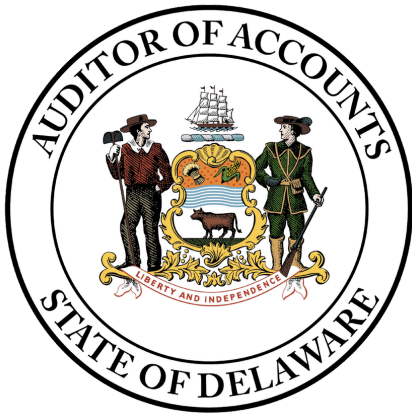




DELAWARE DSCYF YOUTH CARE AND PLACEMENT

SPECIAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2026

AUDITOR.DELAWARE.GOV

DELAWARE DSCYF YOUTH CARE AND PLACEMENT SPECIAL REPORT

Dear Fellow Delawareans,

Much of the work we do in the Office of Auditor of Accounts (AOA) is critical, but routine fiscal oversight. These audits help ensure effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars but may sometimes obscure the true importance of what those dollars fund. Occasionally, however, our office has the opportunity to create reports that illustrate how essential State Agencies, programs, and funds are for Delawareans, especially the most vulnerable among us.

In 2024, AOA received outreach from concerned Delawareans about how our State government deals with youths in the care of Division of Family Services (DFS) under the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF). Our subsequent engagement and this resulting special report demonstrate an important way that taxpayer funds make an outsized impact on vulnerable populations. The children who come into contact with this system rely on our State to get this right. We cannot afford not to, both fiscally, and more importantly on a human level.

Every year, youths in Delaware come into State custody, sometimes after interactions with our justice system, and often through situations they cannot control. They may face unstable or untenable situations at home, deal with chronic mental illness, or face a variety of other factors that leave them at the mercy of the State. A small, but significant group of these youths under the care of DFS cannot be placed in a foster home or facility. Instead, they are sometimes sent out-of-State, costing taxpayers more than \$3.5 million in FY 2025. In other cases, these youths sleep in temporary but potentially unsuitable accommodations in State offices, while State employees volunteer for overtime shifts to care for them, adding an additional cost burden.

These youths often have no one to advocate for them besides tireless workers in the DSCYF, Department of Justice, and other State offices. These social workers, therapists, administrators, attorneys, and others dedicate an outsized amount of their time to ensuring youths are cared for, especially when they are unable to secure placement in a foster family or in-State facility. I commend DSCYF staff and leadership for their cooperation with our office for this report. I also recognize their strong efforts to rectify issues identified in this report, and to continue working towards a stronger system that addresses the needs of youths in DFS care. However, DSCYF continues to work with limited resources to commit to this problem, even as they make progress. I believe this report raises important questions that lawmakers, State leaders, and advocates should take into consideration.

DELAWARE DSCYF YOUTH CARE AND PLACEMENT SPECIAL REPORT

Our State spends millions of dollars every year to serve this small population of youths, but lawmakers have more work to do to build a holistic system that addresses their needs. State employees face a changing set of circumstances for each child – often depending on timeframe, facility availability, individual youth circumstances, and more. While DSCYF is working towards adding youth housing capacity, it may still be a concern that the additional beds our State has funded will be enough for all youths in DFS care at any one time, or if all of their individual needs can be addressed.

This is a population that desperately needs, and legally relies upon, our State to be ready for them before they walk through the door of a State office or courtroom. Make no mistake – this is a nationwide issue, and not one that any State has resolved entirely. However, I believe that this is an opportunity for Delaware to lead. In order to do so, we need to think bigger about this problem and potential solutions than we have before.

I hope that this report serves as the beginning of a larger conversation about how we serve youths in DFS care, and how we can prepare to serve them better. It will be a worthy investment in our State's future, and also in the basic decency that we owe each other when we face our times of greatest need. That is what our State government is here to do.

Sincerely,



Lydia E. York
Auditor of Accounts

Summary

On December 12, 2024, the Office of Auditor of Accounts (AOA) received allegations through the AOA Fraud Hotline that the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF) was mistreating children under State care and wasting State of Delaware resources in the process. The complaint specifically alleged that due to a lack of other suitable options, youth under the care of DSCYF's Division of Family Services (DFS) are sometimes required to sleep on the floor of Division of Family Services (DFS) office space under poor conditions. Additionally, the complaint alleged that DSCYF regularly placed juveniles in out-of-state facilities at a high cost to the State.

AOA performed an evaluation in response to the allegations to evaluate the following for youth in DFS custody:

- The cost and process for sending youths to out-of-state facilities during the fiscal years ended June 30, 2023, 2024, and 2025
- The causes and risks of youth in-office stays
- The availability of other DSCYF facilities to house the youths

The evaluation found that DSCYF faces ongoing challenges in meeting the placement needs of youths because of limited in-state placement capacity, shortages of foster families and specialized service providers, and the absence of centralized oversight for certain placement activities. Although DSCYF evaluates each youth's individual needs and available in-state resources before authorizing an out-of-state placement, the evaluation identified opportunities to strengthen continuity of care through improved coordination and documentation. The evaluation also found that limited placement options have resulted in some youths remaining temporarily in DFS office locations while appropriate placements are identified. Although these office stays are intended to be temporary, office facilities were not designed or equipped to provide residential care, creating operational and safety risks for both youths and staff. Existing State-operated juvenile facilities generally could not be used for these temporary placements because of statutory, operational, or programmatic limitations related to their correctional or treatment missions. At the time of the evaluation, DSCYF had already initiated efforts to address these challenges, including plans to develop a temporary placement facility in Sussex County using existing funding. If implemented as planned, the facility is expected to increase DSCYF's capacity to provide appropriate temporary housing for youths awaiting placement.

The evaluation also determined that out-of-state placements will likely remain necessary when a youth's treatment or behavioral needs cannot be met by available in-state resources. As a result, maintaining effective oversight, documentation, and monitoring of these placements remains essential. Similarly, until additional in-state placement capacity and foster care resources become

available, DSCYF will continue to face the need for temporary emergency housing for some youths throughout Delaware.

Recommendations

- Strengthen Oversight and management of Out-of-State Placements:
 - Perform periodic analyses of the costs and services associated with out-of-state placements to support resource planning, evaluate cost effectiveness, and inform policymakers regarding unmet service needs within Delaware.
 - Collaborate with policymakers, service providers, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to expand the availability of specialized in-state services and reduce reliance on out-of-state placements when appropriate.
- Document and Monitor DFS In-Office Stays:
 - Develop and maintain formal policies, processes, and procedures for standard and emergency placements, including:
 - An on-call schedule with primary and secondary emergency contacts.
 - Accommodation requirements for male/female and criminal/non-criminal juvenile segregation.
 - Staffing and accommodation needs reflected in the budget.
 - Collaborate with lawmakers and the community to increase the network of Foster Families to support the needs of juveniles waiting for placement.
 - Standardize policies and procedures for medication handling, distribution, and oversight.
- Utilize DSCYF Facilities:
 - Review campus projects to identify opportunities to assist with care of the emergency placements in New Castle County.
 - Ensure that all facilities used to house youths include shelters with hygiene and kitchen facilities, appropriate security features, trained staff, and child-to-staff ratios are in place to protect both staff and juveniles.

Results of Evaluation

Evaluation of Out-of-state Care Placement

AOA evaluated the allegations that the State was unnecessarily placing juveniles in out-of-state facilities while the State already has facilities, causing additional costs to the State for the fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The out-of-state placement process for youth in DFS custody is managed by DFS. Before out-of-state placement of youth under DFS custody is considered, DFS first searches for in-state care facilities, family placement, and foster homes. If no in-state resource can be identified or the youth has complex needs requiring specialized placement, DFS determines the most appropriate course of action for each out-of-state placement, coordinates with the placement facility, and develops a comprehensive care plan. The care plan includes facility availability, treatment requirements, and duration. Out-of-state placements are also considered when juveniles in custody require specialized treatment that is unavailable in Delaware, including for inappropriate sexual behavior, fire-setting behavior, substance use, severe aggression, medical complexities, eating disorders, and intellectual or developmental disabilities. The placement process is conducted by DFS with input from family services specialists serving the youth. However, despite the efforts of DFS, the juvenile can refuse the placement option suggested or request a change while in the facility, and DFS must start searching for alternative placement to accommodate the juvenile.

DSCYF utilizes the For Our Children's Ultimate Success (FOCUS) system for case management for youths in their care. This system allows DFS to record the attempts and outcomes of their search for care and the path for each juvenile under their care, as well as track their progress. A case worker records the various care facilities that were contacted for placement and reasons for denial of placement to input befo/re utilizing an out-of-state facility.

Out-of-State Service Providers

DSCYF adheres to the State of Delaware's procurement process to select contractors. Additionally, DSCYF may enter into single-case agreements with facilities that provide specialized services for juveniles in the custody of DFS.

Delaware DSCYF – Youth Care and Placement Special Report

At the time of the evaluation, DSCYF had agreements with about 30 out-of-state facilities available for placements. The unit cost for specialized treatment can range from \$55 to \$2,000 and is determined by the level of care and treatment plan requirements for each juvenile. In FY 2025, DSCYF had agreements with 27 out-of-state facilities located in several states, predominantly on the East Coast.¹ In the same period, there were 30 youth in out-of-state placements, 15 of which were still in the facility at the end of that time period² (see Table 1).

Table 1: Out-of-State Placement Data:

Facility	Active	Discharged
American School for the Deaf	1	
Bancroft		1
Benchmark		1
BridgeWay	1	
Cumberland Hospital		1
Devereux	3	
DTA	1	
Foundations		1
Fox Run	2	
Gulf Coast		1
Harbor Point		2
Huntington Creek		1
Kidspeace	2	2
Laurel Oaks	2	2
Millcreek	1	1
Nexus	1	
Sandy Pines	1	1
Springbrook		1
Woods	1	
Youth for Tomorrow		1
Sub Total	15	15
Grand Total		30

Out-of-state Placement Costs

Out-of-state placements of youth in DFS custody costs have increased between the fiscal years ended June 30, 2023, 2024 and 2025. The number of youths in custody stayed the same, however the lengths of stay varied and the contracted costs increased.

¹ DSCYF Current Out-of-State Contractual with Rates

² Youth in Out-of-State Placements FY25 Report

Table 2: Total DFS Out-of-State Placement Costs by Vendor*

Out of State Providers	Fiscal Year		
	2023	2024	2025
ABH PENNSYLVANIA CHILDRENS SERVICES INC	\$ -	\$ 16,873	\$ 781,686
BHCFOX RUN HOSPITAL			117,100
CHESTNUT HILL MENTAL HEALTH CENTER			138,600
CUMBERLAND HOSPITAL			290,700
DIVERSIFIED TREATMENT ALTERNATIVE CENTER	186,826	210,635	182,500
GULF COAST TREATMENT CENTER		230,470	119,506
HABILITATION CENTERS LLC			84,068
HARBOR POINT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER IN	802,207	649,448	304,135
HEALTHBRIDGE CHILDRENS HOSPITAL HBH	42,000		78,700
KEYSTONE NEWPORT NEWS LLC	136,439		
KIDSPACE NATIONAL CTR INC	270,367	332,195	292,191
LAUREL OAKS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER INC	137,360	210,210	342,271
LIBERTY POINT BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE LLC		193,163	47,179
NEXUS NEURORECOVERY CENTER - SAN ANTONIO			56,100
REHABILITATION CENTERS LLCDBA MILLCREEK		68,925	195,120
SP BEHAVIORAL LLC			171,285
UHS OF SAVANNAH LLC	317,866	169,429	
WOODS SERVICES	383,709	326,950	315,815
YOUTH FOR TOMORROW NEW LIFE CENTER INC	21,760	32,030	110,134
Grand Total	\$ 2,298,534	\$ 2,440,329	\$ 3,627,091

*Vendor list provided by DSCYF and amounts are compiled from the State's Accounting system First State Financials (FSF)

Comparing Delaware to Other States

AOA compared Delaware's youth placement process to four other states and found those states face similar challenges. The states of New Mexico, Oregon, Tennessee, and West Virginia were selected for comparison due to availability of data. This research revealed that out-of-state and emergency placement conditions are neither uncommon nor unique to Delaware. The underlying factors driving these scenarios are very similar across states, including increased demand for child services interventions, a decline in the availability of foster families, and limited housing or facility availability, staffing, and off-hours intervention.

Additionally, AOA found that one out-of-state placement system is utilized by all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.³ This system, called the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) establishes uniform legal and administrative procedures governing the interstate placement of children and serves as statutory law and a binding

³ ICPC - <https://aphsa.org/icpc-resources/>

agreement among all fifty-two member jurisdictions. All state and local officials are legally bound to honor and enforce the Compact.

Although the ICPC does not regulate the rates established by service provider agreements, it clearly defines the legal and financial responsibilities associated with a child's placement. These responsibilities, including costs of care, medical coverage, and the potential return of the juvenile, remain with the sending state.

Results

The out-of-state youth placement process is highly complex, involving numerous touchpoints. DSCYF currently lacks a formalized policy for youth in out-of-state care. Here is a breakdown of the current placement observations:

- **Placement Complexity:** The process for coordinating out-of-state youth care is intricate and requires multiple touchpoints across various stakeholders.
- **Utilization of Providers:** In line with national trends, DSCYF often relies on out-of-state providers, while in-state provider options are limited. The systemic imbalance creates redundant expenditures and heightens physical logistical strains.
- **Placement Alternatives & Autonomy:** Although in-state facilities or kinship/family options may be available, youth have the legal right to refuse these placements.
- **Undocumented Placement Processes:** The DFS process for out-of-state placements is not officially documented increasing operational, legal, and compliance risks.

Evaluation of Youth In-Office Stays

AOA evaluated emergency youth placement in State offices under the supervision of DSCYF employees.

Youths in DFS custody requiring immediate emergency placement in Delaware may sometimes be temporarily placed in living quarters within State offices operated by DFS. These temporary placements are caused by factors including a lack of available foster homes or space at **DSCYF** facilities, off-hours and holiday placements, and court orders limiting placement options. Additionally, even available facilities and foster parents can refuse placement based on past experience with youths, internal policies, or safety concerns.

Emergency in-office care for youths causes overtime expenditure for DFS. Staff needs for these emergency placements contribute to the Division's total overtime expenditures of \$1.4 million in FY 2023, \$1.4 million in FY 2024 and \$1.7 million in FY 2025. Additional related expenditures for these placements include purchases from vendors including Wawa, Chick-Fil-A, McDonalds, Burger King, and various grocery stores.

State Offices Used for Emergency Placement

- Churchman's Office – 92 Christiana Road, New Castle, DE 19720
- Milford Riverwalk Center Offices – 247 NE Front St., Milford, DE 19963
- Silverlake Barratt Building Office – 821 Silver Lake Blvd, Dover, DE 19904

AOA observed living quarters, dining areas, safety precautions, and supply compartments at the above locations. Youths placed at these facilities are able to come in and out of the building at all locations pending permission from the DFS employee.

State Staff Providing Care for Emergency Placement

State positions providing supervision to youths placed in State offices include the following job classifications: Family Service Assistants, Family Service Specialists, Family Crisis Therapists, Family Crisis Therapist Supervisors, and Assistant or Regional Administrators.

Concerns

AOA observations support the conclusion that staff are diligent and professional in their care of youths staying in DFS offices. However, the evaluation raises concerns regarding safety for youths and caretakers, hygiene, cohabitation, nutritional, and health needs:

- DFS staff interviewed by AOA expressed significant concerns regarding their personal safety. These staff noted past altercations between employees and youths staying in-office resulting in police contact and medical care needed for DFS staff.
- AOA's evaluation of buildings identified a critical lack of physical security measures, including:
 - No active monitoring devices (e.g., CCTV) in Milford.
 - No on-site security personnel at any of the locations.
 - No metal detectors at any of the locations.
- There are no shower facilities at DFS offices, creating potential hygiene issues for youth staying in them. Instead, youths staying in-office are required to leave the office and travel to a different facility or a foster home to bathe.

- With youths being able to leave the building on their own, there is the risk that the youth could obtain illegal substances, bring others to the facilities, and run away from the facility.
- Cohabitation of youths in State offices can present safety risks to the youths, including inappropriate or violent contact.
- Access to proper nutrition during in-office may be limited. DFS locations kept food on hand for youths in their care, however, each facility had different rules for food purchases and appropriate vendors.
- Although DFS maintains youth medical records, a child may require medical attention that exceeds a caseworker's expertise. While a dedicated call line is available for high-level medical needs, relying on a Family Service Specialist to manage complex medical situations can put other children in the environment at risk.

Results

Inadequate DSCYF placement and medication tracking procedures create vulnerabilities. Unstructured temporary placements elevate safety risks for youth and staff, while informal medication handling at the State Offices compromises facility security and inventory control. The investigation observations are detailed below:

- **Inadequate Emergency Placements:** The temporary and emergency placement procedures lack formal structure process at DSCYF, creating administrative and operational vulnerabilities.
- **Elevated Risk of Harm:** The absence of a formalized placement protocol increases the risk of physical and emotional harm for both youth in care and state employees.
- **Informal Medication Protocols:** The inventory and distribution processes for medications lack formal oversight. At the State Offices, medications were stored in areas with inadequate security, allowing potential unauthorized access.

Evaluation of DSCYF Facilities Availability

AOA evaluated allegations that DSCYF was not using its currently owned facilities to their full capacity efficiently or effectively. There are six DSCYF facilities use for youths in their care. One out of the six could be considered for care of temporary place youths. As the others are either a treatment center, Level V facilities are for incarcerated youth with 24-hour confinement or Level IV facilities which are transitional step and considered a quasi-incarceration with structured rehabilitation, curfews, and electronic monitoring.

AOA reviewed the one facility known as the “Cottages” (Snowden, Mowlds, and Grace) located at the 1825 Faulkland Road in New Castle County for viable emergency placement of youths in need.

- Mowlds Cottage is a transitional program that houses adjudicated male youth up to 18 years old who have completed the Ferris School Program. Mowlds Cottage also accommodates short-term after-care supervision commitments for boys who have been committed by family court. The cottage is a total learning environment that provides comprehensive program services in a safe, secure environment.
- Snowden Cottage is a Level IV staff secured residential treatment program designed to address the needs of adjudicated male adolescents and assist them in making a successful transition to the community.
- The Grace cottages are a Level IV staff secured rehabilitation program focusing on the treatment needs of adolescent females in a safe, gender positive environment.

Results

- DSCYF was able to relocate the population utilizing the Grace Cottage and therefore, the Grace Cottage is being repurposed to address temporary housing needs until the facility is completed in Georgetown. These will be known as Landing Point.
- The Mowlds cottage which is a facility typically used for juveniles requiring level four (4) restrictions and the services of the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS) custody, it could be a solution for New Castle County emergency placement needs. However, this facility is designed to meet DYRS requirements, not to accommodate DFS juveniles. Even if the cottage is at empty capacity, due to unknown youths facing trial or court appointment, it would not be a consistent option. And the co-mingling displaced juveniles with those who require rehabilitation services is not the optimal placement and is generally not recommended due to the needs and restrictions of a displaced juvenile’s differ from those requiring detention.
- There is a State project that provided a \$6.0 million funding line in the Capital Bond Bill FY26 for a facility renovation in Georgetown. The facility is a 9,000 square foot facility and will provide 12 beds and help avoid the need to provide emergency placements at the administrative offices, which currently have juveniles in their care. This project is estimated to be completed by July of 2027.

Management Response

Management response letter received via email October 9, 2026 from DSCYF:

State of Delaware



Engage families and communities to promote the safety and well-being of children through prevention, intervention, treatment and rehabilitative services.

State of Delaware
Office of Auditor of Accounts
1128 S. Bradford St.
Dover, DE 19904

Re: Management Response to Special Report

The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF) prides itself on being a responsible steward of public resources while prioritizing the safety and well-being of the children ordered to its care. We appreciate the time taken by the Auditor's Office to understand and recognize that the children and youth at the center of this engagement are far more than statistics or budget lines; they are individuals with complex histories and experiences that influence their current needs and circumstances.

When the Auditor's Office first reached out to DSCYF in March 2025, the department was already aware of and actively working on plans to address the issue of youth in the custody of the Division of Family Services (DFS) having to occasionally spend the night in DFS offices. As the Auditor's report mentions, this is a problem experienced by child welfare agencies nationwide due to a number of factors including, but not limited to, a shortage of foster homes and other in-state providers able to provide placement for children and youth with challenging behavioral health, medical, or other needs, last minute placement disruptions/custody orders, and the wishes of the youth themselves. During the engagement, DSCYF demonstrated to the Auditor's Office, through hours of case review sessions, the diligent efforts expended by DFS staff to both prevent an office stay and to secure an appropriate placement when a youth must remain in the office overnight. This also includes the work that goes into prioritizing in-state resources before exploring facilities out-of-state.

Still, DSCYF recognizes that a DFS office is not where children and youth should be sleeping or living their day-to-day lives while experiencing foster care, even for a short period of time. To that end, since FY23, DSCYF has been working to establish in-state options to serve youth who experience placement disruptions or have complex needs that have historically been difficult to serve in a traditional foster home. The approach has been two-fold:

- Establishing an emergency short-term shelter placement by repurposing one of the Level IV Residential Cottages (previously known as Grace Cottage) operated by the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (YRS) into a DFS-operated shelter facility. The shelter program, known as Landing Point, is anticipated to begin operations later this fall.
- Renovating an existing building on the Stockley Campus in Georgetown to serve as a therapeutic group home for youth in DFS custody who exhibit inappropriate sexual

Delaware Youth and Family Center
1825 Faulkland Road, Wilmington, Delaware 19805

behaviors, fire-setting, severe aggression, medical complexities, and/or intellectual or developmental disabilities, but who do not meet the clinical necessity for residential treatment. DSCYF requested, and was funded, \$6 million in the FY26 Bond Bill for the renovation of the existing facility. The construction bid is anticipated this fall with construction to begin in early 2027 and be completed late summer 2027.

DFS always prioritizes serving youth in their custody in the least restrictive setting. This typically means first seeking placement with a family member or fictive kin, or a foster family in their community. When a community setting cannot be achieved, typically due to the youth's complex needs and behaviors as outlined above, DSCYF must explore settings that can provide the appropriate supervision and services. While in-state resources are explored first, there may be out-of-state facilities that provide specialized settings that meet the unique needs of the youth. When a youth in DFS custody does need to be placed in an out-of-state facility, their wellbeing is monitored by their assigned DFS worker, and the facility is monitored by a DFS Program Manager to ensure the youth is receiving the necessary care. While these placements require greater expenditures due to the specialized resources provided, DSCYF feels strongly that funding should never be a barrier to a youth receiving the care and services that best meet their needs.

Over the last several years, DSCYF has worked to address the issues highlighted in the Auditor's Office report. We look forward to continuing to work with our stakeholders to improve services to youth in our custody.

Sincerely,



Alison McGonigal
Acting Cabinet Secretary

Background

DSCYF (also known as the Delaware Children’s Department)⁴ was established in 1983 by the General Assembly.

Under Delaware Code Title 10, Chapter 9, Subchapter I, Section 901, the DSCYF is authorized to investigate allegations involving child abuse, dependency, or neglect by individuals identified within the statute. DSCYF’s investigative responsibility, however, is specifically limited to allegations involving intrafamilial or institutional child abuse, dependency, or neglect. This statutory framework establishes DSCYF’s responsibility for investigating qualifying allegations, determining validity of the allegations and identifying the proper course of action.

Its primary responsibility is to provide and manage a range of services for children who have experienced abandonment, abuse, adjudication, mental illness, neglect, or substance abuse. Its services include prevention, early intervention, assessment, treatment, permanency, and aftercare. The Children’s Department employs approximately 1,400 staff at 31 locations, who serve over 8,000 children on any given day. The Department comprises four divisions: three service divisions and one management support division:

- Division of Family Services (DFS)
- Division of Management Support Services (DMSS)
- Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS)
- Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS)

Division of Family Services (DFS)

DFS investigates child abuse, neglect, and dependency, and offers treatment services, foster care, adoption, and independent living services. Over 300 staff members are dedicated to protecting children, helping them gain a sense of well-being, and achieving permanency.⁵

DFS works closely with its sister divisions, other state and federal agencies and community child welfare partners to ensure the lives of children and families who need our services are transformed for the better.

⁴ DSCYF Website - <https://kids.delaware.gov/about/>

⁵ DSCYF-DSF Website - <https://kids.delaware.gov/family-services/>

⁶ 13 Del C. § 724

Division of Management Support Services (DMSS)

The DMSS division provides administrative services for DSCYF. DMSS supports DSCYF in areas such as administration, consultation, technology, and facilities management, and is not associated with the inquiry.

Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS)

The DPBHS division provides support to Delaware families through prevention and early intervention programs that promote safe and healthy children, nurture families and communities, support social and academic success, and improve early identification of needs. also DPBHS also serves eligible families of children and juveniles aged 17 and younger with behavioral treatment needs.⁷

DPBHS provides short-term behavioral health treatment for juveniles at the Silver Lake Treatment Consortium and at Stevenson Youth Center. Long-term care needs are provided by public and private service providers, in and out-of-state.

Division of Youth Rehabilitation Services

While DFS is responsible for cases involving child welfare services, foster care, and adoption programs. DYRS is the lead juvenile justice agency serving youth ordered to our care through the judicial system. They are responsible for assessing the needs of youth and collaborating with their families, school, and support systems to coordinate services aimed at addressing the factors that contributed to delinquency. DYRS offers supervision and services through Civil Citation, Community Services, Detention Services, Residential to Alternatives to Detention, and Secure Care Treatment. The goal of all of DYRS programs is to reduce recidivism and promote positive outcomes.

⁷ DPBHS – <https://kids.delaware.gov/prevention-and-behavioral-health-services/>

Evaluation Approach

AOA used the following methods in conducting the evaluation:

- Reviewed DSCYF policies, procedures, and processes related to evaluations, placements, oversight, and reporting
- Conducted interviews with relevant personnel providing oversight with the youths in office and leadership DSCYF management and staff
- Observed juvenile case records in FOSCUS system with DSCYF staff
- Reviewed incident reports related to safety and child welfare in connection with emergency placements
- Toured DSCYF and associated facilities used for emergency placement
- Researched national conditions and practices of Children Services
- Compiled expenditures from the State's Accounting System First State Financials (FSF)