

**Department of Health and Human Services**

**OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**PROGRAMATIC REVIEW OF MULTI-  
STATE FOSTER CARE DATA ARCHIVE**

**UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO'S CHAPIN  
HALL CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND  
FAMILIES**

**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**



JULY 2001  
A-05-01-00084



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF **AUDIT** SERVICES  
233 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601

REGION V  
OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

July 31, 2001

CIN: A-05-01 -00084

Mr. Casey Murray  
Associate Comptroller  
University of Chicago  
1225 East 60<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago, Illinois, 60637

Dear Mr. Murray:

This report provides you with the results of our programmatic review of Grant No. 90CA1620 awarded to the University of Chicago. Our review focused on the grantees performance in achieving project objectives and complying with the terms and conditions of the grant project. We found that the grantee met the objectives and goals of the grant in the development and creation of a multi-state foster care data archive.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND**

The University of Chicago's Chapin Hall Center for Children was awarded the grant by the Department of Health and Human Service, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The grant provided for a project entitled, "Multi-State Foster Care Data Archive." The project continued and extended the grantee's agreement with ACF to maintain, develop, and analyze a multi-state archive of foster care data. The work was to be performed during the period September 30, 1997 through September 29, 2000 at an estimated cost of \$750,000.

### **OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

Our audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. The purpose of our audit was limited to an assessment of the grantee's performance in achieving project objectives and complying with the terms and conditions of the grant award. Since the grantee achieved project objectives, we did not assess the grantee's accountability for Federal funds. However, the issue of fiscal accountability was addressed in the grantee's Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133 Audit Report, which had no findings or questioned costs relating to Federal awards.

In order to accomplish our objectives, we reviewed documentary evidence pertaining to the grant, which included the grant application, interim and final progress reports, and correspondence between the grantee and ACF. We also met with the Principal Investigator and reviewed other documentation maintained by the grantee to determine their effectiveness in accomplishing the objectives of the grant.

The Federal funds awarded under this grant were \$750,000 for the period September 30, 1997 to September 29, 2000. Field work was performed at the University of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois in June 2001.

## **RESULTS OF REVIEW**

We found that the grantee generally accomplished the objectives and goals of the grant. Specific objectives were established by a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which included officials of universities, charitable foundations, and other nonprofit groups, as well as, officials of ACF. In February 1998, the TAG met and identified the objectives for this continuation of a project funded during the previous five years. Specific objectives were to:

- Develop substitute care data in additional states and to maintain data flow from the states that are undergoing Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System conversions.
- Develop short policy papers on the topics of adoption (specifically related to implementing the new Adoption and Safe Families Act), placement transitions and disruption, and substate-level analysis of foster care activity.
- Continue to work to establish individual-level linkage projects, with special emphasis, if possible, on child protection with the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

Our conclusions are based on discussions with project officials and a review of reports that were produced by project staff. Some of the reports were based on an analysis of archive data, while others described efforts of project staff to accomplish project objectives. Many of the reports were attached to quarterly reports to ACF.

We found that the project continued to work with states to expand the data base. During the three years of the grant, the number of states included in the archive was increased from six to twelve. One state was dropped because of conversion issues. Information from the data archive was also used to publish several papers, covering each of the areas specifically targeted by the TAG. Although the project did encounter problems establishing individual-level linkage with the NCANDS, linkage of individuals on the two databases was partially established. It appears that significant effort went into this area, and the grantee did report the problems encountered. The project made advancements in (i) acquiring data on child related services other than foster care, (ii) obtaining information to link child histories between programs, and (iii) demonstrating the research utility and planning value of data linkage procedures.

We found that interim and final progress reports, addressing the objectives and goals of the grant award, were submitted on a timely basis and that ACF oversight was adequate to ensure that the project was meeting its objectives and accomplishing the grant purposes.

During the final year of the grant, the grantee secured additional funding from Federal and private grants to continue the development and utilization of the multi-state foster care data archive

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project. Future work will focus on special topic analyses and dissemination of results to a larger audience.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ross Anderson, Audit Manager, at 3 12-353-8663.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Swanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul Swanson  
Regional Inspector General  
for Audit Services