

# OFFICE OF AUDITS & ADVISORY SERVICES



## CHILD WELFARE SERVICES AUDIT

### *FINAL REPORT*

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# County of San Diego

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**JUAN R. PEREZ**  
CHIEF OF AUDITS

October 20, 2015

TO: Debra Zanders-Willis, Deputy Director  
Health and Human Services Agency – Child Welfare Services

FROM: Juan R. Perez  
Chief of Audits

FINAL REPORT: CHILD WELFARE SERVICES AUDIT

Enclosed is our report on the Health and Human Services Agency – Child Welfare Services Audit. As there are no findings and recommendations in the report, no audit response is required.

Thank you for the courteousness and cooperation extended to the Office of Audits & Advisory Services during the course of the audit.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (858) 495-5661.

JUAN R. PEREZ  
Chief of Audits

AUD: IM:aps

Enclosure

c: Nick Macchione, Director, Health and Human Services Agency  
Tracy M. Sandoval, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer/Auditor and Controller  
Andrew Pease, Executive Finance Director, Health and Human Services Agency

## INTRODUCTION

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**Audit Objective** The Office of Audits & Advisory Services (OAAS) completed an audit of the Child Welfare Services (CWS). The objective of the audit was to evaluate the timeliness of CWS key processes.

**Background** CWS investigates reports of suspected child abuse and neglect, provides family preservation services, removes children from unsafe homes, provides for the temporary placement of these children with relatives or into foster or group homes, and facilitates legal guardianship or the adoption of these children into permanent families when appropriate.

CWS provides emergency response through a Child Abuse Hotline. The 24-hour Hotline is staffed by trained social workers who receive calls about child abuse, molestation and neglect. The Hotline social worker does an immediate assessment of the referral. If the child is determined to be at risk, a social worker is assigned to investigate and when appropriate, a cross referral to law enforcement is made. Each call is logged and evaluated as to the level of possible risk to the child. Referrals to resources and additional help are given to those who have that need.

If it is determined that the child may be in immediate danger, a social worker and/or law enforcement officer will make a home visit within a few hours of receiving notification. If there is not an immediate danger, a social worker will investigate within five to ten days of receiving a call if it is determined that the child may be at risk.

In addition, CWS administers Foster Care Eligibility & Licensing and Group Home Placement Services. Placement costs for children are funded by a combination of federal, state, and county monies. The Human Services Specialist assigned to the Foster care Section is responsible for determining the appropriate funding source based upon information provided by the social worker.

**Audit Scope & Limitations** The scope of the audit focused on evaluating timeliness related to the following activities conducted during FY2013-14 to current:

- Child Abuse Hotline Cross Reporting to Law Enforcement
- Foster Care Aid Payment Processing

This audit was conducted in conformance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing prescribed by the Institute of Internal Auditors as required by California Government Code, Section 1236.

**Methodology** OAAS performed the audit using the following methods:

- Reviewed California Department of Social Services' program regulations and departmental policies and procedures related to CWS to identify specific timeframes for the activities under review.

- Interviewed CWS management to ascertain whether controls are in place to ensure compliance with established timeframes for the activities under review.
- On a sample basis, conducted specific audit procedures to verify compliance with established timeframes, such as inquiry, document inspection, reconciliation, and analysis.

## AUDIT RESULTS

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### Summary

Within the scope of the audit, there is reasonable assurance that reports of child physical and/or sexual abuse received through the Child Abuse Hotline are reported to law enforcement within the required timeframe, and that CWS processes Foster Care Aid Payments in a timely manner.

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## Office of Audits & Advisory Services

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