

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

May 2009



Objective

To determine whether Florida's Title IV-E waiver hindered the Social Security Administration's (SSA) ability to determine Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments due children in Florida's foster care program.

Background

SSI is a needs-based program, and payments are based partly on the claimant's income and resources. Children receiving SSI that have been placed in a State's foster care program may qualify for Title IV-E benefits. A child that receives both SSI Title IV-E benefits may have their SSI payment reduced by the amount of Title IV-E funds. As such, the funding source of foster care benefits is a factor in determining SSI payments.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-04-09-19091.pdf>

Quick Response Evaluation: Florida's Title IV-E Waiver May Impact Supplemental Security Income Benefits (A-04-09-19091)

Our Findings

Changes in Florida's accounting methods, as a result of the waiver, provide less detailed information regarding the source of funds used to pay foster care costs. SSA researched the issued and decided it will accept Florida's attestation that foster care costs are paid with State funds. Accordingly, a foster child's SSI benefits will not be reduced.

Matters for Consideration

SSA should ensure that field offices continue to verify the source of foster care funds, in each case, with Florida Department of Children and Families staff.

SSA should determine whether other States operating under a Title IV-E waiver have source of funding information that would help SSA field office staff determine a child's SSI benefits. Further, for these States, SSA should consider issuing guidance on how staff should handle SSI claims involving foster care children and Title IV-E waiver funds. Finally, in the event other States are granted Title IV-E waivers, SSA should take similar action.