COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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August 7, 2006

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors to extend the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families' sunset review date to January 1, 2011.

BACKGROUND

The Commission for Children and Families (Commission) was established by the Board of Supervisors (Board) in 1984, and has been continued pursuant to Chapter 3.68 of the Los Angeles County Code. The most recent renewal was approved by the Board in 2001.

The Commission's duties are to:

- Monitor, evaluate and report to the Board on the implementation progress of Board-adopted recommendations for improving the delivery of children's services and, when necessary, recommend modification of procedures to ensure compliance with the adopted recommendations.

- Review all County programs/services for children at risk.

- Receive input from community groups and individuals concerning County children's services programs.

- Review and make recommendations to the Board concerning children's services legislation.

- Make recommendations as necessary to the Board and various department heads to improve children's services.

- Provide an annual report to the Board concerning the status of children's services, along with recommendations for improvement to be utilized for broad community distribution and discussion.

The Commission consists of 15 members, three from each Supervisorial district, none of whom are County employees or County contract employees. The Board appoints members who have knowledge and experience in the area of children's services.

The Commission is required to meet at least once per month. From October 1, 2000 to December 31, 2005, the Commission met 108 times with an average attendance of 9.4 (63%) members. Commissioners are entitled to a $25 stipend for each meeting they attend, not to exceed 24 meetings in any one calendar year. The Commission incurred approximately $217,000 and $249,000 in expenses in years 2003-04 and 2004-05, respectively. This includes meeting stipends and the cost of three full-time County staff who assist the Commission by preparing meeting information, serving as a liaison among the Commission and County departments, and preparing reports and recommendations.

JUSTIFICATION

The Commission monitors the implementation and administration of a wide range of programs and services to children and families at risk to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated and well-integrated County/community service delivery system. The goal is to have a continuum of care that ensures multiple services to prevent abuse and neglect; voluntary services to assist struggling families; timely and accessible services for families in crisis who are under Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Probation Department and court supervision; and a network of accessible and appropriate community after-care services that support families.

The Commission's accomplishments during the evaluation period include:

- Participated in three multi-agency collaboratives, which were established to oversee implementation of task force/committee recommendations in the areas of Emancipation Services, Relative Care and Foster Care.

- Participated in workgroups that developed strategies in four areas of the child welfare system, which will improve outcomes for both dependent and delinquent youth. The workgroups recommended fundamental system-wide changes to improve the child welfare delivery system.

The Commission's objectives for the next evaluation period will be to work toward service integration and a continuum of care for children and families. Specifically, the Commission will work in the program areas of Prevention, Permanency, Family Reunification, Mental Health Services Act Planning, Transitional Age Youth, Probation, Faith Based Engagement, Homelessness, Training/Research Development and Community Capacity Building.

Please call if you have any questions.

JTM:MMO:JLS:MR

Attachments

c: Helen A. Kleinberg, Chair, Commission for Children and Families
Dana E. Blackwell, Director, Commission for Children and Families
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer
Robin A. Guerrero, Chief, Board Operations
Jim Corbett, Manager, Commission Services

COMMISSION SUNSET REVIEW
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
REVIEW COMMENTS

Mission. (Does the mission statement agree with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

Stated mission is as set forth in the ordinance creating the Commission. **CONCUR**

Section 1. Relevance. (Is the mission still relevant and in agreement with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

The Commission monitors the implementation of a wide range of services to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated service delivery system. It brings stakeholders together to highlight the needs of specific populations in the child welfare system, and strives to develop a child welfare system that will more effectively support children, youth and families to become more safe, stable and self-sufficient. **RELEVANT**

Section 2. Meetings and Attendance. (Are required meetings held and is attendance satisfactory?)

The Commission is required to meet no less than once per month. From October 1, 2000 to December 31, 2005 the Commission held 108 meetings with an average attendance of 9.4 (63%) members. **SATISFACTORY**

Sections 3 and 4. Accomplishments and Results. (Are listed accomplishments and results significant?)

The Commission's accomplishments during the evaluation period include:

- Advised the Board, through its Emancipation Oversight Committee, on services provided to emancipating youth. The Committee recommended several changes to the County's emancipation program and service delivery structure. The majority of the recommendations have been implemented through oversight by the Emancipation Program Partnership (EPP), a multi-agency collaborative of which the Commission is a member. The following are two of the implemented recommendations:

  - Established a Countywide network of eight Transition Resource Centers to focus on the needs of youth who have been emancipated, or are approaching emancipation.

- Implemented an emancipation website that provides children under County supervision with information regarding emancipation services, and resources to youth and care providers.

- Participated in the Relative Caregiver Committee, which was established to oversee implementation of various recommendations identified in a Relative Caregiver Task Force report titled, "The Care and Safety of Children Currently Residing with Relative Caregivers." In conjunction with DCFS, community stakeholders and relative care providers, all 18 reported recommendations were implemented.

- Chaired the Foster Care Task Force Committee established by the Board to oversee the implementation of the recommendations from the Los Angeles County Foster Care Task Force report titled, "Los Angeles County Foster Care: Children at Risk." Of the 25 recommendations, 16 were implemented, including a full-time Ombudsman at DCFS, dedicated to resolving foster parent issues and investigating and resolving complaints.

- Participated in four workgroups to develop strategies in the areas of Prevention, Family Reunification, Permanency and Relative Care Permanency to improve outcomes for both dependent and delinquent youth. The workgroups, which included DCFS, representatives from public and private organizations, and various advocacy groups each studied and reviewed the child welfare system and indicated the need for system-wide fundamental changes to improve the child welfare delivery system. **SIGNIFICANT**

Section 5. Objectives. (Are the objectives compatible with the mission and goals and relevant within the current County environment?)

The Commission's objectives for the next evaluation period will be to work toward service integration, and a continuum of care for children and families. Specifically, the Commission will work in the areas of Prevention, Permanency, Family Reunification, Mental Health Services Act Planning, Transitional Age Youth, Probation, Faith-Based Engagement, Homelessness, Training/Research Development and Community Capacity Building. **RELEVANT**

Section 6. Resources. (Are the resources utilized by the entity in support of the entity's activities warranted in terms of the accomplishments and results?)

The Commission incurred approximately $217,000 and $249,000 in costs in fiscal years 2003-04 and 2004-05, respectively. This includes meeting stipends and the cost of three full-time County staff who assist the Commission by preparing meeting information, serving as a liaison among the Commission and

County departments, and preparing program recommendations and reports. Given the Commission's level of involvement and its accomplishments, these costs appear reasonable. **WARRANTED**

Section 7. Recommendation.

EXTEND THE SUNSET REVIEW DATE FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO JANUARY 1, 2011.

Attachment II

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
ATTENDANCE RECORD

Commissioner	Nominated by	12/31/00	3/31/01	6/30/01	9/30/01	12/31/01	3/31/02	6/30/02	9/30/02	12/31/02	3/31/03	6/30/03	9/30/03	12/31/03	3/31/04	6/30/04	9/30/04	12/31/04	3/31/05	6/30/05	9/30/05	12/31/05	Totals	% Attended
Number of Meetings per Quarter		**6**	**4**	**6**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**6**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**108**	
Adelina Ruth Sorkin	Molina	6	4	6	3	5	4	6	5	5	6	6	4	5	4	6	4	3	4	4	5	4	**99**	92%
Wendy L. Ramallo	Molina																				1	3	**4**	40%
Kevin R. Gano	Molina	0																					**0**	0%
Cristina Alvarado	Molina				4	3																	**7**	78%
Lily Griego	Molina						2	6	2	4	4	3	4	1									**26**	62%
Robert Louis Petersen	Molina										5	5											**10**	83%
Harriette F. Williams, Ed.D.	Burke	6	3	4	2	5	4	5	4	5	6	6	5	5	5	6	3	4	5	4	5	4	**96**	89%
Barbara Bailey Barnes	Burke	2	2	1																			**5**	31%
La-Doris McClaney	Burke				1	2	4	4	3	2	3	5	2	2	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	**58**	63%
Lula M. Meshack	Hahn	0	0	0																			**0**	0%
Reverend G. Lind Taylor	Burke					2	3	5	5	5	5	4	3	2									**34**	72%
Reverend Cecil Leonard Murray	Burke																				5	3	**8**	80%
Carol Oughton Biondi	Yaroslavsky	3	3	6	3	4	4	6	3	5	4	5	3	2	4	3	3	5	4	5	3	3	**81**	75%
Helen A. Kleinberg	Yaroslavsky	2	4	4	3	4	3	4	5	5	5	6	3	3	3	6	5	5	4	4	4	4	**86**	80%
Phalen G. Hurewitz, Esq.	Yaroslavsky	6	4	4	4	5	4	6	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	6	5	5	4				**87**	94%
Susan F. Friedman	Yaroslavsky																				1	3	**4**	40%
Elsie Go Lu, Ph.D.	Knabe	3	3																				**6**	60%
Robert G. McCaman	Knabe				3	3	3	5	4	4	6	1											**29**	71%
Christina Steinberg Mattingly	Knabe													2	1	4	4	3					**14**	54%
Ann Franzen	Knabe																				5	5	**10**	100%
Elisa Nicholas, M.D. , MSPH	Knabe	3	2	2																			**7**	44%
Janet Teague	Knabe				1	4	3	4	4	3													**19**	66%
Joyce Fahey	Knabe												2	5	4	6	4	4	3	3	4	3	**38**	75%
Sandra M. Rudnick	Knabe	3	3	6	2	5	3	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	3	5	4	5	3	4	4	3	**86**	80%
Patricia Curry	Antonovich	6	2	5	2	4	4	5	4	5	3	4	3	5	2	5	4	3	2	2	1	3	**74**	69%
Daisy L. Ma	Antonovich	4	4	3	4	3	3	5	3	4	2	3	3	5	4	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	**68**	63%
Darren W. Parker	Antonovich	2	2																				**4**	40%
Jana S. Cooley	Antonovich			2	4	4	2	5	3	4	4	2											**30**	64%
Brenda Galloway	Antonovich												2	3	1	4	2	1					**13**	42%
Stacey F. Winkler	Antonovich																			1	3	3	**7**	47%
Totals		**46**	**36**	**43**	**36**	**53**	**46**	**71**	**55**	**61**	**62**	**60**	**42**	**50**	**41**	**57**	**43**	**45**	**36**	**34**	**47**	**46**	**1010**	
																						Average Attendance Per Meeting →	**9.4**	