

Pat Quinn  
Governor



Richard H. Calica  
Director

## Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

March 29, 2012

Mr. Dan R. Long  
Executive Director  
Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability  
703 Stratton Office Building  
Springfield, IL. 62706

Dear Director Long:

Pursuant to the State Facilities Closure Act (the "Act") and in response to your request of March 1, 2012, this letter sets forth the Department of Children and Family Services' ("DCFS" or the "Department") official recommendation of closure of its Skokie Office at 8140 N. McCormick Blvd., Skokie, Illinois 60076 (the "Skokie Office"). As discussed below, with the exception of six employees, staff currently located at the Skokie Office will be relocated to a state-owned building at 1755 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield, Illinois 60015 (the "Deerfield Office"), a distance of approximately fifteen miles from the Skokie Office. DCFS does not currently have offices in Deerfield.

Pursuant to the Act (30 ILCS 608 5/10), DCFS is providing information concerning the ten specific items listed below:

1. The location and identity of the State facility proposed to be closed.

Response: DCFS Skokie Office, 8140 N. McCormick Blvd., Skokie, Illinois 60076 (Cook County)

2. The number of employees for which the State facility is the primary stationary work location and the effect of the closure of the facility on those employees.

Response: The Skokie office houses approximately 90-100 state employees. The closure of the office will have minimal impact on the employees; no employees will lose their jobs due to the move; and while certain employees may have to commute a longer distance to work, the increased distance is not significant. In addition to those employees moving to the Deerfield Office, six employees from this location, who are Administrative Case Reviewers, will be relocated to DCFS's office at 1911 S. Indiana, Chicago. The movement of the six employees was a request from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees ("AFSCME").

Office of the Director  
100 West Randolph Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor • Chicago, Illinois 60601  
312-814-2074 • 312-814-1888 Fax



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3. The location or locations to which the functions and employees of the State facility would be moved.

Response: With the exception of the six employees noted above, who will move to DCFS's offices at 1911 S. Indiana, in Chicago, the remaining employees and agency functions will be relocated to the Deerfield Office.

4. The availability and condition of land and facilities at both the existing location and any potential locations.

Response: Both the Skokie Office and the Deerfield Office are located in suburban Cook County. Both buildings meet ADA and CMS standards.

*Physical Appearance:* The Skokie Office is a converted one-level warehouse that was built out to meet DCFS needs. However, the existing building does not accommodate growth, and DCFS has reached the capacity of the Skokie Office.

The Deerfield Office building where DCFS proposes to re-locate is a larger, modern, five-story office building. DCFS will occupy the entire fifth floor. There is elevator access to the floor. The remaining four floors are currently occupied by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission ("ISAC").

*Parking Lot:* The Skokie Office parking is adjacent to the building, but DCFS staff must walk through the parking lot to the back of the warehouse building for entry. There are also concerns as the parking lot is not well-lit. The Deerfield Office parking lot is adjacent to the building and well-lit.

*Proximity to Public Transportation and Major Roads:* Both the Skokie Office and the Deerfield Office have similar access to public transportation through the PACE bus service. The Deerfield Office is closer to I-294 (approximately 10 miles closer) and I-94 (approximately 3 miles closer.)

*Security:* The Skokie Office has a key pass security system provided by DCFS at its entry. The Deerfield Office will have two security systems: ISAC provides a security guard at the first floor entry. DCFS will have a separate security identification card swipe system as well as a security guard on the fifth floor.

*Community Services:* Both the Skokie and Deerfield Offices are accessible to community services and restaurants.

5. The ability to accommodate the functions and employees at the existing and at any potential locations.

Response: In addition to the six Administrative Case Reviewers who work in the Skokie Office (and who are addressed below), the DCFS personnel who currently work out of the Skokie Office are Child Protection Investigators, intact family workers, placement workers, licensing workers, clinicians, and members of Child and Youth Investment Teams ("CAYIT"). With the exception of the CAYIT

members, the work of these individuals is community-based. As a general matter, their work includes traveling to clients' homes and to other community locations to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect, providing services to children in homes or placements in schools, or licensing homes for foster placements. CAYIT members work primarily in the DCFS offices. Because the Deerfield Office is only fifteen miles from the Skokie Office, and is large enough to accommodate these workers and any additional space needed for the work they perform on-site, there will be little if any disruption in the community-based (or, in the case of the CAYIT members, office-based) work performed by these employees resulting from the relocation.

As noted above, the six Administrative Case Reviewers currently in the Skokie Office will be relocated to the DCFS office at 1911 S. Indiana, Chicago. Administrative Case Reviews are conducted on-site at DCFS offices and involve the physical presence of family members, caseworkers, other service providers, and attorneys. The six reviewers will be moved to the Chicago location, as opposed to the Deerfield Office, to better accommodate clients, as the Chicago location is more readily accessible via public transportation, including CTA bus and rail lines. Any suburban families who resided near the Skokie Office will be able to access the Chicago office, and thus should not suffer any greatly increased inconvenience as a result of the move.

6. The cost of operations of the State facility and at any potential locations and any other related budgetary impacts.

Response: The operational costs for the Skokie and Deerfield Offices are \$771,435.00 and \$696,000.00, respectively, including, among other things, rent, utilities and maintenance costs.

However, relocation to the Deerfield Office will result in significant, additional fiscal benefits beyond the initial operational cost savings. The Skokie Office is owned by a private landlord (Weiss Properties, Inc.), whereas the Deerfield Office is owned by the State. Rent paid to the State will increase State revenue, and DCFS will be able to utilize space in a State building that is currently vacant. The mortgage on the Deerfield location is expected to be paid in full by the end of 2012, and that will give DCFS an estimated passed-along rent savings of \$336,000-\$384,000 per year

7. The economic impact on existing communities in the vicinity of the State facility and any potential facility.

Response: The move will have no significant economic impact on the population currently served by the Skokie Office, as the Deerfield Office will continue to serve the same client population, with no disruption in services resulting from the move. The move is anticipated to begin on a Friday with staff reporting to the new location on Monday morning. Any economic impact on the Skokie community (e.g., to restaurants and stores near the Skokie Office) is expected to be minor due to the small number of relocating DCFS employees (90-100) relative to the size of the local workforce employed by other businesses, as well as the possibility that the Skokie Office facility will be occupied by another business tenant in the near future.

8. The ability of the existing and any potential communities' infrastructure to support the functions and employees.

Response: The Skokie Office will be closed, and staff will move to the Deerfield Office, where DCFS currently has no presence. Deerfield can support the employees as it is a similar suburban location to Skokie, with similar community support structures (e.g. restaurants, stores, parking) for the relocating employees.

9. The impact on State services delivered at the existing location, in direct relation to the State services expected to be delivered at any potential locations.

Response: None. The Deerfield Office will serve the same community as the Skokie Office.

10. The environmental impact, including the impact related to potential environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities.

Response: Due to the proximity and similarity of the locations of the Skokie and Deerfield Offices, no significant environmental impact is anticipated.

In addition, CGFA requested that DCFS provide the following information:

- How much transition costs will be and where in the budget will they be paid for.

Response: Moving costs are estimated to be \$15,038.00. There are no build-out costs as the Deerfield Office's current layout meets the Department's needs. The Skokie lease provision has a no-penalty clause with ninety-days notice. As a consequence, having given notice that it is terminating its lease, once DCFS closes its Skokie Office, DCFS will have no maintenance or any other obligations relating to the Skokie Office or lease.

- How much, if any, maintenance costs will be annually after closure.

Response: There are no anticipated costs (*see* previous response).

- How this facility closure fits into any long-term plan.

Response: The move to the Deerfield Office will ensure the stability of DCFS's presence in Chicago's northern suburbs, with the additional benefits of increased revenue to the State, and significant cost-savings to DCFS. As detailed above, the long term savings are significant as DCFS is relocating from a private lease to a State-owned building. Additionally, the physical layout and structure of the Deerfield Office are conducive to the dynamic nature of DCFS's work and workforce, as the office space can be more readily rearranged to accommodate workforce increases, decreases, and/or changes in job functions than could the Skokie Office.

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Finally, and most importantly, the move is not disruptive, and thus will not result in any lapse in DCFS's provision of vital child and family support services. On the contrary, it will help ensure DCFS's continuing presence in the same local communities it currently serves.

We look forward to continuing our dialogue regarding the relocation to the Deerfield Office, and to addressing any further questions you may have.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Calica', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard H. Calica  
Director

cc: Senator Jeffrey Schoenberg  
Representative Patricia Bellock