Review of Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Compliance Efforts — Maine DHHS Made Progress, Additional Efforts Warranted

a report by

the Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability
Review Purpose
OPEGA Sought to Answer the Question...

Did Maine DHHS take effective corrective actions to address weaknesses identified in the OIG’s April 2005 audit report?

To Answer This Question, OPEGA...

- Interviewed key individuals within the DHHS
- Reviewed Title IV-E regulations and statutes
- Reviewed relevant policies and procedures
- Researched prior audits of Title IV-E programs
- Tested documentation for a sample of cases
Background
There Are 2 Related Federal Title IV-E Programs...

**Title IV-E Foster Care**
Helps states fund care for children needing placement outside their homes

**Title IV-E Adoption Assistance**
Helps states fund adoptive homes for hard-to-place children

*Eligibility Transfer*
DHHS Administers Title IV-E in Maine...

DHHS

Operations & Support

Division of Regional Operations (DRO)
determines IV-E Foster Care eligibility

Integrated Services

Office of Child & Family Services (OCFS)
administers IV-E Foster Care & Adoption Assistance programs

coordination
communication
Maine DHHS Has Undergone Many Title IV-E Audits in Recent Years...

Prior Audits of Title IV-E Foster Care & Adoption Assistance
Summarized by Fiscal Year Under Review

- ACF Foster Care Audit: Noncompliance (report issued 2001)
- OIG Adoption Assistance Audit: Noncompliance (report issued 2005)
- ACF Foster Care Audit: Substantial Compliance (report issued 2004)

- FY 2000: State Single Audit
- FY 2001: State Single Audit
- FY 2002: State Single Audit
- FY 2003: State Single Audit
- FY 2004: State Single Audit
Conclusion
OPEGA Determined That..

- DHHS took effective corrective actions in response to the OIG report.

  - Computer issues identified by OIG related to a prior version of MACWIS. The enhanced MACWIS system includes controls to address such issues.

  - DHHS addressed procedural issues by:
    - initiating a QA process
    - implementing a determination checklist
    - increasing training efforts

- Additional actions are warranted.
Findings
Finding 1

Finding
Training procedures and materials for Financial Resource Specialists are not formalized.

Management Action
Written training procedures and a training guide will be developed.
Finding

Independent review of Title IV-E eligibility determinations is insufficient.

Management Action

Quality Assurance review will be strengthened with improved sampling methodology.
Finding

The document retention period for Title IV-E eligibility case files has not been increased despite past audit findings.

Management Action

A revised policy with increased retention period will be adopted.
Finding 4

**Finding**

DHHS has not always addressed past audit findings in a timely and effective manner.

**Management Action**

DHHS was already aware of this issue and is preparing new procedures to improve responses to audits.
Finding 5

Finding

Responsibility for understanding Title IV-E regulations and monitoring the Department’s compliance has not been clearly assigned.

Management Action

The role of Title IV-E compliance officer will be assigned within the Office of Child & Family Services.
Summary
OPEGA concluded that DHHS took effective corrective actions to improve Title IV-E Adoption Assistance compliance.

OPEGA suggested DHHS take additional management actions to further improve compliance.

Additional details available in full report available at www.maine.gov/legis/opega or by calling 287-1901.
Questions?
Division of Regional Operations

determine
&
redetermine

Office of Child and Family Services

Foster Care Activities

Adoption Activities

Title IV-E Eligibility
For SFY 2005 the State paid a total of $14,094,503 in adoption assistance payments and was reimbursed for $9,180,849 under Federal Title IV-E.