0	0.00%	N	N
MONROE	94	0	0.00%	N	N
MONTGOMERY	3,417	10	0.29%	Y	N
MORROW	356	0	0.00%	Y	N
MUSKINGUM	971	0	0.00%	Y	N
NOBLE	91	0	0.00%	Y	Y
OTTAWA	191	0	0.00%	Y	N
PAULDING	107	0	0.00%	Y	N
PORTAGE	881	0	0.00%	N	N
PUTNAM	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N
SANDUSKY	564	0	0.00%	Y	Y
SENECA	612	0	0.00%	Y	N
SHELBY	526	0	0.00%	N	N
STARK	3,109	0	0.00%	Y	N
TRUMBULL	2,122	0	0.00%	Y	Y
TUSCARAWAS	436	1	0.23%	Y	Y
WARREN	236	0	0.00%	Y	N
WASHINGTON	379	2	0.53%	Y	Y
WILLIAMS	245	5	2.04%	N	N
WOOD	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71,402</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>0.40%</b>	<b>Y = 40, N = 14</b>	<b>Y = 18, N = 37</b>
<b>RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>55</b>

Source: AOS Survey, April 2000

(1) – Only responding counties shown.

(2) – Grievance rate is (# of grievances) / (# of incidents)

Y = Yes N = No N/A= Not Applicable - no answer given

Of the counties responding to our survey, Lucas County had the highest grievance rate at 5.64 percent. Only one of the other responding counties had a grievance rate above 2 percent. The low appeal rate could be attributed to a PCSA not having a grievance policy or the PCSA only providing the policy to individuals who request the information. Because alleged perpetrators may not be aware of the existence of a grievance policy, they may request copies of the policies, and thus do not proceed with the appeal.

In addition, ODJFS has not developed a centralized formal policy for appeals at the local or state level. To rectify this situation, ODJFS could implement various types of appeals processes. The State of Minnesota, for example, has a state-supervised, county-administered system; Minnesota Statute Section 626.556(Subd 10i) details the state's appeals policy for local agencies:

- “(a) An individual or facility may request the investigating agency to reconsider its final determination regarding maltreatment. The request for reconsideration must be submitted in writing to the investigating agency within 15 calendar days after receipt of notice of the final determination regarding maltreatment.
- (b) If the investigating agency denies the request or fails to act upon the request within 15 calendar days after receiving the request for reconsideration, the person or facility entitled to a fair hearing under section 256.045 may submit a written request for a hearing under that section.
- (c) If the investigating agency changes the final determination of maltreatment, that agency shall notify the parent or guardian of the child, person determined to be maltreating the child, and if applicable, the director of the facility,
- (d) If an individual or facility contests the investigating agency's final determination regarding maltreatment by requesting a fair hearing under Section 256.045, the hearing is conducted and a decision is reached within 90 days of receipt of the request for a hearing.”

Minnesota's Statute Section 256.045 (Subd 3) details the appeals policy for state administrative hearings:

“State agency hearings are available for an individual or facility determined to have maltreated a minor under section 626.556 (above), after the individual or facility has exercised the right to administrative reconsideration under section 626.556.”

It also states that

“Individuals and organizations may contest the specified action, decision, or final

disposition before the state agency by submitting a written request for a hearing to the state agency within 30 days after receiving written notice of the action, decision, or final disposition.”

***Recommendation 11-4: ODJFS should develop a centralized grievance policy that outlines the basic procedures for appeals at both the local and state levels. In addition, ODJFS should ensure the PCSAs develop and implement formal written grievance procedures.***

*In the past, ODJFS proposed a universal grievance policy that was rejected by the PCSAs. We believe ODJFS should work with PCSAs to develop an unbiased policy that incorporates into its process*

- *a person independent of the child abuse/neglect cases who will preside over the appeal process, such as a hearing officer;*
- *time frames for each appeal; and*
- *policies for state administrative appeals.*

*ODJFS should monitor the PCSAs to ensure that each has developed grievance procedures consistent with ODJFS policy. The procedures may differ slightly, based upon each PCSA’s staffing and organizational structure. Moreover, ODJFS should consider reviewing various case files for evidence (such as a signed certification) that the PCSAs have provided grievance procedures to all alleged perpetrators.*

*According to personnel at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, approximately 7,000 incidents of child abuse/neglect were reported in the state during fiscal year 1999. Of these, Minnesota had 187 appeals at the state level from July 1997 through May 2000—approximately 60 state administrative hearings per year, on average. Based on this number, approximately 0.85 percent of reported incidents are appealed to the state. Applying Minnesota’s percentage to Ohio, which had 79,261 reported incidents in calendar year 1999, the estimated number of state appeals in Ohio would run to approximately 680 per year. This number would be greatly affected by the strength of and adherence to PCSA policies related to the investigation of incidents and handling of grievances. ODJFS should develop policies and procedures to ensure compliance between grievance requirements at the local and state levels as well as the timely resolution of appeals.*

*ODJFS should revise the Ohio Administrative Code to require PCSAs to present written grievance procedures to all alleged perpetrators involved in a child abuse/neglect incident. The PCSAs should also consider requiring alleged perpetrators to sign a certification stating that they have read and understood the*

*grievance procedures. The PCSAs should consider using the grievance policy developed by Lucas County as a format for developing individualized policies.*

*Financial Implications:*

*Per ODJFS personnel, each administrative hearing takes approximately one hour and one additional hour for research. Based on the estimated 680 additional administrative hearings per year, approximately 1360 additional hours are needed for the administrative hearings. We estimate that hiring an additional Hearing Officer to preside over these hearings would cost ODJFS \$48,000 annually.*

**Table 11-6: Annual Financial Implication of Hiring an Additional Human Services Specialist**

Beginning Annual Rate <sup>1</sup>	Benefits Employer's Share <sup>2</sup>	Total Annual Cost
\$37,100	30%	\$48,000

<sup>1</sup> Position Classification and Salary Booklet, Hearing Officer 4, January 5, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> PCN Roster Analysis, March 2000.

*Notification of Case Resolution or Disposition*

***Finding 11-5: Not all alleged perpetrators involved in incidents of child abuse or neglect consistently receive notification about the resolution or disposition of an investigation or assessment.***

Through interviews with ODJFS and PCSA personnel and individuals from the Public Children Services Association of Ohio and the Ohio Family Care Association, we found that not all alleged perpetrators receive notification of case resolution. Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421(H)(4) states,

“A public children services agency shall advise a person alleged to have inflicted abuse or neglect on a child who is subject of a report made pursuant to this section of the disposition of the investigation. The agency shall not provide to the person any information that identifies the person who made the report, statements of witnesses, or police or other investigative reports.”

According to the ODJFS FACSIS manual, the PCSA should use the “218 event,” which documents the notification to the alleged perpetrator of the case resolution or disposition in the county mainframe, to certify that notice has been given. According to the results of our survey mentioned previously, only 12 (24 percent) of the 51 respondents answering this question document the notification using the “218 event.”



**Recommendation 11-5: ODJFS should require the PCSAs to document the notification to the alleged perpetrators of the case resolution or disposition within the county mainframe using the “218 event,” as stipulated in the ODJFS FACSIS Manual.**

ODJFS could fulfill this recommendation by updating programming within FACSIS to document the “218 event” as a required event and to provide error reports that include those cases which have been closed but do not have the notification of the alleged perpetrator so documented. Until the FACSIS update occurs, ODJFS may opt to require PCSAs to manually document the notification to the alleged perpetrator. ODJFS may consider following up on any significant “218 event” deficiencies at the PCSAs when performing their Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) review.

In addition, ODJFS should provide training to caseworkers and data processors, perhaps as part of the FACSIS Back-to-Basics training, to ensure they understand the importance of documenting the notification of alleged perpetrators as well as the steps required by FACSIS (see also recommendation 11-7).

*Financial Implications:*

Since ODJFS is currently developing FACSIS 4.0 and SACWIS, the costs to incorporate this recommendation can be absorbed into those developmental costs.

## **Information Searches**

### *Determination and Documentation of Critical Information*

**Finding 11-6: Caseworkers do not always realize the importance of properly documenting information within case files and the Central Registry. When the ODJFS Program Developer must investigate and inquire about a large number of individuals because information is missing, the backlog in processing verification requests increases.**

When processing Central Registry verification requests, the Human Services Program Developer conducts searches in the following manner:

1. First, the Developer searches by the requesting individual’s social security number.
2. If there is no match by social security number, the Developer searches by name.
3. For every name returned, each of the FACSIS client screens must be accessed to determine

if there is any additional information, such as an address, that could be used to exclude an individual as a potential match.

4. If there are no incidents of child abuse/neglect associated with a client on record, the requesting individual is eliminated as a potential match.
5. When a name has been identified as having been involved in incidents but has no identifying information available, the Developer must contact PCSAs to request any information that can serve to identify the individual further to determine whether or not the person is the one requesting (i.e., the subject of) the search. According to ODJFS personnel, some PCSAs are very prompt in responding to requests, but some may take months to respond.

As an example and for our purpose, the Developer searched the Central Registry for an individual making a verification request. The results of the search returned thirty-nine (39) names as possible matches. This large number of potential matches is usually a result of PCSAs not providing sufficient key identifying information about alleged perpetrators when entering data into the system. According to the results of this PCSA survey and interviews with ODJFS and PCSA personnel, caseworkers do not always realize the importance of properly documenting information within the case files and Central Registry. In turn, this lack of information causes an increased backlog in verification request processing, since the Developer must contact the PCSAs in order to investigate and inquire about individuals. Delays in processing verification requests are directly attributable to the quality of information received from the PCSAs.

***Recommendation 11-6: ODJFS should develop centralized policies on documenting and entering Central Registry information needed to effectively and efficiently track alleged child victims and perpetrators. ODJFS should incorporate the necessary information into available fields within FACSIS.***

*In conjunction with the PCSAs, ODJFS should determine which information is crucial to identifying individuals within the Central Registry. Such information could include the individual's name, social security number, date of birth, age, and address. Once ODJFS does so, it should upgrade FACSIS to allow PCSAs to enter the information into these fields. ODJFS should also generate a monitoring report to assess the completeness of information entered by caseworkers and perform follow up procedures, if necessary.*

*Making these fields available to be entered should reduce the need for ODJFS to contact the PCSAs with information requests, thus decreasing the amount of time it takes for ODJFS to process verification requests as well as the backlog of verification requests.*

*Financial Implications: Since ODJFS is currently developing FACSIS 4.0 and*

*SACWIS, the costs to incorporate this recommendation can be absorbed into those developmental costs.*

*Barriers to Obtaining Information from Principals*

***Finding 11-7: Some Central Registry information obtained at the county level is incomplete or inaccurate.***

As noted in Finding 11-6, a major issue with the Central Registry is the PCSAs not providing sufficient key identifying information about alleged perpetrators when entering data into the system. We surveyed the PCSAs and asked what they felt were the reasons for not obtaining sufficient information. As Table 11-7 shows, our survey of PCSAs revealed certain barriers to obtaining and documenting sufficient information from principals identified within an assessment or investigation.

**Table 11-7: Barriers to Receiving Sufficient Information from Principals**

# of PCSAs responding (1)	What do you feel are the barriers in receiving sufficient information from the principals identified within the assessment/investigation?
31	Reluctance to disclose personal identifying information (i.e., Date of Birth, Social Security #), including attorney's suggestion to not speak to PCSA
11	Timeliness/Inability to locate principals
7	Insufficient/Incorrect information provided by reporter
5	False information
4	No barriers, if you conduct a professional, honest interview, you should be able to overcome barriers
3	Lag time between information received and entered in system
2	Name changes
2	Lack of staff training on FACSIS
2	Being more focused on investigating the incident than gathering information
1	Lack of trust in Children Services system
1	Principals usually have not called PCSA asking for help; defensive with nothing to gain by disclosing
1	Process is time consuming with risk assessment, cannot always devote time to get all information for matrix
1	Fear of being identified as person reporting
1	Age of principal
1	Suspicion and anger about having a complaint made
1	Quantity of information needed
1	Lack of direct access to Central Registry
1	Difficulty in obtaining criminal record checks
1	Obtaining written reports from other professionals
1	Prior history and to what degree

Source: AOS Survey, April 2000

(1) – 56 PCSAs responded and some PCSAs provided more than one response.

The most common barriers include the reluctance of the principals to reveal to caseworkers certain personal information, such as their social security number and date of birth. Another barrier is the inability of investigators to locate principals, and the provision of insufficient, incorrect, or false information by either the principals or the reporter. However, four of the survey's respondents stated that if the caseworker conducts a professional interview, these barriers should be greatly reduced.

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-33-55 requires the caseworker to obtain 90 hours of training the first year of employment and 36 hours every subsequent year. A basic interviewing class is included in the 90 hours of training.

**Recommendation 11-7: ODJFS should require and provide advanced levels of training to caseworkers regarding interviewing principals and entering sufficient information into FACSIS.**

ODJFS should require an advanced interviewing techniques course as part of each caseworker's required 36 hours of training during the second year of employment. In addition, ODJFS should require all caseworkers and supervisors who have not previously attended to receive training on advanced interviewing techniques. The advanced interviewing training should include investigative techniques as well as instruction on how to deal with angry or embarrassed people or people in other difficult situations. The training could also require investigators to inform individuals that Central Registry information is confidential, and that the investigation is not a criminal charge. This training will also assist caseworkers in other critical aspects of their jobs. We estimate that 12 hours of advanced interviewing training would meet the needs of the caseworkers and the Central Registry process.

*Financial Implications:*

Total budget amount for training contracts	\$2,379,582
Divided by number of total participant hours	÷ 21,636
Equals cost of providing training per hour	\$ 110
Divided by number of participants per workshop	÷ 25
Equals cost of training per contact hour	\$ 4.40
Multiplied by number of hours recommended per participant per year	x 12
Equals cost per participant per year (rounded)	53
Multiplied by estimated number of participants	x 5,500
Equals total estimated cost of advanced interviewing training (rounded)	<u>\$ 292,000</u>

### **Expunction of Individuals' Records from Central Registry**

**Finding 11-8: ODJFS has not developed specific criteria to address the expunction of information on individuals from the Central Registry per case resolution. FACSIS is currently programmed only to expunge individuals based on the unsubstantiated, indicated, or substantiated report disposition designations and time frames required by OAC 5101:2-35-19. As a result, those individuals who continue to be involved with familial or in-home cases will not be expunged from the Central Registry.**

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-19 establishes the guidelines for expunging individuals' names from the Central Registry. The term "expunction" means that all information that specifically identifies any principal of a child abuse or neglect case, such as name, address, or social security number, will be removed from the Central Registry and will not be recoverable. ODJFS is required to expunge reports from the Central Registry that meet certain criteria and must notify PCSAs on a regular basis of reports that have been expunged. Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-19(b) defines the following time frames for expunction:

- (1) For **Substantiated reports**: Reports shall be expunged **ten years** from the date the report disposition/finding was made.
- (2) For **Unsubstantiated reports**: Reports shall be expunged **three months** from the date the report disposition/finding was made.
- (3) For **Indicated reports**: Reports shall be expunged **five years** from the date the report disposition/finding was made.

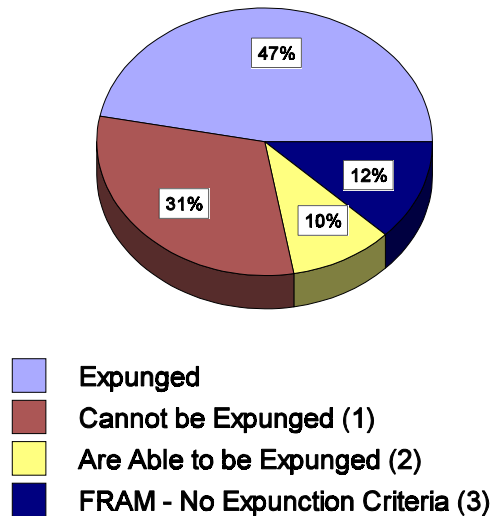
It is important to note that the child's information (name, address, social security number) cannot be expunged from the Central Registry if the child is still receiving services or has an open case plan.

The Ohio Administrative Code Section 5105:2-39-02(B) requires ODJFS to implement the Family Risk Assessment Matrix (FRAM): the caseworker must only complete a case resolution for in-home or familial reports of child abuse or neglect. The case resolution identifies the level of risk of abuse or neglect to the child in the future.

Chart 11-2 shows how the state handled expunction of records as of June 2000.

**Chart 11-2: Expunction of Client Registry Records**

1,993,798 Client Registry Records



Source: ODJFS FACSIS Administrator, June 2000

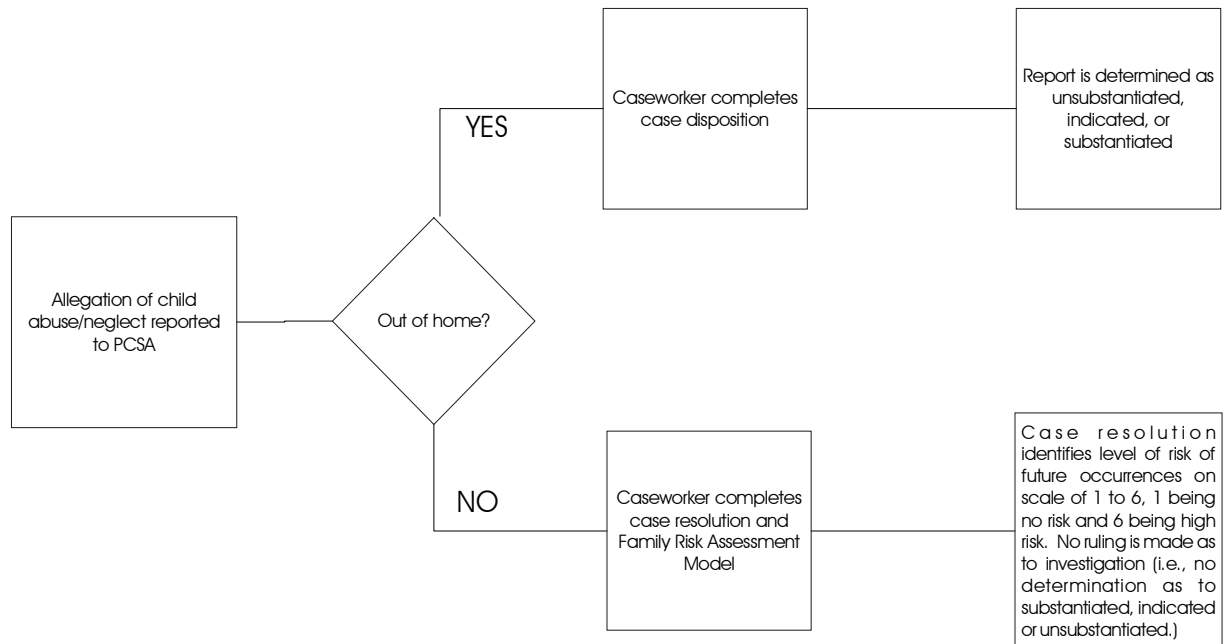
(1) Only the child's information cannot be expunged, due to services still being provided to that child.

(2) Time constraints have not yet expired for expunction to take place.

(3) Out of the 237,456 client registry records that have a FRAM completed, 47 percent have a FRAM, 22 percent have child's names that are not be able to be expunged [see (1) above], and 31 percent have FRAMs as well as additional investigation(s).

Only when the case disposition (not the case resolution) has been completed will an investigation be considered either unsubstantiated, indicated, or substantiated (see Chart 11-3). Without a case disposition, ODJFS cannot expunge certain individuals from the Central Registry. As a result, a report on a principal involved in an in-home allegation of child neglect or abuse may remain in the Central Registry record indefinitely.

ODJFS also uses Central Registry information to prepare its part of the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System Federal Report, which is sorted by the "unsubstantiated," "indicated," and "substantiated" designations. Since Ohio does not use these designations for familial cases, Ohio's report cannot be easily or completely compiled into the federal report. Up to now, ODJFS has not regularly submitted this information, since its participation in the federal report is optional. However, ODJFS believes that the states' participation in the federal report will be mandatory in the near future.

**Chart 11-3: Case Resolution versus Case Disposition**

***Recommendation 11-8: ODJFS should develop criteria to ensure timely expunction of all individuals according to the Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-35-19.***

*With the help of a users group, ODJFS should perform a thorough legal analysis to determine how best to ensure that expunction of individuals from the Central Registry takes place. Once this happens, ODJFS should consider*

- *revising its Administrative Rulings to include the disposition into “substantiated,” “indicated,” or “unsubstantiated” designations of both in-home/familial cases and out-of-home cases. By including the case disposition for all cases, individuals’ records will either be properly maintained in or expunged from the Central Registry in accordance with OAC Section 5101:2-35-19; or*
- *developing an expunction standard using risk assessment or case resolution in addition to the standard for case disposition. The lack of a proper standard could result in an individual being incorrectly included within the Central Registry.*



## Financial Implications Summary

The following table represents a summary of the annual implementation costs for the recommendations in this section of the report. For the purposes of this table, only recommendations with quantifiable financial impacts are listed.

**Table 11-8: Summary of Financial Implications for the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry**

Recommendation	Annual Implementation Costs
11-1: Increase CPS staff by one specialist and one developer	\$97,000
11-4: Additional Hearing Officer	\$48,000
11-7: Advanced Interviewing Training	\$292,000
Total	\$437,000

## Conclusion Statement

ODJFS is aware how important the Central Registry is to the safety of children and the prevention of acts of child abuse and neglect. Though the public is also aware of this importance, many individuals who are directly involved in child abuse or neglect cases are not informed of their rights and the uses others make of the Central Registry.

Currently, a number of Central Registry operational inefficiencies exist due to ODJFS' minimal staff and lack of monitoring of the PCSAs. A backlog of verification requests exist, PCSAs are not entering sufficient information into FACSIS, and PCSAs are not consistently applying ODJFS policies.

The Program Developer is responsible for planning, developing, writing, coordinating, and implementing child welfare program rules and regulations; providing consultative expertise, and acting as liaison to other ODJFS units, as well as writing reports and position papers and giving presentations at workshops. In addition to these functions, the Developer also performs Specialist duties, such as processing verification requests and protective service alerts. In November 1999, ODJFS hired an additional Developer to assist with these duties; however, due to an increase in verification requests and other projects, and because of the separation of a Developer in May 2000, the Child Protective

Services Section remains understaffed.

ODJFS is commended for addressing the backlog of verification requests. ODJFS hired a temporary employee to process the verification requests and protective services alerts and is in the process of hiring a Specialist. The backlog of requests decreased by over 100 requests in April 2000. However, one of the Developers transferred to another agency, reducing the staff to only one Developer in May 2000.

To further reduce the backlog and manage the verification requests in the future, ODJFS should place an emphasis on the PCSAs role in gathering information. Much of the backlog has been the result of insufficient or incorrect information being entered into the Central Registry as well as inconsistent application of ODJFS policies and procedures by the PCSAs. ODJFS should be reviewing current policies and procedures as well as developing new policies to ensure compliance with laws and regulations. Additionally, ODJFS should be monitoring the PCSAs through on-site visits, actions related to restrictions within FACSIS programming, and training to ensure consistent application of procedures.

The public has voiced its concern over a lack of due process in investigations and expunction of names from the Central Registry. Currently, many alleged perpetrators are not aware of their right to appeal case disposition or resolution, nor are they aware that the information within the Central Registry is confidential or that the caseworker investigation is not a criminal investigation. Principals are concerned their names are not being expunged from the Central Registry. And since the Central Registry affects the public directly, it is imperative that ODJFS and the PCSAs continually review and update policies and procedures to effectively and efficiently obtain and maintain information within the Central Registry, as well as ensure a consistent application of the policies throughout the 88 PCSAs.



STATE OF OHIO  
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR  

---

JIM PETRO, AUDITOR OF STATE

88 East Broad Street  
P.O. Box 1140  
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1140  
Telephone 614-466-4514  
800-282-0370  
Facsimile 614-466-4490

**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES - CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**

**CLERK'S CERTIFICATION**

**This is a true and correct copy of the report which is required to be filed in the Office of the Auditor of State pursuant to Section 117.26, Revised Code, and which is filed in Columbus, Ohio.**

*Susan Babbitt*

**CLERK OF THE BUREAU**

**CERTIFIED  
FEBRUARY 9, 2001**