

2024-108 AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Alameda County—Department of Children and Family Services

The audit by the California State Auditor will provide independently developed and verified information related to Alameda County's Department of Children and Family Services (department). The audit's scope will include, but not be limited to, the following activities:

1. Review and evaluate the laws, rules, and regulations significant to the audit objectives.
2. Evaluate the county's process for cross-collaboration with other agencies and entities pursuant to requirements in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16521.6, including adherence to the memorandum of understanding's (MOU) required process for youth with complex needs, and determine the following:
 - (a) Whether the timeline, process, and partners outlined in the MOU are sufficient to provide needed support for youth.
 - (b) The adequacy of the processes the county uses for family finding and engagement, as well as the adequacy of intensive family-finding efforts for older youth or those in the foster care system longer than 2 years.
 - (c) Whether foster youth have timely access to behavioral health services throughout the continuum of mental health care to address their needs.
 - (d) The sufficiency of the collaboration, pursuant to the MOUs, for ensuring that children involved in both the child welfare and regional center systems receive needed services timely.
3. Determine whether the department has a sufficient number of trained staff to address its foster child caseload and its complaint investigation workload by performing the following:
 - (a) Determine the trends and total number of department positions of staff who review foster child placements and investigate child abuse claims (both filled and vacant positions) and evaluate how staffing levels compare to employee caseload standards and best practices.
 - (b) Determine whether the department has a training program to ensure that employees are aware of departmental case processing standards and best practices. Identify the number of employees who have received training and how often such training occurs.
4. Evaluate the department's approach to ensuring the health and safety of foster youth placed in transitional centers. Specifically, evaluate the following:
 - (a) The safety measures put in place and whether such procedures are consistently followed.
 - (b) How the department evaluates the overall performance of transitional centers and ensures corrective action when warranted.

5. Review and assess any other issues that are significant to the audit.