

Rural Area Flexibility Analysis

1. Types and estimated numbers of rural areas:

The regulations will affect 44 social services districts that are defined as being rural counties and the seven social services districts that include significant rural areas within their borders. In addition, there are approximately 100 voluntary authorized agencies that service rural communities that will be affected by the regulations.

2. Reporting, record keeping, and other compliance requirements and professional services:

The regulations are necessary to comply with state statutory requirements relating to the protection of children in residential facilities from child abuse and neglect. The regulations reflect the enactment of Chapter 323 of the Laws of 2008, which requires implementation of the statutory changes to be effective January 17, 2009.

Social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies will continue to operate under the current definitions and determination standards for incidents that occurred before January 17, 2009. The regulations reflect the statutory clarification of the definitions of abuse and neglect of a child in residential care and the process used to investigate and respond to such allegations.

The regulations require that a copy of a facility's and licensing state agency's corrective action plan or plan of prevention and remediation be sent to OCFS if OCFS conducted the investigation

of the abuse or neglect, even where the facility is licensed by another State agency. This adds one copy of a report to the paperwork already required to be sent to the licensing State agency under the current statutory and regulatory standards.

3. Costs:

The regulations are necessary to comply with the enactment of Chapter 323 of the Laws of 2008. The fiscal impact to OCFS is \$397,000 for six positions and associated non-personal service expenses.

4. Minimizing adverse impact:

It is anticipated that the regulations will not have an adverse impact on rural areas. The regulations build on existing procedures.

5. Rural area participation:

The regulatory changes make the changes necessary to conform the regulations to the statutory changes made by Chapter 323. In December 2008, OCFS conducted six regional trainings for voluntary authorized agencies and facilities licensed by OCFS, OMRDD and OMH regarding the changes in state statutory provisions relating to the protection of children in residential facilities from child abuse and neglect. A Statewide teleconference was held in November of 2008 regarding the changes in law and that training was recorded so that the training is available to all

agencies that were not able to attend one of the regional trainings. A reminder of the statutory changes will be sent to the voluntary agencies in an informational letter in January 2009.