



# OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

July 29, 2025  
Performance Audit

## Follow-Up Report

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### Performance Audit of the Department of Children and Family Services' Placement of Children Audit Follow-Up

The Illinois Office of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services' (Department or DCFS) compliance with its obligations to place children in its care in placements consistent with their best interests. This audit was conducted pursuant to Senate Resolution Number 140. The audit was released in September 2016 and contained four recommendations to the Department. As part of the compliance examination for the two years ended June 30, 2018, the auditors noted three of the four recommendations were not implemented, and one of the four recommendations was partially implemented. The four recommendations were subsequently followed up on as part of the compliance examination for the two years ended June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2022, and the auditors noted all four recommendations had been partially implemented. As part of the compliance examination for the two years ended June 30, 2024, we followed up on the status of the recommendations. The current status of the recommendations is shown in the table below. The four recommendations remain partially implemented.

#### STATUS OF PERFORMANCE AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

As of June 30, 2024

Rec. No.	Recommendation Description	Agency	Current Status		
			Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
1	Administrative Rules and Procedures	DCFS		X	
2	Internal Forms and Case Files	DCFS		X	
3	Planning Meeting and Matching Process	DCFS		X	
4	Tracking Information	DCFS		X	

Source: Summary of OAG follow-up.

#### Recommendation 1: Administrative Rules and Procedures

*The Department of Children and Family Services should review existing administrative rules and internal policies and procedures on the placement of children. The Department should make necessary revisions to update the rules and procedures to reflect current practice and to implement any needed changes.*

*The Department should also examine areas that lack policies and procedures on the placement of children and implement procedures as needed.*

#### Current Status: Partially Implemented

As noted in the compliance examination for the two years ended June 30, 2022, the Department has implemented policies, procedures, and forms regarding the children who are psychiatrically hospitalized (Procedures 301.110) and children in emergency shelters (Procedures 301.55). However, the auditors continue to note as they did in the prior examination report, that while the Department has implemented policies regarding specific payments for children in detention facilities, it lacks detailed procedures regarding the temporary placement of children in these detention facilities.

## **Recommendation 2: Internal Forms and Case Files**

*The Department of Children and Family Services should ensure that required forms are being utilized and that required documentation is consistently maintained in case files. The Department should also explore the feasibility of maintaining forms in its primary case management system.*

### **Current Status: Partially Implemented**

During the current examination, Department management stated, as it did in the prior examination, the Department no longer utilized the Discharge and Aftercare Plan (CFS 965-1 form) and Psychiatric Hospitalization Report (CFS 965-2 form), however, the current Department Procedures 301.110 still refer to the use of these forms.

In addition, the auditors noted the Department utilized the ERC Intake & Referral form (CFS 1901 form) and the Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation Meeting Referral form (CFS 1452-1 form) during FY23 and FY24. Further, the Department stated that the Department no longer maintained these internal placement forms in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) due to the transition to the IllinoisConnect system which will replace the current SACWIS. As an alternative, the Department's Clinical and Child Services Division is currently working with administration on building a Clinical Folder in the child case for each Youth in Care, in IllinoisConnect, to house all clinical documents, including the CFS 965-1 form.

As of June 30, 2024, the CFS 1901 form continues to be utilized by the Department. The Clinical and Child Services Division is currently working with Department administration, requesting the form be automated into the new IllinoisConnect system. The CFS 1452-1 form is still in final stage of being consolidated into the CFS 399-1 Clinical Referral form that combines referral and intake for all clinical consultations and staffing.

## **Recommendation 3: Planning Meeting and Matching Process**

*The Department of Children and Family Services should implement policies and procedures for its matching process to ensure that the planning meeting is held promptly and to improve the timeliness of the matching process.*

### **Current Status: Partially Implemented**

The auditors noted that progress appears to have been made during FY24 regarding this recommendation. As was reported in the prior examination, when children are admitted to an emergency shelter, the shelter is considered a temporary placement. The Department holds a planning meeting, which is called the Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meeting to determine the level of care and possible placements for the child. Per Procedures 301.55(j)(7), the CIPP meeting is to occur within seven (7) and no later than 15 calendar days of the Department being awarded temporary custody or, if the Department already has temporary custody or guardianship, then within seven (7) and no later than fifteen (15) calendar days of admission to the emergency shelter. As of June 30, 2024, the Department's Child and Family Policy Division and Clinical Division are in the process of finalizing CFS Form 399-1 and Policy Guide 2025.01 for Clinical Staffing replacing the Policy Guide 2013.03 Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation. Per the Policy Guide 2025.01, the timeframes for a clinical staffing for youth admitted to a shelter have been identified as an immediate need and the staffing process is initiated within 2 working days. If during the Clinical Staffing a higher level of treatment is identified as needed, the Clinical Team has 5 days to complete and forward the Clinical Summary and the Action Plan, to the Placement Administration.

In addition, as of June 30, 2024, the Clinical Placement Administration was in the process of reviewing the draft Procedures 301.85, Clinical Placement Administration Referral and Matching Process and preparing a request for formal policy writing. The Department follows the draft procedure to ensure timely matching (within 48 hours) for youth in emergency shelters. Additionally, the Department's Procedures 301.55, Section r, Weekly Regional Review of Emergency Shelter Cases, details the procedures where the Department staff assist caseworkers in finding placement resources.

## **Recommendation 4: Tracking information**

*The Department of Children and Family Services should make necessary changes to track information in its computer systems to ensure processes are working and better monitor children in its custody. These changes should enable DCFS to readily report information.*

### **Current Status: Partially Implemented**

The auditors noted progress in FY23 and FY24 regarding this recommendation. As reported in the prior examination, Department management stated that the Department is currently engaged in a multi-year program to implement the

Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), known as IllinoisConnect. IllinoisConnect is replacing the current case management systems, SACWIS and the Child & Youth Centered Information System (CYCIS). It is modernizing the vast majority of the Department's IT systems and automating many of the manual, paper-based processes the Department currently relies on for day-to-day operations. IllinoisConnect is being developed in multiple phases, with releases to production every six to nine months. As of June 30, 2024, the Department was in the process of transitioning to IllinoisConnect.

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*Follow-up was conducted as part of the Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 State compliance examination by our special assistant auditors, Roth & Co. This was the fourth time follow-up has been done on the recommendations from the September 2016 performance audit.*