



Michigan  
*Office of the Auditor General*  
**REPORT SUMMARY**

*Performance Audit*

Report Number:  
 43-260-02

*Adult Protective Services*

*Family Independence Agency*

Released:  
 April 2003

*Adult Protective Services (APS), Office of Adult Services, Child and Family Services Administration, is responsible for the overall administration of services to adults in need of protection, including the development of policies and procedures. The Family Independence Agency's (FIA's) Field Operations Administration oversees APS workers located in FIA local offices throughout the State and is responsible for implementing the provisions of the Social Welfare Act and APS policies and procedures.*

**Audit Objectives:**

1. To assess APS's effectiveness and compliance with laws, policies, and procedures in investigating and substantiating referred cases of adult abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.
2. To assess APS's effectiveness and compliance with laws, policies, and procedures in coordinating and providing services for substantiated cases of adult abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.
3. To assess other pertinent issues related to APS.

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**Audit Conclusions:**

1. We concluded that APS was moderately effective in investigating and substantiating referred cases of adult abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.
2. We concluded that APS was moderately effective in coordinating

and providing services for substantiated cases of adult abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.

3. We concluded that several other pertinent areas within APS need improvement.

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**Noteworthy Accomplishments:**

FIA had developed and planned to start implementing a formal APS risk assessment tool in 2002. The risk assessment tool is a structured method used to assess whether an adult is vulnerable and in danger of harm from abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation. The risk assessment tool is required at case opening, whenever there is a perceived change in vulnerability or the risk of harm, and at case closing.

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**Material Conditions:**

APS workers sometimes did not conduct thorough investigations to determine whether adults suspected of being abused,

neglected, and/or exploited were in need of protective services (Finding 3). APS workers sometimes did not coordinate and provide appropriate and/or sufficient services to vulnerable adults at risk of harm from abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation (Finding 5). FIA had not developed and implemented a comprehensive process to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of APS in protecting vulnerable adults (Finding 7).

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**Other Conditions:**

APS workers frequently did not document their notification of the referral source that a case was assigned for investigation or that the referral was not appropriate for investigation and was denied. Also, APS workers frequently did not identify the specific reasons for denying a referral in the notification letters sent to referral sources (Finding 1). FIA frequently did not commence investigations within 24 hours as required by statute. Also, APS workers sometimes did not conduct initial face-to-face interviews with customers within 10 working days as required by FIA policy (Finding 2). APS workers frequently did not complete service plans and/or interim narratives in accordance with FIA policy. Also, FIA had not established a formal policy regarding the completion of service plans for unsubstantiated cases in which ongoing services were provided (Finding 4). FIA had not established a formal policy requiring APS workers to make contact with customers in need of protective services at least on a monthly basis, and

APS workers frequently did not contact customers on a monthly basis (Finding 6). FIA needs to develop formal caseload standards for APS workers. Also, FIA needs to expand policy guidance pertaining to case closing time frames (Finding 8). FIA had not established a formal policy regarding supervisory review of APS investigation cases, and supervisors frequently did not review investigation cases (Finding 9). APS workers sometimes did not record accurate and/or complete information on the Adult Services Comprehensive Assessment Program (ASCAP) automated database (Finding 10). FIA should determine the feasibility of developing and maintaining a central registry of perpetrators of adult abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation (Finding 11).

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**Agency Response:**

Our report includes 11 findings and 15 corresponding recommendations. The agency preliminary response indicates that FIA agrees with 13 recommendations, partially agrees with 1 recommendation, and disagrees with 1 recommendation.

In response to the majority of our findings, FIA stated that it plans to issue a major rewrite of APS policies and practices effective October 1, 2003. This rewrite will help ensure quality services for vulnerable adults.

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A copy of the full report can be obtained by calling 517.334.8050 or by visiting our Web site at: [www.state.mi.us/audgen/](http://www.state.mi.us/audgen/)



Michigan Office of the Auditor General  
201 N. Washington Square  
Lansing, Michigan 48913

**Thomas H. McTavish, C.P.A.**  
Auditor General

**James S. Neubecker, C.P.A., C.I.A., D.P.A.**  
Executive Deputy Auditor General

**Scott M. Strong, C.P.A., C.I.A.**  
Director of Audit Operations