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For Information
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DHS Passes Audit of Foster Care

DES MOINES, Iowa – The Iowa Department of Human Services has passed a once-every-three-year audit that checks accuracy of a state's claims for federal funds for foster care, with Iowa achieving nearly a perfect score.

Auditors for the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families randomly selected 80 cases for their review, which was completed early this month. The ACF said Iowa got 79 correct and that it was reviewing the final case to see if it, too, met federal requirements.

Mathematical accuracy is only a small portion of the review.

Auditors also make sure that in every case, there is a court order to remove the child to foster care and another court order confirming that the state made a reasonable effort to prevent removal in the first place.

They also check to see that in every removal, there are completed background checks on prospective foster and adoptive parents, and that foster parents are properly licensed.

In cases where the child is in foster care for more than a year, the auditors make sure there is a court order confirming that the state made a reasonable effort to reunify or achieve permanency in another manner.

The 80 cases were selected from the 2,250 cases in which the state claimed federal funds under chapter IV-E of the Social Security Act in a recent six-month period.

Iowa receives about \$60 million IV-E funds a year, which equals about a third of the cost of foster placements and adoption subsidies.

Federal auditors review 17 or 18 states a year. Of the most recent 43 reviews, 12 states did not pass. States that are not in compliance face a disallowance assessment.

Iowa also passed the review three years ago but the state was not in compliance in 2001. An improvement plan brought the state in compliance and in 2004, the DHS created a specialized unit to insure accuracy in IV-E claiming.

Gov. Chet Culver said, "I'm pleased but not surprised with the outstanding rating DHS received. This rating is just another example of a well-run department, and I congratulate DHS."

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