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March 26, 2026

Senator Craig V. Hickman, Senate Chair  
Representative Anne-Marie Mastraccio, House Chair  
Government Oversight Committee  
82 State House Station  
Augusta ME 04333-0082

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Mastraccio, and Honorable Members of the Government Oversight Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to your questions raised in Committee on February 27. We regret that Director Johnson has scheduling conflicts during the public hearing and is unable to attend. To that end, we are providing written responses to the outstanding questions from the prior meeting below. We appreciate your attention to this important work.

Questions from the February 27, 2026, GOC meeting:

1. *If someone within OCFS was overseeing the process to ensure that invoices were paid in a timely manner, would that person have to perform the same amount of work that OPEGA did? (Rep. Perkins)*

With regard to the current state of the OCFS invoice process, our staff would have to perform substantially similar work. OCFS staff would, however, bring a deeper understanding of program language and process systems. Through the potential process improvements work we discussed, a measurement system for process performance would be established to ensure consistent adherence to payment/reimbursement timeframes.

2. *What is the origin of the Operational Excellence Group within DHHS? (Sen. Hickman)*

DHHS' Office of Continuous Quality Improvement evolved into the Operational Excellence team. Operational Excellence (OpEx) is a widely-used business practice improvement model that centers employee engagement, problem-solving, efficiency, and continuous improvement. The purpose of the DHHS OpEx team is to work with Offices to evaluate work streams that the Offices would like to improve or establish for better overall performance. A review of the current state of the process is conducted, with opportunities identified for process improvement to meet quality and stakeholder requirements.

3. *Why would someone ever be expected to submit an invoice form with their social security number on it? (Sen. Timberlake)*

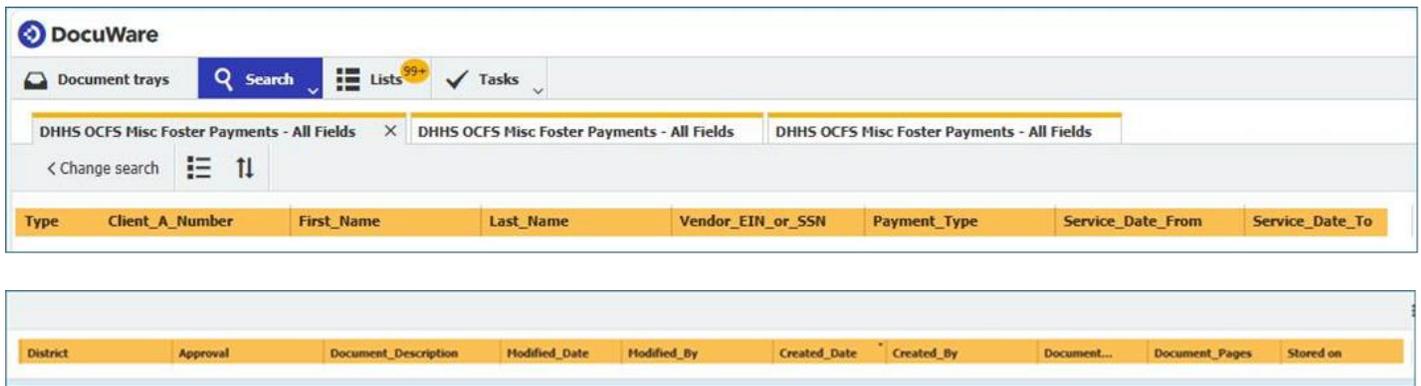
Social security numbers were used in instances when a provider did not have an IRS employer identification number (EIN). OCFS, in coordination with the DAFS Service Center, recently updated the reimbursement standards and forms to eliminate the use of SSNs and instead utilize

Vendor Code (VC) numbers. Management continues to reinforce that providers should not use SSNs when submitting invoices.

4. *How are files saved in DocuWare? There must be unique identifiers in the pdf name when it is scanned/saved. (Sen. Hickman)*

Files are added to DocuWare by either uploading into the software or dragging the .pdf into the “Document Tray” for the appropriate office. The Case Aide or Office Associate then uses the system’s search functionality to locate the child’s record using the unique identifier called a “Client\_A\_Number.” The Case Aide or Office Associate then looks at Payment Type and the dates of service and identifies the child care invoices. Finally, the staff person opens the record (imaged document) to confirm accuracy prior to finalizing the upload.

When a file is saved in DocuWare, it is indexed using a number of fields to support accurate retrieval and tracking. Below is a screenshot from DocuWare that shows the data fields used to index the invoice.



5. *If a vendor calls OCFS about an unpaid invoice, how does OCFS track it down? (Sen. Guerin)*

When a vendor identifies the date(s) of service that has/has not been paid out, a transaction ledger is run to confirm whether a payment was issued. If no payment is identified, OCFS staff use the search functionality in DocuWare to locate the child’s record using the unique identifier (Client\_A\_Number). OCFS staff review the dates of service to identify the child care invoice(s) and confirm OCFS has the correct invoice and that the ‘Approval’ status shows as approved (and not rejected). If the invoice is approved and not paid, additional research is conducted to determine why payment was not made and resolve the issue with the vendor. If the invoice was rejected, further steps are taken with the vendor to identify and address the reason for rejection.

6. *What percentage of the district office clerical worker’s time does processing invoices and ensuring invoices are paid make up? (Rep. Lee)*

This varies by district. In some districts, there are dedicated staff who manage billing and invoicing functions on a full-time basis. In other districts, particularly smaller districts, staff process payments in addition to other job responsibilities. In those cases, staff typically perform these functions one to two days per week.

7. *Can we get the market rate tables/information? (Sen. Timberlake)*

Market Rates are posted on the OCFS website. The current table (updated May 2025) can be accessed here: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/5.19.25%20Child%20Care%20Market%20Rates.pdf>.

8. *How and when are those market rates changed? (Rep. Perkins)*

In alignment with Federal guidance, Maine conducts a Market Rate Survey every three years. OCFS recently completed a competitive procurement process, and the University of Southern Maine was selected to conduct the next Market Rate Survey in 2026. Findings from this survey will be used to inform updated rates for July 1, 2027. Prior survey reports are available here: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/child-care-subsidy-information-for-providers>.

9. *How long did it take to reconcile an account after OCFS was notified that someone hadn't been paid? (Sen. Timberlake)*

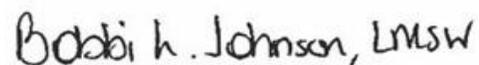
For the 4.5% of invoices that are not paid timely, OCFS works diligently to resolve issues as quickly as possible once notified. The time required to reconcile an account, after OCFS is notified, varies depending on the circumstances. If the issue is a rejected invoice sitting in a queue, district staff can typically resolve this quickly. If an invoice was approved, but not paid, there may be a system issue that requires the DAFS Service Center and/or the Office of State Controller to get involved for resolution, which may extend the time to resolution.

Thank you again for your attention to this important work, and for your questions of the Department. We remain committed to continued collaboration and to ensure timely, accurate, and compliant payment processes. Should you have additional questions, please reach out.

Sincerely,



Sara Gagné-Holmes  
Commissioner  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services



Bobbi L. Johnson, LMSW  
Director  
Office of Child and Family Services