



January 2008

Report No. 08-05

Lead Agencies Structure Their Adoption Programs in a Variety of Ways

at a glance

Community-based care lead agencies use three arrangements to structure their foster child adoption programs: services primarily provided by subcontractors, a combination of in-house and subcontracted staff, or services primarily provided in-house. Lead agency administrators generally prefer to use in-house staff or contracted service providers and only use fee-for-service child placing agencies to a limited degree.

Lead agencies also use three models of progressing children's cases through their systems of care from foster care to adoption finalization. Lead agencies may keep a child's case with one case manager for the life of the case, transfer a child's case from the original case manager to an adoption specialist, or assign an adoption specialist to coordinate and assist a primary case manager. Lead agencies report advantages and disadvantages to each approach.

Scope

At the request of the Legislature, OPPAGA examined how community-based care lead agencies contract with adoption agencies and seek to make successful placements of foster children with adoptive families. This is the first of two reports and answers two questions concerning the implementation of adoption programs by the lead agencies.

- How do lead agencies structure their arrangements with different types of adoption service providers?

- At what point do lead agencies transfer cases between foster care and adoption case managers?

A companion report examines barriers to adoption and identifies steps the department and lead agencies could take to improve the state's adoption program.¹

Background

Adoption is a permanency option considered by the state when a foster child cannot be safely reunified with his or her biological parents. The process of finalizing an adoptive placement is complex and involves several entities.

The process for moving a child toward adoption involves participation by the Department of Children and Families, community-based care lead agencies, other subcontracted providers, and the court system. The child welfare system is highly outsourced, and responsibilities are divided between the department and community-based lead agencies. The department is responsible for program planning, informing lead agency staff about changes in the law, rules, and policies and procedures; training lead agency adoption staff; and contacting the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conduct background checks on potential adoptive families. The department's Child Welfare Legal Services staff also assist case managers with

¹ *Additional Strategies Would Help Address the Barriers to Successful Adoptions*, [OPPAGA Report No. 08-06](#), January 2008.

the legal components of the adoption process and working with the court system.²

Lead agencies are private, community-based agencies or county governments responsible for planning, administering, and delivering client services; ensuring that services are delivered in accordance with state and federal laws; and coordinating with other local public or private agencies that offer services for clients. In Fiscal Year 2006-07, 20 lead agencies held 22 contracts with the department making them contractually responsible for providing foster care and related services to children removed from their homes, including case management and adoption services.³ To implement their foster child adoption programs, some lead agencies subcontract for the provision of these services, while others provide these services with their own staff, and some use a combination of in-house staff and subcontractors.

Questions and Answers—

How do lead agencies structure their arrangements with different types of adoption service providers?

Lead agencies use three possible arrangements to structure their systems of care with adoption service providers: services primarily provided by subcontractors, a combination of in-house and subcontracted staff, or services primarily provided in-house. When they use subcontractors, lead agencies follow a procurement process to select these providers. Lead agency administrators generally use in-house staff or contracted service providers in their adoption programs and only use fee-for service child placing agencies to a limited degree.⁴

Lead agencies are required to perform certain adoption functions, including dispersing financial assistance to adoptive families, convening the adoption review committee meetings, and providing oversight of subcontractors.⁵ Lead agencies may use subcontractors to provide other adoption services, which may include conducting parenting training and home studies, recruiting families, managing adoption cases, and providing post-adoption services.^{6,7} As shown in Exhibit 1, these subcontracting arrangements fall into three categories.

First, most (14) lead agencies subcontract the majority of their adoption services. Under this model, lead agency staff oversee the contract, but do not directly provide adoption services. These lead agencies subcontract in two ways. Some contract with a provider to perform adoption services as part of a “full case management” contract that covers all child welfare case management, including in-home, foster care, and adoption services. Other lead agencies have separate contracts for in-home/foster care case management and adoption case management. These case management organizations may also provide other adoption services or lead agencies may have additional subcontracted providers to perform other adoption services such as adoptive parent recruitment, home studies, parent training, and post-adoption services.

The second option is used by four lead agencies that use a combination of in-house staff and subcontractors to provide adoption services. Generally, these lead agencies use in-house staff for case management and use subcontracted providers to provide other adoption services such as home studies, legal services, or recruitment.

² Child Welfare Legal Services attorneys represent the Department of Children and Families during the various stages of dependency proceedings. Their responsibilities include advising investigators, case managers, and administrators regarding legal sufficiency for shelter, dependency, and termination of parental rights petitions and other issues.

³ As of September 1, 2007, there are 19 lead agencies for these 22 contracts because one lead agency voluntarily withdrew from its contract and two lead agencies previously failed and their contracted responsibilities were assumed by other lead agencies.

⁴ To identify lead agency practices, we surveyed lead agency managers and analyzed contracts and other documentation maintained by the Department of Children and Families.

⁵ Each lead agency has an Adoption Review Committee, which is responsible for providing consultation and assistance to the adoption worker on any adoptive home study in which the worker and supervisor are recommending rejection, or adoption case situations which present challenging issues. Both lead agency and department staff sit on this committee.

⁶ The home study evaluates the strengths, weaknesses and overall ability of a family to provide a supportive environment for the child. Home study assessments are based on interviews with family members, references, and an in-home evaluation of living conditions.

⁷ Lead agencies are responsible for providing post-adoption services to stabilize adoption placements, which often include mental health counseling for adopted children.

Finally, two lead agencies primarily provide adoption services in-house and report not using any subcontracted providers in their adoption programs. Services provided in-house include adoption case management, parenting classes, home studies, and adoptive parent recruitment. Appendix A provides detailed information on each lead agency's subcontracting arrangements.

Exhibit 1

The Lead Agencies Use Three Primary Models to Structure Their Adoption Programs

Case Management and Other Adoption Services Provided Primarily by Subcontracted Providers

Big Bend Community-Based Care (East and West)
 Child and Family Connections
 Children's Network of Southwest Florida
 Community-Based Care of Brevard
 Community-Based Care of Seminole
 Family Services of Metro Orlando
 Family Support Services of North Florida
 Heartland for Children
 Hillsborough Kids, Inc.
 Kids Central
 Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe
 Partnership for Strong Families
 Sarasota Family YMCA (North and South)
 United for Families

Combination of In-House Case Management and Subcontracted Adoption Services

ChildNet
 Clay and Baker Kids Net
 Community Partnership for Children
 Families First Network

Case Management and Other Adoption Services Provided Primarily In-House

Nassau County Board of County Commissioners / Family Support Services of North Florida¹
 St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

¹ As of September 1, 2007, the Nassau County lead agency withdrew from its contract and another lead agency (Family Support Services of North Florida) took over its responsibilities.

Source: OPPAGA review of documentation provided by lead agencies.

Lead agencies follow a procurement process to recruit subcontracted adoption providers. Each lead agency developed a plan to procure subcontracts and services as one of their initial requirements when they signed a contract with the department to provide foster care and related services. Prior to initiating or renewing their subcontracts, lead agencies analyze the costs required for the anticipated services. This analysis is designed to ensure sufficient funding is

available in the lead agency's budget, and also to validate that the anticipated costs are allowable, reasonable, and necessary. Lead agencies also define the scope of work, service delivery, and performance expectations in each subcontract. Once these steps are complete, the lead agency accepts proposals from entities willing to provide the needed services. Appendix B provides information on the adoption services provided by subcontractors and how much the lead agencies pay for these services.

Lead agencies only use fee-for-service child placing agencies to a limited degree. Fee-for-service child placing agencies are entities that provide a specialized service, such as conducting home studies, and charge a fee for each service provided. Thirteen of 20 lead agencies reported using fee-for-service entities to a limited degree during Fiscal Year 2006-07. Lead agency administrators said that they sometimes pay fee-for-service entities to conduct home studies for potential adoptive parents who live outside of Florida. Another possibility is if a family first contacted the fee-for-service entity prior to contacting the lead agency. Many fee-for-service entities conduct their own adoptive parent recruitment activities in the community. These entities also sometimes conduct their own parenting classes and home studies. If a child is placed for adoption with a client of a fee-for-service entity, then the lead agency will pay the entity separate fees for a parenting class, a home study, or a finalized adoption.

The primary reason lead agency administrators only occasionally work with fee-for-service entities is that they have already structured their adoption program and budget in a way they consider sufficient to meet their adoption goals. As previously mentioned, many lead agencies have subcontracts with providers to provide adoption services or provide these services in-house. Lead agency administrators have ongoing meetings and performance discussions with their in-house staff and subcontractors and believe this is a more efficient approach to ensure adequate performance. In addition, all the lead agencies allocate their adoption budgets to their subcontractors or in-house staff. They may not have extra funds available to pay the additional fees.

At what point do lead agencies transfer cases between foster care and adoption case managers?

Lead agencies use three models for managing cases as children progress toward adoption:

- keeping a child's case with one case manager for the life of the case,
- transferring a child's case from the original case manager to an adoption specialist, and
- assigning an adoption specialist to coordinate and assist a primary case manager.

As shown in Exhibit 2, most lead agencies use adoption-specific caseworkers, either in a primary or supporting role. It should be noted that although most lead agencies use a single model across all their subcontracted providers, a few lead agencies reported that their subcontractors use different models.⁸ Lead agency administrators cited various rationales for selecting their case management model.

Two lead agencies keep a child's case with a single case manager for the life of the case and do not have adoption specific case managers. Under this approach, each child is assigned a case manager who conducts in-home and foster care activities, such as court appearances and monthly child visits. The same case manager also conducts the adoption activities, such as recruiting adoptive parents and ensuring parenting classes and home studies are complete. Administrators for these lead agencies chose this approach because they believe it best ensures that those making decisions have the most knowledge about the child, the child's family, and the most likely options for adoptive placements. This model also lessens disruption to the child that occurs when transferring him or her to another case manager. However, critics of this approach argue that foster care case managers are too busy to adequately focus on their adoption cases. Foster care case managers still have an obligation to visit other children in their caseloads once a month, attend frequent court hearings, and immediately tend to disrupted placements or other problems.

⁸ Family Services of Metro Orlando, Heartland for Children, and Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe reported that their subcontractors use more than one model.

Exhibit 2

Lead Agencies Use Three Models for Managing Cases as Children Progress Toward Adoption¹

One Case Manager for the Life of the Case Who Also Conducts Adoption Functions

Heartland for Children
Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe

Transfer a Child's Case From a Foster Care Case Manager to an Adoption Case Manager

Big Bend Community-Based Care (East and West)
Clay and Baker Kids Net
Families First Network
Family Services of Metro Orlando
Heartland for Children
Hillsborough Kids, Inc.
Kids Central
Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe
Partnership for Strong Families
Sarasota Family YMCA (North and South)
The Children's Network of Southwest Florida
United for Families

One Foster Care Case Manager for the Life of the Case Who Is Assisted by an Adoption Specialist

Child and Family Connections
ChildNet
Community Partnership for Children
Community-Based Care of Brevard
Community-Based Care of Seminole
Family Services of Metro Orlando
Family Support Services of North Florida
Nassau County Board of County Commissioners / Family Support Services of North Florida
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

¹ The number of lead agencies adds to more than 20 because some lead agencies use more than one model depending on arrangements with their subcontractors.

Source: OPPAGA review of documentation provided by lead agencies.

Twelve lead agencies transfer a child's case from the original case manager to an adoption specialist. Under this approach, a child's case is transferred to a new case manager, either at termination of parental rights or when an adoptive placement is made.⁹ Lead agency administrators said that the benefits to transferring a child's case include that an adoption specialist has more time to devote to reviewing placement options, ensuring the child attends matching events, and making sure that

⁹ Activities that adoption staff may still need to conduct once a child is in an adoptive home include 90 days of in-home supervision, coordinating final court hearings to finalize the adoption, and working with the adoptive parents to establish the amount of maintenance adoption subsidy.

court proceedings occur as quickly as possible. Adoption specialists also have experience and institutional knowledge that allows them to move the child's case through the adoption process as quickly as possible.

However, staff at lead agencies that do not use this approach expressed concerns that knowledge about the case can be lost when transferred between caseworkers. According to these lead agency staff, the case manager who has been with the child since entry into care best knows the child and is therefore the best person to find the child a permanent placement.

Nine lead agencies assign an adoption specialist to coordinate with the original case manager as a secondary worker. Under this approach, lead agencies keep the same case manager with the child for the life of a case, but assign an adoption specialist to assist, generally upon termination of parental rights or placement of the child in an adoptive home. This allows the original case manager to maintain a relationship with the child, conduct the monthly visits, attend court, and conduct other foster care-related activities. The specialist conducts only adoption-related tasks for the case, which include reviewing the child's family history for potential relative placements, preparing the child for adoption, talking to the foster parents about adopting, conducting other adoptive parent recruitment activities, ensuring timely adoption-related court proceedings, and maintaining the child's profile on the Adoption Exchange. Lead agency administrators who use this model believe that it captures many of the benefits of the above two options. Other lead agencies did not express any concerns about this case management model.

Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families for his review and response.

The Secretary's written response is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix C.

OPPAGA supports the Florida Legislature by providing evaluative research and objective analyses to promote government accountability and the efficient and effective use of public resources. This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by telephone (850/488-0021), by FAX (850/487-3804), in person, or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475). Cover photo by Mark Foley.

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Gary R. VanLandingham, Ph.D., OPPAGA Director

Appendix A

Subcontracted Providers for Lead Agency Adoption Programs

Lead agencies structure their adoption programs in a variety of ways. As shown in the table below, most lead agencies use subcontracted providers for case management; however, six lead agencies keep case management in-house by providing these services with their own employees. Also, some lead agencies have contracts with providers for a range of other adoption services such as conducting home studies, recruiting adoptive parents, providing adoption legal services, and providing post-adoption services. Lead agencies that contract with case management organizations may contract for full case management, with subcontracted providers managing both foster care and adoption cases. Other lead agencies opt to have separate providers for in-home and foster care case management and adoption case management. See Appendix B for a list of the subcontracted adoption providers used by each lead agency and types of service provided.

Lead Agency	Case Management Provider(s)			Other Adoption-Related Service Provider(s) (Home Studies, Recruitment, Legal Services, Post-Adoption Services) ¹
	Full Case Management (In-Home, Foster Care, and Adoption)	In-Home and Foster Care Case Management	Adoption Case Management	
District 1 Families First Network	Full case management provided by Families First Network			Children's Home Society
District 2A and 2B Big Bend Community-Based Care (East and West)		Camelot Community Care Children's Home Society	Children's Home Society Life Management Center	
District 3 Partnership for Strong Families		Community Partnership for Children Devereux Family Preservation Services	Children's Home Society	
District 4 Clay and Baker Kids Net	Full case management provided by Clay and Baker Kids Net, Inc.			Clay Behavioral Health Center
District 4 Family Support Services of North Florida	Children's Home Society Daniel, Inc. Jewish Family and Community Services Mental Health Resource Center	PSI Family Services		Children's Home Society Boys Home Association
District 4 Nassau County Board of County Commissioners / Family Support Services of North Florida ²	Full case management by Family Support Services of North Florida			
District 4 St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners	Full case management provided by St. Johns County			

Lead Agency	Case Management Provider(s)			Other Adoption-Related Service Provider(s) (Home Studies, Recruitment, Legal Services, Post-Adoption Services) ¹
	Full Case Management (In-Home, Foster Care, and Adoption)	In-Home and Foster Care Case Management	Adoption Case Management	
District 7 Community Based Care of Brevard	Children's Home Society Devereux			Children's Home Society Devereux Intervention Services
District 7 Community Based Care of Seminole	Children's Home Society Human Services Associates			
District 7 Family Services of Metro Orlando	Children's Home Society Devereux Intervention Services Kids Hope United Neighbor to Family			
District 8 Children's Network of Southwest Florida	Family Preservation Services Lutheran Services			Adoption attorney(s) Behavior Analysis Children's Advocacy Center-Lee Counselor Delta Family Counseling Family Preservation Family Preservation Services Florida Baptist Children's Home Florida Youth and Family Services Lee Mental Health Lutheran Services Mentor(s) Quality Life Center Suncoast Psychometrics
District 9 Child and Family Connections	Children's Home Society Family Preservation Services			Children's Home Society Place of Hope
District 10 ChildNet	Full case management provided by ChildNet, Inc.			Children's Home Society Kids in Distress
District 11 Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe	Center for Child and Family Enrichment CHARLEE Homes for Children Children's Home Society Family Resource Center of South Florida His House Children's Home Kid's Hope United Neighbor to Family Wesley House Family Services			
District 12 Community Partnership for Children	Full case management provided by both Community Partnership for Children and by a subcontractor (Neighbor to Family)			Adoption attorney(s) Adoption therapist(s)
District 13 Kids Central		Camelot Community Care Children's Home Society LifeStream Behavioral Center The Centers	Children's Home Society	

Lead Agency	Case Management Provider(s)			Other Adoption-Related Service Provider(s) (Home Studies, Recruitment, Legal Services, Post-Adoption Services) ¹
	Full Case Management (In-Home, Foster Care, and Adoption)	In-Home and Foster Care Case Management	Adoption Case Management	
District 14 Heartland for Children	Children's Home Society Devereux Gulf Coast Community Care Kids Hope United			Adoption attorney(s) Adoption therapist(s) Bay Area Behavioral Services Everyday Blessings Florida Baptist Children's Home Children's Home, Inc.
District 15 United for Families		Children's Home Society Family Preservation	Children's Home Society	
Suncoast Region Hillsborough Kids, Inc		Camelot Community Care Children's Home, Inc. Children's Home Society Devereux Kids Gulf Coast Community Care Youth and Family Alternatives	Camelot Community Care	Adoption attorney(s) Children's Home Society Camelot Community Care Everyday Blessings Family Enrichment Center Independent home study contractor(s) Sylvia Thomas Center
Suncoast Region Sarasota Family YMCA (North and South)	Direction for Mental Health Family Preservation Services Gulfcoast Community Care Harbor Behavioral Health Care Manatee Glens Manatee Glens Specialty Population Youth and Family Alternatives			

¹ Lead agencies or case management providers may also provide these other adoption services.

² Family Support Services of North Florida took over as lead agency in Nassau County in September 2007.

Source: Community-based care lead agencies.

Appendix B

Payments to Subcontracted Providers for Adoption Services

Lead agencies often use subcontracted providers to implement their adoption programs. The following table provides information on lead agency contracts for adoption-specific services such as case management, support services, and post-adoption services. Full case management and foster care dependency case management providers listed in Appendix A are not included in this table. The table identifies the adoption providers used by each lead agency, the specific services provided by these subcontractors, and the reported cost of these services in the most recent contract period. Lead agencies may pay subcontractors different rates for similar adoption services for several reasons. For example, rates may differ due to the number of adoptive families receiving services from a subcontractor or the complexity of the contracted tasks. In addition, the time period of the contracts does not necessarily correspond with the state fiscal year, and the length of these contracts may vary, affecting the total cost a lead agency pays its service provider(s).

Lead Agency	Adoption Provider	Services Provided	Cost ¹
District 1 Families First Network	Children's Home Society	Adoption support services such as home studies, sibling visitations, post-adoption services	\$421,574
District 2A and 2B Big Bend Community Based Care	Children's Home Society	Adoption case management and support services such as home studies, recruitment, and post-adoption services	\$344,746
	Life Management Center	Adoption case management and support services such as home studies, recruitment, and post-adoption services	\$529,853
District 3 Partnership for Strong Families	Children's Home Society	Adoption case management and support services such as home studies, recruitment, matching, and post-adoption services	\$1,129,932
District 4 Clay and Baker Kids Net	Clay Behavioral Health Center	Family preservation services and in-home parenting classes that may include adoptive families	\$218,746
District 4 - Family Support Services of North Florida	Children's Home Society	Post-adoption services	\$49,500
District 7 Community Based Care of Brevard	Children's Home Society	Adoption support services including recruitment, home studies, and child studies	\$65,000
	Devereux	Adoption support services including recruitment, home studies, and child studies	\$65,000
	Intervention Services	Adoption support services including recruitment, home studies, and child studies	\$65,000

Lead Agency	Adoption Provider	Services Provided	Cost ¹
District 8 Children's Network of Southwest Florida	Adoption attorney(s)	Adoption legal services	\$90,000
	Behavior Analysis	Behavior assessment, behavior modification plans, adoptive parent training, and placement stabilization	\$3,000 per episode of care
	Children's Advocacy Center	Mental health assessment, psychiatric services, counseling (specializes in sexual abuse counseling)	Assessment - \$85.91 per hour, psychiatric services - \$352.71 per hour, counseling - \$91.09 per hour
	Counselor	Pre- and post -adoption consultation	\$490 parenting assessment \$150 pre- or post-adoption consultation
	Delta Family Counseling	Therapy, play therapy	\$100 per session
	Family Preservation Services	Family-centered services, emergency services to prevent out of home placements/adoption disruptions	\$4,000 per 8-week episode of care
	Florida Baptist Children's Home	Recruitment, adoptive parent training and licensing	\$12,500 per month
	Florida Youth and Family Services	Adult and child psychological assessment	\$700 per assessment
	Lee Mental Health	Respite care	\$135.80 per day
	Lutheran Services	Family-centered services, emergency services to prevent out of home placements/adoption disruptions	\$4,000 per 8-week episode of care
	Mentor(s)	Respite care	\$135.80 per day
	Quality Life Center	Family mental health assessments and in-home services	\$190,000
	Suncoast Psychometrics	Adult and child psychological assessment	\$600 per assessment
District 9 Child and Family Connections	Adoption attorney(s)	Adoption legal services	\$160,000
	Children's Home Society	Adoption support services such as home studies, recruitment, matching, and post-adoption services	\$406,136
	Place of Hope	Adoption support services including recruitment and training of prospective adoptive parents, child studies and staffing, and post-adoption services	\$3,000 per finalized adoption + \$1,500 for each additional sibling placed
District 10 ChildNet	Children's Home Society	Pre-adoption support services such as child and family counseling, matching process assistance, and education of prospective adoptive parents; and post-adoption services	\$130,000
	Kids in Distress	Pre-adoption services such as child and family counseling, matching process assistance, and education of prospective adoptive parents; and post-adoption services	\$130,000
District 12 Community Partnership for Children	Adoption attorney(s)	Adoption legal services	\$145,000
	Adoption therapist(s)	Pre-adoption psychological evaluations of children, consultations with applicant families, and post-adoption therapy.	\$25,000

Lead Agency	Adoption Provider	Services Provided	Cost ¹
District 13 Kids Central	Children's Home Society	Adoption case management and pre-adoption support services such as child and family counseling, matching, and education of prospective adoptive parents; and post-adoption services.	\$1,724,283.78
District 14 Heartland for Children	Adoption attorney(s)	Adoption legal services	\$150,000
	Adoption therapist(s)	Adoption therapeutic services, adoptive parent training, education seminars, and adoption support group	\$50,200
	Bay Area Behavioral Services	Home studies, child studies, and comprehensive behavior health assessments	\$425 per home/child study
	Everyday Blessings	Placement services including home studies and post-adoption services	\$3,196 per finalized adoption + \$1,598 per additional child
	Florida Baptist Children's Home	Placement services including home studies and post-adoption services	\$5,000 per finalized adoption + \$1,000 per additional child
	Children's Home, Inc.	Placement services including home studies and post-adoption services	\$5,000 per finalized adoption + \$1,000 per additional child
District 15 United for Families	Children's Home Society	Adoption case management, support services, and post-adoption services	\$607,145
Suncoast Region Hillsborough Kids, Inc	Adoption attorney(s)	Adoption legal services	\$1,000 per finalized adoption + \$500 for each additional child in group
	Camelot Community Care	Adoption case management	\$2,166,980
	Camelot Community Care	Recruitment of adoptive families	\$45,191
	Camelot Community Care	Recruitment of adoptive families	\$61,950
	Everyday Blessings	Adoption support services such as recruitment, adoptive parent training, and matching; and post-adoption services	\$1,500 per adoptive home recruited, payable after finalization
	Independent home study contractor(s)	Adoptive home studies	\$300 to \$400 per home study

¹ Generally, the cost represents the maximum payment allowed for the period listed. If there is no upper cap for the contract, we listed the rate at which the provider is paid for a particular service. In some cases, costs may include payment for non-adoption services.

Source: Community-based care lead agencies.

Appendix C



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist
Governor

Robert A. Butterworth
Secretary

January 25, 2008

Mr. Gary R. VanLandingham, Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis and
Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Mr. VanLandingham:

Thank you for your January 4 letter providing the Department of Children and Families a draft copy of your report, "Lead Agencies Structure Their Adoption Programs in a Variety of Ways." The report provides a wealth of information about the structural and process differences the lead agencies use to provide adoption services.

Although the report does not include findings or recommendations, the information in this report will assist the Department and our Community-Based Care partners as we develop our improvement strategies for our Program Improvement Plan. The Program Improvement Plan will respond to the findings included in the recent statewide federal review of child welfare services, including adoption services.

I want to thank your staff for this informative report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Butterworth', is written over the typed name and title.

Robert A. Butterworth
Secretary

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and
Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency