

Implementing State Auditor recommendations for DCFS

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee of the State of California directed the California State Auditor to look at the practices of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) shortly following the death of Anthony Avalos. The audit, titled “Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services: It Has Not Adequately Ensured the Health and Safety of All Children in Its Care” was released on May 21, 2019. This report included several recommendations to improve the practices of the department to ensure the safety of children, focusing on safety and risk assessments, placement assessments, monthly case visits, timeliness of reunification assessments, quality improvement recommendations, decreasing caseloads and supervisor to staff ratios, and protecting the health and safety of children identifying as LGBTQ.

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MOTION

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RIDLEY-THOMAS	_____
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As reported in the audit, the supervisor to social worker ratio in the Palmdale DCFS office, among other offices, remains 1 supervisor to 7.3 social workers, higher than the union agreement of 1 supervisor to 6 social workers allows. The department should review financial bonuses and other ideas to ensure the staffing ratios in this office, as well as all other regional offices, is decreased.

The State Auditor made several recommendations for DCFS, which are as follows:

1. Incorporate Structured Decision Making (SDM) instructions into its policies and procedures by July 2019, and provide mandatory annual SDM training for applicable staff, supervisors, and other members of management by May 2020.
2. Require supervisors to regularly review and evaluate assessments against available evidence and observations, and implement this process by July 2019.
3. Require staff and supervisors to utilize tracking reports and email alerts to identify investigations and SDM assessments not completed on time after these activities should have been completed, and establish thresholds for the number of days that will trigger follow-up from the department's various levels of management by July 2019.

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4. Implement a tracking mechanism to monitor and follow-up on uncompleted or undocumented initial home inspections and background checks by November 2019.
5. Implement a tracking mechanism to monitor live scan criminal record checks by November 2019.
6. Conduct annual reviews of community organizations that perform home environment assessments to ensure that they complete these assessments on schedule by November 2019.
7. Create a quality improvement division and increase the number of cases it regularly reviews by November 2019.
8. Enhance the focus of case reviews to not only include a review of particular case outcomes, but to also determine whether critical assessments are accurate and thorough by November 2019.
9. Broaden case reviews to include an evaluation of the quality of supervisor reviews by November 2019.
10. Establish a mechanism to identify and address case management problems that are prevalent and persistent among social workers, supervisorial, and regional offices by November 2019.

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11. Implement a tracking system to monitor the implementation and results of recommendations resulting from child death reviews by November 2019.
12. Specify time frames by which each type of document should be reviewed by November 2019. In doing so, the department should acknowledge that particular urgency of reviewing safety assessments and related safety plans, which are keys to determining whether or not to leave a child in a home.
13. Reduce the number of social workers assigned to each supervisor to at least the ratio specified in its union contract by May 2020.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Director of DCFS, the Executive Director of the Office of Child Protection, and the Chief Executive Office to provide an analysis of the recommendations included in the State Audit of DCFS, as detailed above, including a fiscal analysis of implementation costs, a detailed implementation plan, and the identification of needed staff resources, and report back to the Board in ~~45~~ 60 days.

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