

An Informational Report on the
ACCESS AND VISITATION PROGRAM,
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 155
Issued February 6, 2013



**LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
1600 NORTH THIRD STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 94397
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9397**

LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

**FIRST ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
AND STATE AUDIT SERVICES**
PAUL E. PENDAS, CPA

DIRECTOR OF PERFORMANCE AUDIT SERVICES
NICOLE B. EDMONSON, CIA, CGAP, MPA

Under the provisions of state law, this report is a public document. A copy of this report has been submitted to the Governor, to the Attorney General, and to other public officials as required by state law. A copy of this report is available for public inspection at the Baton Rouge office of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor.

This document is produced by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, State of Louisiana, Post Office Box 94397, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9397 in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 24:513. One copy of this public document was produced at an approximate cost of \$8.64. This material was produced in accordance with the standards for state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31. This report is available on the Legislative Auditor's website at www.la.la.gov. When contacting the office, you may refer to Agency ID No. 9726 or Report ID No. 40120062 for additional information.

In compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance relative to this document, or any documents of the Legislative Auditor, please contact Kerry Fitzgerald, Chief Administrative Officer, at 225-339-3800.



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

February 6, 2013

The Honorable Francis Thompson
Post Office Box 68
Delhi, Louisiana 71232

The Honorable Marcus L. Hunter
900 St. John Street
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

Dear Senator Thompson and Representative Hunter:

Pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 155 of the 2012 Regular Session, the Legislative Auditor's Office examined the allocation of funds provided to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) relative to the Access and Visitation Program. A summary of our review is below.

Purpose of Program. The federal Access and Visitation Program, which began in Louisiana in 1997, gives states funds to establish and administer programs to support and aid non-custodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. DCFS is the agency responsible for administering the program in Louisiana. According to DCFS, the objective of the program is the promotion of emotional, mental, and physical well-being of children in the state and to facilitate and encourage the duty, obligation, and responsibility of each parent to share and participate in the upbringing of their children.

Current Program Funding. The program is funded through a federal grant award with a 10% required state contribution. If the program projects a deficit, it may also use additional state funds or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds. In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011, the total grant award amount, including the state contribution and TANF funds, was \$167,624. The program does not allocate funds to individual parishes or cities. Currently, the program serves the more populated areas of the state, specifically Ascension/Baton Rouge, Caddo/Bossier, Jefferson/New Orleans, and Lafayette/Calcasieu and employs four classified DCFS state attorneys who are paid on a salary basis to mediate agreements and/or obtain court orders for the non-custodial parent to receive visitation rights. Program funds are used for attorney salaries as well as court costs, traveling expenses, and costs associated with an annual conference that all program attorneys must attend. Exhibit 1 provides details on how these funds were allocated for FFY 2011.

Exhibit 1 Summary of Total Expenditures Federal Fiscal Year 2011		
Wages	\$122,234	72.9%
Retirement	27,745	16.6%
Group Insurance	9,038	5.4%
Professional Services	3,699	2.2%
Medicare Tax	1,707	1.0%
Wages Termination	1,339	0.8%
Field Travel	1,058	0.6%
Out-of-State Travel	789	0.5%
IAT Printing	15	0.0%
Total Expenditures	\$167,624	100.00%

Historical Information. From FFY 1997 to 2003, DCFS provided Access and Visitation Program services statewide. From FFY 2004 to 2006, DCFS provided these services only in Calcasieu through the Fourteenth Family and Juvenile Court Judicial District Court. As mentioned earlier, from 2007 to present, services are provided in the four larger populated areas of the state. According to DCFS, it chose these areas of the state because they have the highest number of cases. Exhibit 2 summarizes the funding, number of cases, providers, and areas served by the program from FFY 1997 to 2012.

**Exhibit 2
Funding by Year, Provider, and Area Served
FFY 1997 to 2012**

Federal Fiscal Year	Federal Grant Amount	State Funds Expended*	TANF Amount	Number of Cases	Provider	Area Served
1997	\$205,732	Not Available**	Not Available**	Not Available**	Capital Area Legal Services Corporation	Entire State
1998	\$205,732			913		
1999	\$182,411			1,148		
2000	\$182,411			971		
2001	\$182,411			1,379		
2002	\$170,393			Not Available**		
2003	\$170,393	\$13,659	Not Available**	1,582	Louisiana State Bar Association	Entire State
2004	\$175,073	\$15,819		326	14 th Family and Juvenile Court JDC	Calcasieu
2005	\$175,073	\$19,454		200		
2006	\$164,447	\$3,471		303		
2007	\$161,207	\$22,556		New Orleans - 46 Baton Rouge - 74 Lafayette - 48 Shreveport - 78 Total - 246	State Attorneys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alice Montestruc Karen Brooks Kimberly Arvie Pamela Blankenship 	Combination of Parishes, including: Baton Rouge/Ascension Caddo/Bossier Lafayette/Calcasieu New Orleans/Jefferson
2008	\$139,592	\$17,586	\$4,825	New Orleans - 92 Jefferson - 62 Baton Rouge - 162 Lafayette - 32 Shreveport - 172 Calcasieu - 22 Total - 542	State Attorneys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alice Montestruc Karen Brooks Kimberly Arvie Pamela Blankenship 	
2009	\$144,570	\$22,875	\$13,861	New Orleans - 194 Baton Rouge - 116 Lafayette - 80 Shreveport - 140 Total - 530	State Attorneys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alice Montestruc Kim Graham Kimberly Arvie Christy Walker 	
2010	\$145,278	\$45,395	\$243	New Orleans - 192 Baton Rouge - 112 Lafayette - 44 Shreveport - 202 Total - 550	State Attorneys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alyson McCord Kim Graham Kimberly Arvie Christy Walker 	
2011	\$149,318	\$16,763	\$1,543	New Orleans - 164 Baton Rouge - 190 Bossier/Caddo - 79 Total - 433	State Attorneys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natashia Benoit Kim Graham Madeline Carbonette Christy Walker 	
2012	\$153,521	***	***	***	State Attorneys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natashia Benoit Kim Graham Terry Adams Vacant 	

*This amount includes the state match and any additional funds needed above the federal grant amount.

**DCFS no longer has this data. DCFS is only required to maintain documentation for seven years.

***DCFS does not have this data yet.

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from DCFS.

I hope the information provided in this letter is helpful to you. If you need additional information or have any questions, please call Nicole Edmonson, Director of Performance Audit Services, at 339-3983.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daryl G. Purpera". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Daryl G. Purpera, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor

DGP/ch

HCR 155 2013