



Texas

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY
AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES



PROGRESS REPORT TO THE
SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION:

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
TRANSFORMATION

OCTOBER 2016





TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

COMMISSIONER
H. L. Whitman, Jr.

November 3, 2016

Mr. Ken Levine, Director
Sunset Advisory Commission
1501 North Congress 6th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Levine:

Recommendation 2.2 of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Sunset Report requires the agency to report the following Child Protective Services (CPS) performance measures statewide, and for each region, to the Sunset Advisory Commission at six-month intervals through October 2016.

- Turnover rate for investigators, conservatorship caseworkers, and family based safety services caseworkers;
- Average number of days to close an investigation;
- Average number of placements per child;
- Average number of days to achieve permanency; and
- Recidivism rate of children into the CPS system in all stages of service.

Because this is the final Progress Report to the Sunset Advisory Commission relating to CPS Transformation, a comprehensive update is being provided in order to provide a full picture of the work that has been accomplished since 2014.

Transformation has been the vehicle for improvement. CPS has implemented multiple projects and initiatives that will continue to have an effect on the outcomes for children and families and more are underway. DFPS is committed to continuing to measure outcomes and alter the course on initiatives in order to safeguard child safety, work toward increased positive permanency, and promote wellbeing. Further updates to CPS' initiatives and metrics will be provided in the CPS Business Plan, which will continue to be published annually.

Since embarking on the Transformation effort in 2014, DFPS and CPS leadership have been focused on developing a professional and stable workforce; ensuring child safety, permanency, and wellbeing; and establishing an effective organization. I've highlighted a few major accomplishments below:

Professional and Stable Workforce:

- Streamlining the screening and hiring process;
- Creating opportunities for support staff with two-year degrees and relevant work experience to apply for caseworker positions;
- Revamping the CPS training program for caseworkers;
- Launching a confidential complaint system for DFPS employees;
- Altering performance evaluations to better reflect the work that is being completed by CPS staff; and
- Restructuring of the CPS Supervisor training model.

Child Safety, Permanency and Wellbeing:

- Implementing a new practice model framework;
- Launching a new automated structured decision making tool;
- Creating efficiencies in case transfers between CPS stages of service;
- Emphasizing permanency through a number of initiatives across the state;
- Implementing a child and adolescent needs and strengths assessment; and
- Focusing on quality of purchased service providers and residential care providers.

Effective Organization and Operations:

- Streamlining policies for caseworkers;
- Implementing organizational changes to better align stages of services and expedite services to families; and
- Using predictive analytics and continuous quality improvement to better inform practice changes.

These are only some of the significant changes occurring in DFPS and CPS. Be assured that DFPS remains committed to changes that will result in a highly effective organization that retains quality employees and provides the best services to the children and families that we serve.

We appreciate the opportunity to update you on our progress over the last two years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. L. Whitman, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

H. L. Whitman, Jr.
Commissioner, DFPS

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Summary of Major Accomplishments

Develop a Professional and Stable Workforce

- Implemented new employee evaluations for caseworkers – March 2015
- Implemented DFPS-specific behavioral assessment hiring tool – March 1, 2015
- Provided Strengths-Based Supervision training to CPS statewide leadership and to supervisors in every region – March 31, 2015
- Implemented new hiring process – April 1, 2015
- Developed recommendations to strengthen and evaluate the Title IV-E Training Program – August 2015
- Designed and implemented new statewide worker training model – January 1 - October 1, 2015
- Increased efficiencies in the screening process to allow applicants to be hired quickly – February 2016
- Launched a confidential complaint system for DFPS employees – March 2016
- Began efforts to restructure Supervisor training – March 2016
- Expanded the applicant pool by allowing applicants with two-year degrees and relevant work experience to apply for caseworker positions – July 2016

Ensure Child Safety, Permanency, and Well-being

- Established new comprehensive CPS practice model framework and trained statewide leadership team – January 6, 2015
- Launched new automated Structured Decision Making (SDM) safety assessment statewide – March 29, 2015
- Visitation Matters training delivered in all regions – March 31, 2015
- Began collaboration with stakeholders on the Single Child Plan of Services – March 2015
- Realignment of Kinship/Conservatorship staff implemented in all regions – April 2015
- Implemented earlier assignment of Conservatorship worker in all regions – April 2015
- Trained staff in all regions on “triaging” cases using administrative closures and abbreviated investigations to safely close more cases – July 2015
- Harris County moved to permanency 375 children in care more than two years, most of whom had a goal of adoption – July 31, 2015
- Implemented initiative to hold the Family Group Conference within 30 days of removal and make other improvements in all regions – August 2015
- Launched SDM risk assessment statewide – August 23, 2015
- Established a work plan to shift residential contracts monitoring to performance-based monitoring approach, including design of the demonstration program – August 24, 2015
- Accelerated Family Reunification initiative rolled out in all regions – September 2015
- New timeliness standard implemented statewide – January 2016
- Residential Contracts Demonstration initiated – January 2016

- Second Annual Permanency Summit – February 2016
- DFPS produced an analysis of child abuse and neglect fatalities – March 2016
- DFPS updated prevention campaigns – Spring 2016
- Texas Home Visiting and Prevention and Early Intervention merged into one division at DFPS – May 2016
- Office of Child Safety held the second annual Safety Summit – July-August 2016
- Posted a new Request for Proposal (RFP) for Region 2, Foster Care Redesign – August 2016
- Collaborated with Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) on the Multidisciplinary Enhancement Program – September 2016
- Family Strengths and Needs Assessment and the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment was implemented statewide – September 1, 2016
- Posted new Evaluation and Treatment Scope of Work for purchased services providers – September 1, 2016

Establish Effective Organization and Operations

- Implemented a plan to use predictive analytics to anticipate high-risk events and allow staff to make real-time interventions beginning with a new case reading process for Family Based Safety Services cases – October 1, 2014
- Completed streamlining of Investigations and Family Based Safety Services policy – December 11, 2014
- Transformation teams identified and tested organizational changes in the field to better align stages of service and expedite services to clients – October 2014 - January 2015
- Placement policy streamlined (to be published October 2016) – April 2016
- Education policy streamlined and published –April 2016
- DFPS has an open procurement for IMPACT Modernization – August 2016

CPS Transformation Implementation Update

Priority A: Develop a Professional and Stable Workforce

CPS' ability to build a high-quality, professional, and stable workforce is a critical step to improve outcomes for children and families. CPS caseworkers must have the skills and training to work with children and families in complex environments through work that demands specialized intellectual and behavioral skills, appropriate and effective training, and ongoing support. In 2015, DFPS started an initiative that includes redesigning recruiting and hiring practices, overhauling the current learning model for caseworkers, and providing additional support through mentoring, strengthened management, and improved employee performance evaluation and recognition. In 2016, CPS expanded the potential pool of applicants to include those with two-year degrees and experience in working with children and families in an effort to allow candidates with relevant work experience, particularly those who may already be working for CPS in a supportive role, to leverage that experience and become caseworkers. A better understanding of the characteristics of high-performing workers and the essential competencies needed for job success now informs activities from recruitment and hiring to training, competency testing, and retention.

A key component of Commissioner Hank Whitman's 10-point plan to improve CPS is top-to-bottom accountability, and revamping CPS' regional leadership is critically important and necessary to ensure that the children, families, and regional front-line staff have the best leadership as CPS continues to transform into a more efficient agency. In 2016, DFPS evaluated regional CPS management. CPS leadership chose to replace regional management in four areas of the state. A critical component of the Regional Directors' work moving forward will be to create and maintain a culture that supports high performing teams. Improving agency culture is a key to developing and maintaining a stable workforce.

Recruitment and Hiring

Transformation initiatives involving recruitment and hiring practices at DFPS sought to establish a strategic approach to recruiting the highest-quality individuals for the job by:

1. Increasing collaboration with targeted colleges and universities to develop child welfare professionals.
2. Improving DFPS hiring practices to identify successful candidates and expedite hiring.
3. Establishing early outreach to staff within the first two years of service to work towards long-term retention.

In FY 2016, DFPS evaluated and validated the Human Service Index (HSI), a behavioral assessment tool created in FY 2015 for hiring processes. The tool is used to screen potential employees for demonstration of the essential characteristics and traits of individuals who will provide high-quality service, demonstrate a higher degree of commitment, and have the resilience to make protective services a career. The validation confirmed that the individuals who were identified as potential high performers during the hiring process (using the tool) were also rated as high performers by their

supervisor ratings and performance competencies. This validation shows that changes in the hiring process made as part of Transformation have been effective in helping DFPS to identify and hire staff who are later proven to be good workers. Details regarding the validation are in Appendix A.

With respect to the applicant pool, the agency has taken steps to expand recruitment opportunities. These efforts include:

1. Establishing a presence on LinkedIn.
2. Adding to all caseworker job postings a marketing statement touting the benefits of working for the state.
3. Expanding the applicant pool by allowing two-year degree applicants with experience to compete for caseworker positions and partnering with higher education institutions to assist agency employees to earn four-year and master's degrees.

Recruiting from the military community continues to be a central part of the agency's recruitment efforts. In 2016, HHS executive leadership reviewed the DFPS military veterans program, aimed at recruiting and retaining military veterans for work within DFPS. It was determined that this program had benefits system-wide and should be expanded and overseen by HHSC beginning in FY 2017.

DFPS also made significant efficiency improvements to the hiring process that have resulted in a decrease in time spent from application to candidate interview. Historically, high-quality applicants receive multiple job offers. By simultaneously decreasing the time to hire and increasing engagement, DFPS is more likely to retain applicants through the point at which they are hired and to fill vacancies sooner.

Table 1: Implementation Status of Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p><u>University Collaboration:</u></p> <p>Collaborate with colleges and universities to attract and develop qualified students from diverse degree plans through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and outreach • Course curriculum development • Continuous learning <p>Specific focus on enhancing current collaborations with Title IV-E partner colleges and universities.</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2015 – College Collaboration Workgroup submitted final recommendations, which include developing a system to track employee performance and client outcomes of those staff who participated in the Title IV-E Training Program, and creating a Title IV-E coordination role within the Workforce Management and Support Division. DFPS is assessing the capacity to implement these recommendations within existing resources.
<p><u>Recruitment:</u></p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2015 – Finalized market analysis to assist in defining and identifying high-

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Expand recruiting and marketing efforts and opportunities to educate job seekers about protective services careers at DFPS.</p> <p>Enhance efforts with community colleges to improve DFPS internships that will expand the quality of caseworker applicants using two-year degree with experience recruitment strategy.</p>		<p>priority populations for recruitment. This analysis will guide the development of more targeted recruitment activities in FY 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2016 – Added marketing statement to all job postings to highlight the benefits of working for the agency, including health insurance, retirement, and student loan forgiveness program. • February 2016 – Launched agency LinkedIn page that has over 7,000 followers. Site is used to share upcoming events and limited postings. • January 2016 – MilVets program was integrated into recruitment strategy. Attendance at military events between FY 2015 and FY 2016YTD increased by 20%. This program is now being overseen by HHSC. • August 2016 – Began working with Texas State University to create experience -based undergraduate degree plans for DFPS employees and an all-online master's program. • Over the next year, DPFS will begin working with Austin Community College and Alamo Community College to improve internship opportunities for two-year degree students and to provide tailored curriculum to meet agency needs.
<p><u>Hiring:</u></p> <p>Strengthen the quality of job candidates by evaluating and reconfiguring the screening and hiring process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS contracted with STARK, an outside agency, to assist with the 	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 1, 2014 – Completed human resource contract changes. The new process includes an initial contact with the applicant, periodic communication throughout the hiring process, and a statement of interest that contractors screen and DFPS hiring specialists analyze for quality and match.

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>administrative hiring functions to expedite the hiring process and allow trained hiring specialists to dedicate more time to recruitment and retention efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expedite the screening and hiring process by revising or eliminating unnecessary steps, monitoring performance targets and timelines, and revising processes. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 1, 2015 – Implemented the DFPS-specific Human Services Index, which identifies essential characteristics and traits of individuals who can be successful workers. August 2015 – Created a new job-preview video of CPS’ various stages of service. Applicants are required to watch the video as part of the screening process. February 2016 - Eliminated unnecessary steps to shorten the applicant screening process. April 2016 - Human Services Inventory validated. July 2016 - Applicant pool expanded to allow for applicants with two-year degrees and experience to apply for CPS caseworker positions.
<p><u>Retention:</u></p> <p>Improve staff development and retention by periodically contacting new workers in the 6- to 24-month tenure range for support. Collect feedback and apply to continuous improvement of the hiring, training, and retention program.</p> <p>In a coordinated effort, DFPS hiring specialists and program will develop a standardized statewide process that will effectively identify, track, and respond to issues to improve staff development and retention.</p> <p>The Sunset Advisory Commission's recommendation 1.7 instructed DFPS to develop a system in which Workforce Development develop procedures to receive and monitor staff complaints. The complaint</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 15, 2014 – CPS regional management staff completed contacts to employees in the 6- to 24-month tenure range. The experience was overwhelmingly positive for management staff and workers. CPS regional leadership continued the practice at six month intervals for all new workers for their first 24 months of employment as part of transformation. In July 2016, CPS completed a final evaluation regarding the management calls. While statistically the evaluation does not show a significant improvement in retention for staff contacted, when a message was left, or not contacted, regional leadership found the calls beneficial in identifying regional issues. Therefore, DFPS will continue the calls. March 2016 – DFPS started a confidential complaint system in which

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>process should allow for anonymous complaints, but at a minimum, keep them confidential. Additionally, DFPS was charged with preparing clear and concise communications so that employees understand the difference between anonymous (or confidential) informal complaints and formal complaints.</p>		<p>employees could submit information pertaining to formal and informal complaints, which were subsequently monitored by the Internal Confidential Complaints (ICC) Division.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2016 – DFPS implemented an automated internal complaint process that serves as the system of record for the agency's internal complaints. The automated system, which has defined criteria for formal and informal complaints, allows for the submission of anonymous or confidential internal complaints. To promote confidentiality, DFPS set up the system with a safeguard that does not allow anyone outside the ICC Division to have direct access to complaint data. Data analysis on trends and effectiveness of the complaint division and process will be ongoing.

Continuous Learning and Mentoring

CPS Professional Development (CPS Caseworkers)

During FY 2014-2015, DFPS redesigned CPS caseworker training and started a mentor program. The CPS Professional Development (CPD) for caseworkers begins on the newly hired caseworkers' first day of employment and extends over the first nine months of their career. The model includes using mentors, revised classroom training and increased time spent on field-based specialty training, specifically for Investigations, Family Based Safety Services, and Conservatorship stages of service. This figure shows the integration of classroom and field experience over a protégé's first 12 to 13 weeks of training.



While the previous model was largely classroom-based, the new model provides more field-based training. In addition, the training model has shifted from task-focused to core practice model competencies. New caseworkers receive a customized plan for their training and development over their first nine months on the job. The individualized plan allows more time to help the caseworker develop competencies, if needed, or less time in situations where they may develop quicker (or if they have prior child welfare experience). Supervisors assess whether their staff are “case assignable” based on demonstration of competencies, instead of the prior approach of testing workers at the end of Basic Skills Development using two simulated cases.

CPS implemented the new training model statewide. Before this rollout, CPS tested, evaluated and modified the approach to design the most-effective statewide program.

DFPS is contracting with the Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP) at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin to evaluate the CPD model. CFRP’s final report on the caseworker training model will be published in December 2016.

Preliminarily, CFRP found:

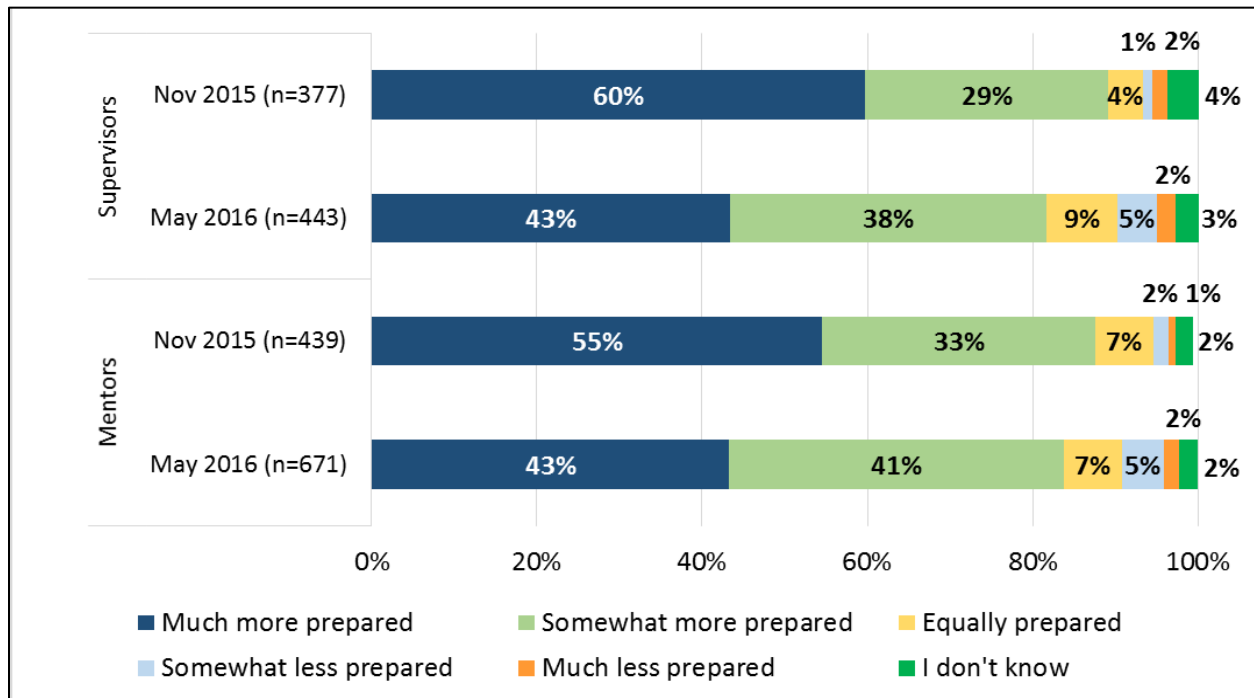
1. Staff believe the CPD training model better prepares caseworkers for their jobs than the BSD training model.
2. Preliminary analyses of caseworker quality show CPD-trained caseworkers have stronger skills and more proficiency in the CPS Core Competencies than BSD-trained caseworkers.
3. Early trends show that CPD-trained staff are staying with the agency longer than their BSD-trained counterparts.

Evaluators found that the CPD model is a favored approach for training new caseworkers, and preliminary analyses of outcomes related to caseworker quality and stability show promising trends. Although it is too early in the implementation of CPD to conclusively assess differences with regard to

caseworker quality and workforce stability, preliminary analyses show encouraging results in both areas. When asked to assess specific caseworkers, supervisors consistently rate CPD-trained caseworkers higher than their BSD-trained counterparts across a variety of skills and in all of the CPS core competencies. CFRP also found that, as of March 2016, CPD-trained caseworkers were more likely to work for the agency at nine months as compared to BSD-trained caseworkers.

Supervisors and Mentors’ Perceptions of Training, CPD vs. BSD

Supervisors and mentors were asked, "Compared to BSD, under the CPD model, how much more prepared do you believe staff will be?" Responses are detailed in the chart below.

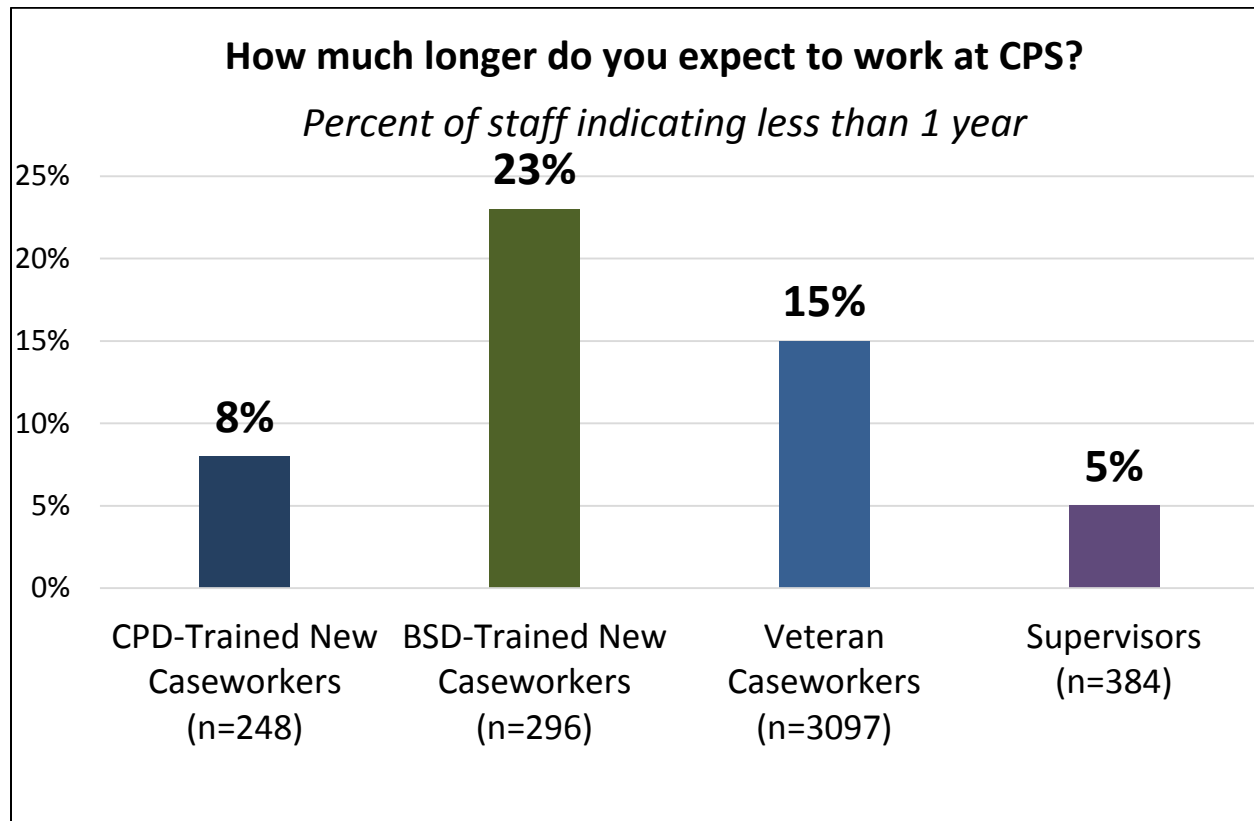


Source: Child and Family Research Partnership, Survey I (November 2015) and Statewide Survey II (May 2016).

Notes: Supervisor sample limited to supervisors who had a new caseworker hired in their unit between January 2015 and survey administration. Mentor sample is limited to caseworkers who had mentored at least once at the time of survey administration.

Caseworkers and Supervisors Reporting Plans to Leave CPS in the Next Year

Caseworkers and Supervisors



Source: Child and Family Research Partnership, 2016.

Although there are promising trends regarding caseworker preparedness, quality, and stability, there is also variation in these outcomes requiring further analyses. In addition, more time is needed to examine if trends are sustained over time.

In June 2016, CFRP concluded its second interim report for the evaluation. Overall, the evaluation found that:

1. CPD-trained caseworkers, tenured caseworkers, and supervisors positively rate all elements of the CPD training and indicate the field-based phases of training are critical for preparing new caseworkers for their job.
2. Mentors and supervisors continue to need training and support in implementing the CPD-training model, particularly in the areas of mentors and supervisor's roles and responsibilities and the content covered in CPD Core and Specialty Classes.
3. Mentors and supervisors continue to have some concerns about mentor capacity and sustainability, noting that the largest barrier to mentoring is balancing the responsibilities with a high workload.

4. Additional work is needed to ensure the CPD training model assessment tools provide meaningful data to inform continuous quality improvement efforts.

CPS reviewed the CFRP interim report with the State Training Council on August 30, 2016. CPS will make some operational changes before the end of calendar year 2016. These changes will focus on strengthening training for mentors and supervisors and the evaluation tool that assesses protégé readiness at the completion of training.

Table 2: Implementation Status of Continuous Learning and Mentoring Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Overhaul the CPS core and specialty training program and curriculum. Change delivery of specialty training to primarily field-based, delivered by staff with field experience. Implement the revised training model and new mentoring program as one program.</p> <p>Key features of the program include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-to-one pairing of mentor and protégé, beginning the protégé’s first day. • A shared caseload, where the protégé works real cases and gradually assumes more responsibility. • A realistic job preview, where the protégé adopts the same on-call schedule as the mentor. <p>Compensate mentors with a monthly stipend (began September 1, 2015). Evaluate the program at key stages to address barriers and make practice improvements.</p>	<p>Complete with evaluation in progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2014 - November 2014 – Conducted and evaluated pilot mentoring programs in Regions 1, 3, 4/5, and 8. • November 2014 - December 2014 – Conducted pilot for investigator specialty training in Region 7. • January 1, 2015 – Implemented new continuous learning model (combined mentoring, CPS professional development and specialty training) in Region 8. • May 2015 - October 2015 – Completed statewide rollout. • December 31, 2015 – First Interim Evaluation Report completed. • June 30, 2016 – Second Interim Evaluation Report completed. • December 31, 2016 – Final evaluation due.

Management Training

Supervisors are a critical layer of the CPS organization. They are responsible for development of caseworkers, oversight of case decision-making and outcomes, and modeling positive behavior and attitudes. Supervisors play a key role in staff retention and along with regional management, set the tone for the agency’s culture.

Transformation's success, in particular, depends heavily on the supervisors' ability to become proficient in their new responsibilities, including:

1. An increased level of decision-making.
2. A grasp of the new safety and risk assessment tools.
3. Moving from a primarily classroom-based training model towards a field-based learning model for staff training in which the supervisor is responsible for caseworker development and learning.

DFPS selected Strengths-Based Supervision (SBS) as the first initiative to strengthen supervisors' skills. In early 2015, CPS provided two days of classroom training (separated by one month) to all supervisors and this training was followed by a series of group supervision sessions over the course of the year that led by management. The model provides practical and emotional support and highlights the importance of in-depth supervision essential to child welfare work. Regions had some flexibility in how they organized their group supervision sessions and the topics discussed. Information from surveys and focus groups indicated that group supervision sessions in Regions 7 and 8, where they favored a more structured approach, were more effective. Both of these regions had adopted this practice before Transformation through collaboration with Casey Family Programs. CPS is revising and piloting a more structured approach to group supervision in Region 6 and CPS will rollout this more standardized approach statewide in FY 2017.

The next phase of strengthening frontline managers involved evaluation of the current training program for new supervisors from the point of hire through their promotion to Supervisor II, which is known as certification. This typically occurs at the end of their second year of supervision. CPS completed an analysis of essential supervisor tasks, functions, skills, and behaviors, to identify key competencies for supervisor training and development. CPS completed a gap analysis using surveys and focus groups with field staff that examined the effectiveness of the content, timing, and modality of the two main classroom trainings offered to new supervisors and of the intermediate and advanced training elective courses taken as a part of the two-year certification process. Based on the identified gaps, the team designated a framework for a new supervisor training program.

Goals of the program include:

1. Ensuring the new model incorporates beginning, intermediate, and advanced competencies that align with job description and performance standards.
2. Preparing beginning managers to effectively transition from caseworker to supervisor.
3. Equipping new supervisors with the primary skill-sets needed to manage a unit.
4. Providing new supervisors with professional support through a mentor.
5. Providing structure and tools for program directors to use in the ongoing development of their staff.

Although frontline supervisors play a significant role in developing and supporting staff and impacting quality outcomes in child protection work, top-level leadership development is vital to overall success and will be a priority during FY 2017.

Table 3: Implementation Status of Management Training Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Implement Strengths-Based Supervision training model statewide to improve management and supervisor capabilities in three essential areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical thinking and analysis. 2. Guidance and support. 3. Administrative responsibilities. 	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 24, 2014 – Launched SBS training for more than 100 frontline supervisors in Harris County (Region 6). • November 14, 2014 – Completed delivery of SBS training to all CPS management staff statewide. • December 9-10, 2014 – Trained selected CPS program directors to deliver SBS training statewide. • December 11, 2014 – Launched SBS training for management and supervisors in Region 8 in anticipation of new continuous learning model rolled out to new staff in Region 8 on January 5, 2015. • March 31, 2015 – Completed rollout of SBS training in all regions. • Training continues to offer SBS in all regions for new supervisors.
<p>Modify the training for CPS Supervisors by addressing gaps identified in the current model, from promotion through two-year certification.</p> <p>Key features of the new model include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic job preview and leadership development for tenured workers through pre-service classroom and hands-on training. 	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2016 – Gap analysis of current Supervisor training model completed. • July 2016 – Designed framework for the new Supervisor training model using gap analysis findings to drive changes. • August - October 2016 – Design new supervisor training curriculum. • November - December 2016 – Present curriculum to supervisors statewide

Initiative	Status	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of competency based 30-day classroom and hands-on training before assuming unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formal mentor assigned day 1 ○ Structured conferences for supervisors with standard coaching and direction outlined from mentors and Program Directors. • Training track built out for supervisors from 30 days to two years linked to competency areas. • Training track built out for supervisors with two years plus tenure, building upon strengths and focused on enhancing identified areas of developmental need. <p>Evaluate the model at key stages to address identified implementation or design deficits.</p>		<p>for feedback and make adjustments and build-out training track from 30 days to certification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2017 – Train mentors and regional leadership for February 2017 class. • February 2017 – Implement the new curriculum; begin work on pre-service program for caseworkers; train mentors and regional leadership for March 2017 class. • May 2017 – Preliminary evaluation of the model through focus groups; make necessary adjustments for upcoming training groups. • May-August 2017 – Build-out training track for supervisors with more than two years of training. • August 2017 – Six-month evaluation; design and rollout changes based on the evaluation findings.
<p>Evaluate gaps and provide leadership development for mid/upper management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure managers are taking advantage of available training opportunities through the Leadership for Advanced Management (LAM) team. • Design and implement a formalized competency-based training for Program Directors. • Partner with Casey Family Programs to provide 	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January - July 2016 – LAM provided "Five Fundamentals for Strengthening DFPS Leaders" training to regional leadership as well as consultation and other trainings to individual regions upon request. • February - August 2017 – Build and rollout out training for Program Directors. • January 2017 – Work with Casey Family Programs on leadership development for Program

Initiative	Status	Comments
leadership development for Program Administrators and Regional Directors.		Administrators and Regional Directors.

Retention

Improving performance evaluation, increasing feedback, and expanding recognition efforts are part of the broader objectives of elevating the professionalism of CPS' workforce and refining the agency's culture, work environment, and staff retention.

In March 2015, CPS implemented a statewide employee recognition and appreciation program based on a successful pilot in Region 2. The "e-Rewards program" allows a supervisor to recognize employees for their contributions to CPS and award privileges such as administrative leave or wearing jeans to work.

In 2015, DFPS leadership implemented the Commissioner's employee recognition program, "DFPS Stars." Under this program, employees were nominated for recognition by the Commissioner for outstanding performance. In September 2016, Commissioner Whitman launched the following employee recognition program to replace "DFPS Stars":

- **Commissioner's Award of Excellence**
Awarded to DFPS staff (or DFPS partners) who have done extraordinary work to protect the unprotected and have shown a strong dedication to DFPS and the work we do. Recipients of this award can take up to two days of extra leave. Any DFPS staff member can nominate a co-worker or external partner. Commissioner Whitman selects the winners.
- **DFPS Team Integrity Award**
The Team Integrity Award recognizes a program, unit, or team that demonstrated exceptional teamwork and produced an extraordinary outcome. Any DFPS staff member can nominate any DFPS team, and the DFPS Awards Review Board selects the winners.
- **DFPS Award of Distinction**
The Award of Distinction recognizes regional staff members from each DFPS program across the state. The nominees may be field workers or support staff, but not State Office staff. The associate commissioner of each DFPS program selects these awards.

Following an operational review recommendation, the agency is working with The University of Texas at Austin to develop a "360 degree" performance feedback as one method to strengthen managerial skills. Once developed, CPS plans to pilot the assessment with Program Administrators in Regions 4, 7, and 11.

DFPS has developed new performance evaluations for most direct delivery staff, subject matter experts, administrative staff, supervisors and managers. Feedback provided from the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission indicated the evaluations were very quantitative-focused and did not measure the quality of the work. Work is underway to reduce the length of the evaluations. The revised evaluations measure tasks for quality, as well as completion, and incorporate the practice model components and structured decision-making requirements. Supervisors unanimously agreed that the redesigned evaluation was more useful in developing and training caseworkers on critical thinking, outcomes and quality.

The Legislature provided DFPS funding for CPS staff Performance-Based Merit awards. In FY 2016, CPS awarded 2,211 awards to 2,160 high-performing staff. The target expenditures for FY 2016 were \$3.8

million; in just over eight months of issuing awards, CPS came close to that goal by spending \$2.7 million.

In FY 2016, DFPS initiated the Informal Confidential Complaint System (ICCS) where staff can anonymously report a complaint. DFPS highlighted the new system in the March 2016 DFPS newsletter. The system began in May 2016 with all DFPS employees able to access the system through a link on the agency intranet page and make an anonymous report. DFPS is tracking the reports and how they are being resolved. Since May 2016, there have been 37 reports related to CPS, primarily involving Investigations. The DFPS Workforce Division is tracking the reports and their resolution but it is too early to identify any patterns or trends.

Table 4: Implementation Status of Retention Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Evaluate successful regional recognition campaigns for expansion statewide.</p> <p>Implement 360-degree performance feedback for CPS regional management.</p> <p>Revise performance evaluation tools for all caseworkers that incorporate qualitative and quantitative indicators and correspond to new job descriptions, competencies established in training, and practice model guidelines.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 5, 2014 – Implemented “DFPS Stars” employee recognition program. • March 2015 – CPS Regions implemented e-Rewards recognition programs. • February 1, 2015 – Conducted 360-degree performance feedback with Regional Directors, Program Administrators, and ROSAs/SPAs. • March 1, 2015 – Launched new performance evaluations for investigation, FBSS, and CVS caseworkers to align with new training model. Staged rollout for all other staff continues throughout 2015. • September 1, 2015 – Performance-Based Merit program launched. The 84th Legislature funded a bonus award program to provide a financial reward to 25% of tenured CPS staff for outstanding behaviors that surpass what is expected from regular job performance. The Legislature allocated \$3.8 million per year for fiscal 2016 and 2017 for the awards. The bonus award program is for CPS staff with the exception of Program Administrators, Regional Directors, Division Administrators and Directors. • May 2016 – New performance evaluations

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<p>in place for Investigation, Family Based Safety Services, Conservatorship, Foster/Adoption, Kinship, ISeeYou, Master Investigator, Special Investigator, and Preparation for Adult Living caseworkers, supervisors, and unit support staff. Additionally, new templates completed for Regional Directors, Deputy Regional Directors, Program Administrators and Program Directors. The new templates cover 92% of regional staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• August 2016 – Began working with HHSC to convert new performance evaluations to the HHSC proposed format that would reduce the form from approximately 20 pages to three without losing comprehensiveness.• Fall 2016 – 360 assessments for all Program Administrators in regions 4, 7, and 11.

Priority B: Ensure Child Safety, Permanency, and Well-being

The CPS mission and mandate is to:

1. Protect children from abuse and neglect.
2. Provide services so children can live with their families when possible or in another permanent setting.
3. Ensure the health and well-being of children in the state's care.

Transformation aims to provide caseworkers the right tools and consistent training to aid in judgment and decision-making from beginning to end of a case to improve outcomes for children and families CPS serves. In addition, Transformation includes efforts to improve operational efficiency to give staff more time to spend with the children and families. Meeting this goal is essential to retaining staff and providing quality services.

Case Reads

CPS continues to conduct live (real time) and retrospective case reads in all stages of service to ensure child safety and improve the quality of casework. Live case reads offer an opportunity to evaluate key decision-making in a case and change course if needed. Analysis from the retrospective reads allows the program to identify more systemic issues, such as a need for more training in certain areas. Virtually all of the case reads use a structured case review tool where information from the review is entered into a database. The information from the case reviews is aggregated and analyzed and used to make needed improvements. As further discussed in the section Using Data to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families, regional management is incorporating the results of the case reads into their quarterly regional improvement team meetings and annual business planning.

Structured Decision Making

Structured Decision Making (SDM) is a research and evidence-based decision-support system. The SDM system is a model developed by Children's Research Center at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) that includes a comprehensive set of assessment tools, which guide each critical decision in the life of a child-welfare case.

CPS fully implemented three SDM tools: the 24-hour Safety Assessment, the Risk Assessment, and the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment. CPS is assessing the implementation plan for more assessment tools

Safety and Risk Assessments

CPS worked with NCCD to adapt its SDM safety assessment tool for use in Texas and develop a training plan and curriculum. CPS implemented safety and risk assessment instruments that guide and support caseworker decision-making in a manner consistent with the agency's mission of protecting children. While many states have safety and risk assessment tools, Texas has become a national leader by adopting a 24-hour safety assessment tool and integrating the tool with its Practice Model. The goal

with these new tools is not to replace individual judgment, but to help guide decision-making and identify common issues in CPS cases. It is important to note that each case is unique with its own set of challenges. This decision-making tool helps caseworkers identify issues early so they can intervene to secure child safety.

The 24-Hour Safety Assessment focuses on whether a child is in immediate danger and helps the caseworker determine if a child can safely remain in the home with or without a safety plan. Investigation caseworkers first used this assessment in March 2015, and FBSS and CVS caseworkers began using it in March 2016.

The Risk Assessment helps the caseworker identify families who have very high, high, moderate, or low probabilities of abusing or neglecting their children in the future. The risk assessment helps caseworkers determine the likelihood that a child could be harmed in the future with the purpose of guiding the caseworker's decision to open the case for ongoing services or close the case in investigations. Initial evaluation of the safety and risk assessment tools reflect a decrease in cases open for services after implementing the safety assessment tool because the focus is on immediate, identifiable danger. Data also reflects an increase in cases open for services after implementing the risk assessment tool, primarily through FBSS, including families where a child is "safe" with no immediate danger, but the family is at a higher risk of recurrence due to prior history.

Family Strengths and Needs Assessment

One of the SDM tools for Alternative Response (AR), FBSS, and CVS is the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA). This assessment will help caseworkers determine the parent's needs and strengths to identify services to address the safety and risk factors in the home. The assessment will guide decisions regarding goals and tasks on the Family Plan of Service. It will be updated before every Family Plan of Service or Family Plan of Service Evaluation. This tool helps caseworkers determine if they have identified risk factors in previous stages of service, and throughout the conservatorship case, and adequately addressed them to ensure the safety of children reuniting with their families.

FBSS and CVS staff began using the FSNA in all cases new to FBSS and Conservatorship beginning September 1, 2016. AR staff will begin using the FSNA once the assessment is integrated into IMPACT as a part of the IMPACT Modernization efforts.

Caseworkers use the FSNA along with the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment to help develop the Child Plan of Service and Child Plan of Service Reviews. Clinicians conducting the CANS assessment will receive copies of the FSNA as background information when doing the assessment and recommending interventions and supports.

CPS will evaluate the SDM tool through case-reads and recidivism data and will also consider whether to implement additional SDM tools in FY 2017, including the Family Reunification Assessment and Risk Re-Assessment.

Table 5: Implementation Status of Structured Decision Making Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p><u>Safety Assessment</u></p> <p>Implement a 24-hour safety assessment for use during initial contact with the child or children. Aspects of the safety assessment tool can be completed on site, with additional factors being completed within 24 hours.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 1, 2014 – Finalized 24-hour safety assessment tool. Development included rigorous “inter-rater reliability” testing of tools to determine consistency of rating of test cases by users. • January 26, 2015 – Began rollout of SDM safety assessment training to early adopter units. • March 2015 – Deployed statewide. • April 2016 – Began training FBSS and CVS staff on SDM Safety Assessment. • April 2016 – FBSS and CVS began using the Safety Assessment.
<p><u>Risk Assessment</u></p> <p>Implement a new risk assessment for use within 30 days of the start of the case. This new tool will be more objective and based on scientifically accepted actuarial principles adapted for Texas.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 18, 2014 – CPS completed the first draft of the risk assessment tool. • February 6 - 27, 2015 – CPS and NCCD adjusted the SDM tool to incorporate Texas’ unique case information. • May 7, 2015 – Deployed SDM risk assessment to early adopter units • August 2015 – Deployed statewide.
<p><u>Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA)</u></p> <p>Implement a new family assessment for use before developing a Family Plan of Service (FPOS) to help identify the parent's needs and strengths and to prioritize goals and tasks for the FPOS.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2016 – CPS customized the FSNA to align with the Texas practices and legal requirements. • August 2016 – Texas began training staff to use the FSNA. • September 1, 2016 – All cases new to FBSS and CVS will receive a FSNA. • FY 2017-2018 – AR will begin using the FSNA once it is integrated into IMPACT.

Practice Model

CPS developed a practice model that defines the organization, its values, and approach to serving children and families. As of December 2014, the practice model concepts were integrated into all transformation-related initiatives, such as Structured Decision Making, performance evaluation tools, strengths-based supervision, mentoring, and the core competencies created for the training model. The alignment between the practice model and other transformation initiatives is the most critical piece of implementation and what brings the practice model to life in the daily work of child protection.

CPS is using a multi-pronged approach to build staff core practice competencies. First, CPS developed tools and training for all caseworkers and supervisors. Practice guides and critical-thinking tools address core practice model competencies of engaging, assessing, teaming, planning, intervening, and evaluating. CPS started training seminars on these guides and tools in January 2015 and continued through August 2016, including webinars and regional face-to-face training for supervisors and mentors. CPS began work on two reference guides: one relating to domestic violence cases, and another regarding substance abuse and mental health issues. CPS will complete both guides in FY 2017.

CPS implemented an innovative model known as Signs of Safety, a relationship-grounded, safety-organized child protection framework designed to help families build real and lasting safety for children. The Signs of Safety approach to child protection casework is a risk assessment, risk management and case planning framework that is designed to be used from the beginning intake phone call through the case closure. The model engages families by eliciting information from family members regarding concerns or dangers, existing strengths, safety, goals, and day-day plans, which allows for an open, working relationship with the family and their network. In March 2015, CPS began rollout to early adopter units in Region 8 (a total of seven Family Based Safety Services units). In July 2015, CPS implemented Signs of Safety in four FBSS units in Region 11. In October 2015, Regions 8 and 11 added three early adopter units in the Investigations stage. While CPS has received anecdotal information that the model has decreased staff turnover and shown initial signs of decreased recidivism, the Signs of Safety model is an intensive practice change and must be deployed in a pragmatic and thoughtful manner to ensure fidelity of the model. Planning for continued rollout is in progress.

Table 6: Implementation Status of Practice Model Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
Implement a practice model, including a consistent framework for the standards, approaches, and methods that define the essential elements of how CPS interacts with children and families, as well as expectations of the child/family's experience with CPS.	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 14, 2014 – Finalized the practice model framework document and communication strategy. Published framework document November 15, 2014. January 6, 2015 – Trained regional directors, program administrators, and state office leadership on the practice model at the quarterly leadership meeting.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2015 – Signs of Safety implemented in the first early adopter units (seven Family Based Safety Services units in Region 8). Since March, Signs of Safety has been implemented in additional FBSS units in Region 11 and in Investigations units in Regions 8 and 11, for a total of 16 early adopter units. • FY 2017 – Complete practice guides and staff desk references regarding substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health. • August 31, 2016 – Provided face-to-face training in each region (with the exception of Regions 6a, 6b, and 3, which will receive the trainings in FY 2017) on the practice model application of the core competencies in all stages of service to supervisors and mentors.

Investigation and Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)

The CPS operational review identified process, practice, organizational, and technology issues that were obstacles for Investigations and Family Based Safety Services caseworkers. These issues ranged from minor inconveniences to major time-consuming activities. Subsequent to the operational review, two regional leaders organized a team with field staff from every region and state office subject experts to find solutions.

The team prioritized ideas into three groups:

1. Those that could be implemented immediately.
2. Those that needed testing and evaluation before implementation.
3. Those that required technology changes and could be considered for future IMPACT modernization.

From fall 2014 to early spring 2015, the team oversaw the development and implementation of its initiatives in early adopter regions. The team provided technical assistance and training to additional regions as these initiatives rolled out statewide. In October 2015, the Investigation and Family Based Safety Services (FBSS) workgroup was restructured to begin a more intense focus on FBSS issues. The workgroup was tasked with looking at issues related to FBSS staff turnover. The work included conducting a statewide survey to identify factors that helped workers stay in their positions. Regional Systems Improvement Specialists will further analyze the regional data. Many of the recommendations from the workgroup involved caseworker efficiencies that require changes to the IMPACT system. The recommendations have been prioritized for work that will be included in IMPACT Modernization.

Table 7: Implementation Status of Investigation and Family Based Safety Services Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Decrease time spent on activities that can be eliminated or handled by other staff and adopt practice improvements increasing the amount of time spent with families, and getting families needed and tailored services faster while maintaining focus on child safety.</p> <p>The team generated 320 process and practice changes and prioritized those for immediate implementation or pilot testing in the regions. The four initiatives included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triaging (use of administrative closures and abbreviated investigations). 	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2014 – Implemented immediate solutions. Began testing select process and practice changes in specific areas. Between November 2014 and January 2015, pilots expanded to additional regions (See chart next page). • December 2014 - January 2015 – CPS evaluated the pilots using focus groups, surveys, and data. • January 8, 2015 – Developed statewide rollout schedule to implement successful pilots as practice.

Initiative	Status	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations/FBSS case transfer. Timeliness – require 90 percent of investigations to be submitted for supervisor approval within 45 days. Caseworker support centers. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March - July 2015 – Regional staff trained on how to triage cases. May – November 2015 – Regions implementing INV/FBSS case transfer initiative. January 1, 2016 – New timeliness standard implemented statewide.

Evaluation of Investigations / Family Based Safety Services Initiatives

Child Protective Services created two teams of field and state office staff to identify program and process improvements in response to The Stephen Group’s operational review finding that staff spend limited time working directly with children and families. One team focused on Investigations and Family Based Safety Services. The team generated hundreds of process and practice changes and prioritized four initiatives. The table below defines each initiative and summarizes anticipated outcomes.

Table 8: Investigation and Family Based Safety Services Initiatives

Initiative	Increase Time with Families	Increase Safety	Expedite Service Provision	Increase Staff Collaboration
<p>Timeliness Implements statewide standard that 90 percent of investigations must be submitted to a supervisor within 45 days of assignment.</p>	Yes	Yes		
<p>Triaging Improves “triaging” and assessment of cases before assignment to an investigator to allow CPS to focus on high-risk cases. Helps identify situations that fit policy standards for abbreviated investigations and administrative closures, and tries align regional practice with policy.</p>	Yes	Yes		
<p>INV / FBSS case transfer Pairs Investigations and FBSS units to accelerate service provision. Requires investigations to involve FBSS within 10 days of the start of the investigation if the caseworker determines the family needs services.</p>	Yes		Yes	Yes
<p>Caseworker Support Center Create a one-stop/one-call pool of administrative resources to support caseworkers.</p>	Yes			Yes

Timeliness

Many obstacles prevent timely case closure. This initiative refers to the speed at which investigations are closed and seeks to align actual performance with targets established in policy (workers submit investigations to their supervisors within 45 days to enable case closure by 60 days). An investigation should be thorough enough to consider input from the alleged victim, other family members, teachers, medical professionals, and the alleged perpetrator (as appropriate) but completed quickly enough so the caseworker can act to ensure child safety.

In April 2015, CPS communicated the new timeliness standard to the regions and gave them through January 2016 to comply. Between May and August 2015, the statewide rate of investigations submitted for approval within 45 days ranged from 47.6 percent to 53.9 percent. To provide additional technical assistance to the regions, CPS collected best practices from strong-performing regional staff and shared them statewide. CPS presented all regions with the project's goals and expectations. DFPS modified IMPACT to better support workers submitting cases by the 45th day. CPS continues to send weekly reports to the regions to help them monitor progress in real time. For FY 2016 to-date (through July), statewide performance is 50%, ranging from 44% in Region 3 and 71% in Region 5.

Triaging

Since 2011, policy allows for both an abbreviated investigation and an administrative closure of an investigation and defines the specific circumstances for their use. In an abbreviated investigation, the caseworker gathers enough information to rule out the allegations or determines a parent has taken actions to protect the alleged victims from any identified danger. Administrative closures occur when the caseworker determines CPS does not have jurisdiction to investigate the allegations or if the allegations do not meet the definition of abuse and/or neglect. The INV/FBSS Team provided training in each region and this initiative has been implemented fully. CPS trained all regions on the triage model by July 2015. The regions continue to use data on their rates of abbreviated investigations and administrative closures to determine if additional coaching is needed.

Region 10 data showed that during a three-month pilot period, caseworkers identified cases that did not need full investigations, and this initiative provided them with tools to manage the workload and the average length of an investigation decreased by 7.8 days. The region also did not experience an increase in recidivism, suggesting that workers and supervisors made sound decisions in closing cases.

Staff participating in regional focus groups identified the following positive outcomes of the initiative:

1. The initiative is helpful for managing/reducing caseloads.
2. It is positive for CPS to not get involved with families when they should not be.

Some supervisors are feeling more comfortable closing an investigation when a thorough investigation is not warranted, using abbreviated or administrative closure when appropriate. Still, work remains in implementing this change.

INV/FBSS Case Transfer

This initiative pairs Investigations and FBSS units to improve communication and collaboration between CPS staff and accelerate the involvement of the FBSS caseworker in the case to start services sooner for the family. The progression of a case from Investigations to FBSS involves various handoff issues between staff that can delay services to families. National research has shown that the sooner services begin, the more receptive the family is to the services and the more likely they will complete the desired services.

CPS piloted this initiative from fall 2014 through spring 2015. Data from the pilot regions indicates that services started an average of 20.3 days sooner (64% improvement), from the point at which the case was opened to FBSS.

CPS trained all regions on the model. As of April 2016, regions reported varying success in maintaining the model due to turnover and increased workloads. Additionally, CPS has seen an increase in the number of cases being referred to FBSS since the implementation of the SDM tools in the investigation stage of service.

Alternative Response (AR)

CPS is implementing a strength-based, family centered "alternative response" practice that allows for a more flexible, family engaging approach while still focusing on child safety. An alternative response involves an assessment of the family, including a safety assessment and providing agreed-upon services and supports. The key differences from a traditional investigation are that there is not a formal finding about whether abuse/neglect occurred and, thus, no designation of a perpetrator because such administrative findings are unnecessary to keep the child safe in these cases. Strong family engagement practices are crucial to AR's success.

CPS recognized that the agency has been involved in numerous initiatives on an ongoing basis for the past several years. Staff in the field were feeling overwhelmed with the rapid change and management determined that a temporary pause on the implementation of AR and some other initiatives was warranted. In addition, management wanted to ensure AR practice was in line with the model and to determine if the rollout was effective before moving forward statewide. CPS temporarily paused AR in April 2016. The pause was not to reflect on any of the practice issues associated with AR and work continued to embed the AR practice in the regions that had already implemented (Region 1, 3, 7, 9 and 11). This has allowed the focus of current AR resources on the regions that have implemented and allowed time to focus on building sustainability.

CPS plans to reinstate AR implementation in January 2017.

Child Advocacy Centers (CAC)

CAC Texas has partnered with DFPS in order to enhance collaboration through the Multidisciplinary Enhancement Program (MEP), which is a program where Statewide Intake sends a copy of the CPS intake to local CACs at the same time that the Law Enforcement notification is launched. Texas CACs will continue the statewide rollout of the MEP in FY 2017, with an additional 10 CACs joining the program. This will bring the number of CACs participating in the MEP to 58 of the 70 CACs in Texas. The additional

10 CACs joining MEP in 2017 began receiving Statewide Intake (SWI) reports on September 1, 2016. At that time, almost 350 law enforcement agencies were participating (allowing their CACs to receive duplicate SWI reports).

Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN)

The Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN) is a group of physicians from six medical schools in Texas who are experts in child and adult abuse and neglect. The goal of the network is to ensure that medical professionals with expertise in maltreatment are more readily available to offer their advice and expertise to DFPS caseworkers. This network fills in gaps when no local medical experts are available. The network helps CPS, Child Care Licensing (CCL), and Adult Protective Services (APS) staff make better decisions about child and adult safety. The FACN provides statewide access to forensic medical consultation services, expert testimony regarding child abuse/neglect diagnoses in abuse/neglect cases, and ongoing training on the medical aspects of abuse and neglect to staff via in-person trainings, live electronic conferences, and web-based resources.

To assist staff with understanding the FACN process, DFPS recently published a resource guide in conjunction with the FACN physicians.

All stages of service (CVS, INV, AR and FBSS) have been added to the FACN portal so that CPS staff have access to the information provided by FACN physician on specific investigations.

The FACN is in the process of finalizing a FACN app that caseworkers can install on their agency phones. The Child Protector App is designed specifically for caseworkers to help improve investigations. It includes animations depicting mechanisms of injury and a decision tree. The DFPS Mobil and DFPS Security teams have approved the app, which was released in September 2016. Staff will be trained on the app in October and November 2016.

Additionally, DFPS is currently conducting an internal audit to assess the following:

- Office of Child Safety process and its effect on changes in utilization of medical consultations.
- Assessment of materials and methods for promoting awareness of FACN.
- Documentation/consideration of assessments provided by FACN.
- Timeliness of FACN assessments.
- Delinquency rates, if any, of cases with FACN involvement.
- Attendance at available FACN trainings.

Casework Support Center

DFPS designed the casework support center as a convenient way for mobile caseworkers to scan documents, address common administrative support requests, and to provide a physical workspace for collaboration with their peers. The concept was piloted in the Austin regional office. Lessons learned from that pilot led to refinement of the model to focus on use of the pooled administrative support. The Region 7 center now serves as a model for the rollout of additional centers. There are two centers fully operational (Austin) and other centers are under development (Waco, Amarillo, and Houston).

Feedback from the Region 7 center has been positive and the center has steadily added to the tasks it performs for field staff. DFPS will continue to explore expansion, dependent upon availability of space and evaluation of the centers' effectiveness.

Reunification and Permanency

CPS believes that all children deserve a lifelong connection to a family and it is CPS's responsibility to find safe, permanent, family relationships for each child and youth in foster care. Because of this, DFPS is dedicated to creating a practice that supports developing family connections for children and youth, and quickly exiting children and youth to permanency. Towards this goal, two regional leaders organized a cross-functional team with field staff from every region and state office subject matter experts to identify CPS system improvements to move children more quickly to permanency. The group targeted agency practices that inadvertently delay reunification and other exits to positive permanency. The team also focused on field-driven ideas to reduce time spent on activities that could be eliminated or streamlined so caseworkers have more time for critical casework. Together, these efforts seek to improve time to permanency for children and increase caseworker morale and retention.

The team prioritized ideas into three groups:

1. Those that could be implemented immediately.
2. Those that needed to be tested and evaluated before implementation.
3. Those that required technology changes and could be considered for future IMPACT modernization.

From fall 2014 to early spring 2015, the team oversaw the development and implementation of initiatives in early adopter regions. The team provided technical assistance and training to additional regions as these initiatives began statewide. After careful consideration, the workgroup was discontinued. It was determined that the workgroup had successfully implemented several recommendations and that other significant changes were approaching, including changes to the Practice Model. Additionally, many of the recommendations from the workgroup involved caseworker efficiencies that require changes to the IMPACT system. The recommendations have been prioritized for work that will be included in IMPACT Modernization.

Table 9: Implementation Status of Reunification and Permanency Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Increase the average number of children who can be reunified with their families in less than a year, and reduce the average time to permanency by involving field staff in identifying immediate solutions.</p> <p>The team generated 95 process and practice changes and prioritized 17 ideas for immediate solutions that CPS can implement statewide and practice changes for testing and replication. Ideas prioritized for implementation include:</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2014 – Began testing select process and practice changes in specific areas. Between November 2014 and January 2015, pilots expanded to more regions. • December 2014 - January 2015 – CPS evaluated the pilots using focus groups, surveys, and data. • January 8, 2015 – Developed statewide rollout schedule to

Initiative	Status	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation Matters training • Realignment of Kinship/CVS Staff • Accelerated family reunification • CVS Worker Assignment • Family Group Conference (FGC) Improvements • Single Child Plan 		<p>implement successful pilots as practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 31, 2015 – Visitation Matters training rolled out in all regions. • January - April 2015 – Realignment of Kinship/CVS Staff rolled out in the regions. • January - April 2015 – CVS Worker Assignment rolled out in areas where it was not standard practice. • January - August 2015 – FGC improvements implemented in the regions. • January - September 2015 – Accelerated Family Reunification rolled out in the regions. • March 2015 – CPS created an internal and external workgroup to identify barriers to the strategies for implementing the single child plan of service. Participants from CPS, the Residential Provider Community, Residential Child Care Contracts, Residential Child Care Licensing, Texas CASA, The Parent Guidance Center, and DFPS legal participated in developing the single child plan model. As a result, changes to the residential child care contract, minimum standards, and CPS policy will change to support the implementation of this practice.

Visitation Matters

CPS implemented this training for all Conservatorship and Kinship caseworkers. The University of Texas at Austin developed the content after academic research and feedback from external stakeholders. The theory is based on the following concepts:

1. CPS owes parents immediate feedback on any issues that occur during a supervised visit with their child rather than the parents hearing about it months later in court.
2. The supervised visit is an opportunity to coach the parent on improving his or her parenting skills.
3. It will be motivating to parents to move from highly supervised visits to unsupervised visits as they improve their skills. The feedback on the visits will help enable this progression.

CPS will continue to reinforce this work through the practice model and in collaboration with CPS' partners.

Realignment of Kinship/CVS Staff

In situations where a child is placed with a relative, the kinship worker is the advocate for that family member, assisting with tasks such as day care renewals and paperwork to get financial compensation. In the past, in some regions, kinship workers were assigned by geographical area. This created difficulties when large sibling groups were placed with different relatives, potentially resulting in multiple kinship workers involved in a case, as well as the conservatorship worker. This Transformation initiative changed the alignment and assignment of kinship workers so they are paired to one conservatorship unit. The intent of the pairing is to increase collaboration between conservatorship and kinship staff and improve coordination of the support to the kinship placement(s) in a family's case. All regions have implemented this change.

Staff response to this initiative in focus groups was overwhelmingly positive and cited the following benefits:

1. The initiative has improved communication between conservatorship and kinship staff. Kinship staff are more integrated and receive more information about court hearings and other meetings.
2. Kinship workers are helpful to conservatorship workers.
3. Involving kinship workers sooner is good for families – it expedites service delivery and the referral to Fostering Connections.

As anticipated, the additional travel required of kinship workers who are no longer geographically based is a challenge. Building relationships between personnel also takes time. Overall, the effort has proven worthwhile.

Accelerated Family Reunification

Texas law provides parents with one year to successfully complete services and alleviate the safety and risk issues that led to the children being under the conservatorship of DFPS, before their parental rights

being terminated. That law was designed to protect the parent and give them time to make positive change to reunify with their children. The unintended consequence of this is that CPS sometimes uses the 12 months as a standard, which can delay reunification unnecessarily. This initiative was designed to accelerate reunification for cases that meet certain criteria, such as engagement in services, stability of the home environment, and demonstration of protective capacities. All regions have implemented Accelerated Family Reunification.

This initiative has encouraged staff to think creatively to reunify families. For example, in one Region 9 case involving a 4-year old boy, accelerated reunification was proposed early in the life of the case (at only 64 days). The rationale for the reunification was that a strong safety and support network was in place to support the mother and child. The mother was living in the home of a couple whom CPS originally studied to be a fictive kin placement because they were not related, but still maintained a strong bond. Once reunified, the mother and child continued to reside in their home. All parties agreed with the plan.

Frontline staff responded positively in focus groups, noting the following benefits:

- This initiative has put reunification at the forefront and allowed staff to consider this option earlier.
- Early reunification is good for families and staff.

Concerns raised about this initiative included the following:

- Only a limited number of cases meet the criteria.
- This change represents a cultural shift for the system and CPS must continue to work with stakeholders to reinforce the change and remain focused on reunification whenever possible.

CVS Worker Assignment

In some regions, CPS assigned the CVS worker early in the process, but in other regions, this was not occurring until well after the 14-day hearing (adversary hearing). This initiative sought to extend the practice of early CVS worker assignment statewide (so that the worker who will own the case long-term can be involved sooner). Early assignment of the CVS worker enables them to attend and meet the family at the 14-day hearing and start their work sooner. CPS has implemented this initiative in all the regions where it was not already practiced.

Evaluation of this initiative found a decrease in the average time to authorize services in both pilot regions. One region experienced a 15-day reduction, while another experienced a 41-day reduction. Focus group feedback indicated positive support from CVS workers. One worker noted: "It is a lot better. This helps get the parents engaged with Family Plan sooner and report to the judge at the hearing that the parent is engaged and working to do what needs to be done." Another indicated: "This [initiative] eliminates parents having to wait. At times this can also help identify parents that want to relinquish rights sooner in the process and find permanency for the children."

Family Group Conference within 30 Days

The Family Group Conference (FGC) is a meeting of CPS staff, parents and extended family members, and other stakeholders who agree to a service plan. This is a critical step in getting the buy-in from the parents on what they must do to regain custody of their children and to engage other persons who can hold the parents accountable to the plan.

The concept of this initiative is to hold conferences within the first 30 days of a case (faster than current practice) and to improve their effectiveness by ensuring that the family plan is completed at the FGC and that parents leave the meeting with their service referrals. All regions have implemented this initiative.

Single Child Plan of Service

This initiative seeks to increase collaboration between CPS and the Child Placing Agency (CPA) on the child's plan of service. In the current system, CPS and the CPA create their own plans of service for the children at separate points in time. The intent of this initiative is better coordination of services and accountability for all parties, resulting in a unified approach to achieving permanency for the child.

The initiative's success depends on the CPAs working with CPS. State Office staff worked extensively to engage residential care providers through a workgroup. In March 2015, CPS created an internal and external workgroup with members from the Residential Provider Community, Texas CASA, DFPS Child Care Licensing, CPS Contracts, The Parent Guidance Center, CPS staff from across the state, and DFPS legal staff to examine implementation barriers. After over 25 meetings, the workgroup made the following recommendations for increased efficiencies and higher-quality service plans:

1. A uniform service plan that all child placing agencies contracted with CPS will use.
2. A method for a child's service plan to remain in effect should a child change placements and there are no significant changes due to the child's needs.
3. A model for multidisciplinary meetings to discuss permanency and services.
4. Changes to IMPACT to support the single service plan.

The single child plan of service was piloted in regions 2 and 8.

Initial feedback from the pilot area indicates that the expected outcomes from this work are occurring. There is more collaboration between the foster parent and the parent, more parental engagement in the case and in service planning, and more clarity about the permanency goal for the case. All team members report they enjoy the multidisciplinary meeting and find it to be very effective for case planning. CPS is committed to implementing this initiative, as it provides for efficiencies and increased quality in case planning. However, CPS leadership is assessing the best approach toward implementation, as this is a complex cultural shift for families, foster parents, residential care providers and CPS staff. In addition, technology changes are necessary to support the Single Child Plan of Service in order to promote caseworker efficiencies as the pilots tested this model using a paper-based system that would not be sustainable statewide.

Permanency Call to Action

In February 2015, CPS began a Permanency “Call to Action” in partnership with Casey Family Programs. A statewide permanency summit with state office staff, regional directors, and conservatorship program administrators focused staff on the statewide goal of safely achieving positive permanency for more children and youth. Positive permanency is achieved when a child leaving DFPS’ care exits into a permanent setting, which involves a legal relationship to a family. Reunification with parents, transfer of custody to a relative or extended family member, and adoption are all examples of positive permanency outcomes.

In April 2015, a second statewide summit engaged more regional staff about the importance of permanency. Each region reviewed data to identify their unique challenges. Regions focused on reunification, exits to relatives, or adoption. They also developed plans on how to engage and prepare their local stakeholders for their regional permanency summits held between June and November 2015.

In February 2016, CPS held the second annual permanency summit. With the support of Casey Family Programs, CPS brought in a speaker from the National Implementation Research Network to help CPS leadership better understand how to effectively implement practice change through implementation science principles and frameworks. Leadership received information on the four key stages of change efforts and the core components of building a team and ways to support and sustain a practice change.

The regions also shared their strategies and progress towards achieving the regional and statewide permanency goals. More information about the statewide and regional permanency work can be found in the [Permanency Strategic Plan](#).

Progress towards achieving the goals identified in the Permanency Strategic Plan included:

- Time to permanency was reduced from 18.8 months in FY 2014 to 18.4 months in FY 2016.
- Between December 2014 and April 2016, 65% of the children under the age of six who had been in care for two or more years had achieved permanency.
- The number of youth who aged out of foster care reduced from 7.4% in FY 2014 to 6.6% in FY 2016.

Table 10: Implementation Status of Permanency Call to Action Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Goals of the Permanency initiative include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safely reduce the average time to achieve positive permanency by 25 percent by 2020. 2. Achieve positive permanency for children under six years old who have been in DFPS conservatorship for more than two years. 3. Reduce the number of youth exiting care without a permanent home. 4. Create a culture in which staff and stakeholders value and demonstrate a sense of urgency to achieve positive permanency. 	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 20, 2015 – Permanency Summit kicked off Permanency Call to Action. • April 29 - 30, 2015 – Statewide program director Call to Action meeting. • September 1, 2015 – Statewide Permanency Strategic Plan established statewide goals for FY 2016 and accompanying targets for each region. • June - November 2015 – Regions engage local stakeholders through regional Permanency summits. • February 2016 – CPS held second annual Permanency Summit. • November 2016 – Regional Directors will be meeting with regional judges at the Child Welfare Judge's Conference to discuss permanency. • Ongoing – Regions continue to monitor and adjust the regional permanency goals and targets.

Harris County Transformation

Transformation is a statewide effort. However, with a child population of over 1 million and a monthly average of almost 4,500 children in CPS care, Harris County's challenges are especially acute. Children living in Harris County remain in foster care longer than the statewide average (29 months compared to 24 months) and are less likely to reunite with their families (22 percent compared to 32 percent statewide). Recognizing the specific needs of this urban area, CPS requested that Casey Family Programs assess the issues in Harris County and make recommendations. Casey Family Programs recommended a targeted permanency campaign and structured effort toward making long-term practice improvements.

Over the past year, CPS has worked toward moving to permanency a targeted group of 600 children who have been in care for more than two years, most of whom have a goal of adoption. As of July 2016, CPS had moved 451 of the original group of more than 600 children into permanency. This group includes children with complicated needs. The Regional Director held quarterly town hall meetings with supervisors, one with stakeholders, and one with the legal community to discuss permanency and complex legal issues regarding children reaching reunification and other permanency goals. Region 6 has begun to restructure to a system where cross program staff will work cases in "permanency teams" in three catchment areas. The teams will continue to operate with safety and permanency as the focus from initial intake. As of April 2016, Harris County had 10% fewer children in care than during the same time period in calendar year 2015.

During this process, CPS continued to develop a deeper understanding of barriers to permanency and engaged staff in taking ownership of work needed to affect internal change. Harris County has now implemented a change management structure that includes the state transformation efforts in this plan, along with initiatives specific to Harris County. This governance structure facilitates the region's ability to develop, lead, track, and evaluate efforts designed to improve child welfare practice, increase the professional skills of the workforce, improve operational efficiencies, and effectively communicate a permanency-based vision within the agency and throughout the community. Strategies under development include initiatives to reunify children and families earlier, improve child and family visitations, engage families and services more quickly, prevent children from staying in state care for extended periods of time, and draw on the strengths of community stakeholders as partners in permanency for children in Harris County.

Table 11: Implementation Status of Harris County Transformation Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p><u>IV-E Demonstration Waiver</u></p> <p>The waiver demonstration was focused on improving permanency and well-being for a cohort of children in paid foster care with a permanency goal of reunification to test and/or implement innovative, valid and reliable screening and assessment tools, providing solution</p>	<p>Project Terminated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 1, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services granted DFPS a Title IV-E waiver. Casey Family Programs and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago will help the state plan and implement the waiver project. January 2015 – Secured an external

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>focused services that meet the assessed needs, and providing evidence-based intervention approaches that will result in positive well-being outcomes for children and their families, and addressing the trauma experienced by children who have been abused and/or neglected.</p> <p>After careful analysis of the progress of the waiver, DFPS elected to terminate the Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver project due to budgetary and other factors. CPS notified all parties of the termination on July 20, 2016. CPS continues to work with Casey Family Programs in Harris County and is planning for Casey to work in Dallas County in 2017.</p>		<p>evaluator to conduct the initial process evaluation, annual outcome evaluation reports upon implementation per federal requirements, and cost analysis. Subsequently, CPS negotiated the scope of work and research design with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2015 – The Texas Comprehensive CANS assessment tool was finalized. This tool includes behavioral health and child welfare assessment information. Region 6A staff provided input in the development of this tool in conjunction with Harris County Protective Services and state partners.
<p><u>Harris County Transformation</u></p> <p>Move a targeted group of 600 children who have been in care for more than two years, most with a goal of adoption, to successful permanency by December 31, 2014.</p> <p>Reduce the length of stay in foster care and the time to permanency in Harris County by identifying key barriers and making practice improvements. Implement geographically driven case distribution. Harris County was divided into four quadrants (north, south, east and west).</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 1, 2014 – Began geographically assigning cases. • December 31, 2014 – At the end of July 2015, CPS had moved 375 of the original group of 600 children into permanency. As of August 2015, CPS has moved 375 of these children to permanency. CPS continues to work to move “long-stayers” to permanency but has also increased work to prevent “long-stayers.” • January 9, 2015 – Completed an analysis of the barriers to moving “long stayers” to permanency. Because many barriers identified were legal, CPS began working with its legal partners to address these issues. • February 6, 2015 - Ongoing – The external stakeholder committee formed to engage key stakeholders in the process. The committee includes CASA, the Harris County Attorney’s

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<p>Office, and education, health, and mental health representatives, and meets quarterly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2015 – Region 6A began conducting quarterly town hall meetings led by the regional director on transformation and permanency-related topics. • July 2016 – CPS moved 451 of the original group of more than 600 children into permanency. This group of children consists of the most complex cases for closure. The Regional Director held quarterly town hall meetings with supervisors, one with stakeholders, and one with the legal community to discuss permanency and complex legal issues regarding children reaching reunification and other permanency goals.

Purchased Family Preservation and Reunification Services

CPS purchases a number of family preservation and reunification services such as counseling, substance abuse, and mental health treatment. In response to The Sunset Advisory Commission concerns about the need to track outcomes of these services, CPS is using data to better drive contracting and referral decision-making. Through this model, CPS will use data to identify the most effective types of services, the providers with the best outcomes, and service capacity needs. To improve services and client outcomes, CPS intends to strengthen training, communication and access to information for all parties involved in the contracting, referral, and delivery of these services, including CPS management and workers, contract monitoring staff, and providers.

The workgroup, consisting of staff from Purchased Client Services (PCS), FBSS, and CVS, has been working to revise the current Evaluation and Treatment Statement of Work (SOW). Collaboration with program field and contract staff in the regions has contributed to significant changes made to the current SOW such as:

1. Incorporating payment for travel in designated underserved areas (including distance thresholds for travel and putting criteria in place to monitor the impact).
2. Including payment for "no-shows" at a reduced rate of fee-for-service with criteria to control attempts to contact prior to the scheduled visit.
3. Strengthening the minimum provider qualifications to improve quality of services.
4. Specifying expertise needed such as experience working with crisis situations (adult or children), families with children between the ages of 3 and 5 years, treating victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse issues and administering evidence-based treatment.
5. Revising performance measures to focus on quality to support child safety, well-being and permanency.

Table 12: Implementation Status of Purchased Family Preservation and Reunification Services Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p><u>PCS Evaluation and Statement of Work</u></p> <p>Develop a method to assess the value of services using data on removals from FBSS and client recidivism at the region, unit, and provider level.</p> <p>Implement strategies to improve</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 1, 2014 – Completed analysis of existing data available in the DFPS data warehouse, from contract management staff, and through quality assurance processes. Identified correlation between low service completion rates and poor client outcomes. Conducted focus groups in December 2014 to get more information in select regions based on

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>service delivery including the quality and array of services available and families' completion of services.</p> <p>Implement strategies to improve communication and partnership among program, contract, budget, and provider staff.</p>		<p>data analysis. DFPS updated the data and CPS is using it to further support the need for the FBSS Family Services Contractor (pilot).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 31, 2014 – Recommended practice, contract and communication improvements, including continued need for data analysis. CPS developed a Referral for Evaluation and Treatment Services form in response to the Sunset Advisory Commission's recommendations. This form further standardizes the referral process statewide to provide succinct information to providers at the onset of services. The overall goal is to more effectively communicate CPS worry statement and describe the behavior that needs to change. • July 1, 2015 – Incorporated provider communication and performance items into quality assurance case reads ensuring that it informs CPS program and contract management decisions. • September 2015 – Conducted provider fair in Regions 2 and 10 to identify best practices in improving communication between providers, contracts, and caseworkers and educating caseworkers about providers in their area. Developed a provider fair toolkit for regions. Regions will be expected to hold fairs in the fall and spring each year. CPS staff has embraced the purpose and need for resource fairs. As a result, they have been successful across the state resulting in increased collaboration between contracts and program staff and contracted providers.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2015 – Drafted revised scope of work for purchased client services provider contracts, which include clearer provider expectations related to performance. CPS will continue to gather internal and external input to finalize by April 2016 for FY 2017 procurement. Revisions to the Evaluation and Treatment Statement of Work are complete. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Posting: September 1, 2016 ○ New Open Enrollment (PEN) activation: March 1, 2017 ○ New Provider Orientation: January 2017 ○ Staff Orientation: January-February 2017
<p><u>FBSS Family Services Contractor</u></p> <p>The objective for this procurement is to pilot the value of using a single Family Services Contractor in conjunction with a performance-based contracting to provide the full array of needed services and case management to children and families in the family preservation (FBSS) stage of involvement with CPS.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2016 – Develop pilot budget • October 2016 –Region 10 Provider Meeting • Fall 2016 – Post RFP January 2017 – Contractor Selection

Foster Care

Foster Care Redesign

Foster Care Redesign is the competitive procurement of performance-based contracts with a single provider to create sustainable placement resources in communities and keep children close to home. The Sunset Advisory Commission identified a need for long-range planning for Foster Care Redesign. Planning for statewide rollout (pacing and location) is taking place in the larger context of CPS Transformation. Additionally, Sunset identified the need to develop a consistent approach to measuring and monitoring provider quality in existing residential contracts.

On January 1, 2014, DFPS contracted with ACH Child and Family Services of Fort Worth to provide services to Tarrant and six surrounding counties.

In its first year of operation, ACH improved residential capacity, including rural capacity, by adding over 300 new beds. This included 50 therapeutic placements. ACH also improved placement proximity with 83% of children new to care being placed within 50 miles of their homes. ACH improved placement stability during the same time period. Ninety-four percent of children had two or fewer placements at the first year mark and 78.5% of children were placed in foster family homes rather than more restrictive placement options. Second year (FY 2016) performance data for ACH is scheduled for release in November 2016.

ACH has made a number of enhancements in the catchment area, including comprehensive safety audits for all network Child Placing Agencies, successful rollout of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment, reduced placement disruptions, and implementation of a Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI). The goal of the QPI is to develop a systemic approach to recruiting and retraining high-quality caregivers in the community. QPI in other state systems has improved children's quality of care by redefining caregivers' expectations and roles.

ACH has also used advanced technology and tools, including the Every Child a Priority (ECAP) placement matching system and the Provider Information Exchange (PIX). The Every Child A Priority system is decision-support software that ranks potential placements for a child according to a research-based algorithm designed to support placing children closer to home and with the best match possible to help support desired outcomes. The Provider Information Exchange (PIX) is an IT system developed by Five Points, Inc. This system combines different data sources in one seamless process that uniquely identifies resources and children in care and offers an integrated interoperable approach between multiple provider systems and ACH's IT system.

On August 1, 2016, DFPS released a request for proposals for the next Foster Care Redesign area in Region 2. Proposals were due on October 3, 2016. DFPS anticipates the contract will begin in January 2017. In FY 2017, CPS will prepare for expansion to Stage 2 in the ACH catchment area, continue Process and Outcome Evaluation, and release a revised Statewide Implementation Plan.

Other Foster Care Enhancements

A July 24, 2014, DFPS Internal Audit report on Residential Foster Care Contract Monitoring recommended shifting from the traditional “one size fits all” monitoring approach to one using predictive analytics to improve the agencies identification of residential childcare providers and foster homes that present the greatest risk to child safety. The CPS Purchased Client Services Division is changing from the traditional approach of reactive, compliance-focused, and annual risk assessments to an approach that is proactive, outcome focused, and includes conducting continuous risk assessments.

Three components comprise the new approach to contracts monitoring:

1. Performance-based contracts set expectations for outcomes providers should attain for children in CPS care.
2. Continuous Quality Improvement approach that uses predictive analytics in anticipating safety risks and provides real-time feedback and technical assistance to providers.
3. Accountability through scorecards.

Table 13: Implementation Status of Foster Care Enhancement Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p><u>Foster Care Redesign</u></p> <p>Develop a long-range plan for fully implementing foster care redesign informed by thorough evaluation, cost-analysis of redesign to date, and a Request for Information (RFI) to solicit information on procurement and implementation approach. The information will help DFPS prepare Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the Single Source Continuum Contracts (SSCC) in designated catchment areas.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 1, 2014 – DFPS contracted with ACH Child and Family Services in Region 3 to serve as the SSCC for Tarrant, Palo Pinto, Parker, Erath, Johnson, Somervell, and Hood counties. As of September 10, 2016, ACH’s Our Community-Our Kids model was serving 1,317 kids. This represents approximately 97% of all children from the catchment area. Chapin Hall will continue to evaluate throughout implementation. • Fall 2014 – CPS gathered data and other information before the 84th Legislative Session, including a cost analysis by Public Consulting Group on September 19, 2014, and information from potential vendors collected in response to an RFI in November 2014. • April 2015 – DFPS published a long-range Foster Care Redesign Implementation Plan.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2015 – The 84th Legislature funded expansion of Foster Care Redesign into one additional catchment area. CPS selected Region 2 counties. • July 2015 – Progressive Intervention Plan - FCR contract staff developed and implemented a progressive intervention plan should the SSCC fail to comply with the contract terms and conditions. The intervention plan includes contingency planning efforts and timeframes. The contingency plan is incorporated into the updated Foster Care Redesign Implementation Plan. • August 2015 to current – Meetings held to plan for FCR Stage 2 Implementation in Region 3b (August 2015 and February 2016). Readiness activities are in process with an anticipated start date of January 1, 2017. • August 2016 – RFP for Region 2 released. Proposals are due October 3, 2016. Contract will begin in January 2017.
<p><u>Other Foster Care Initiatives</u> Residential Contracts Demonstration, aimed at improving the quality of contracted residential care through performance-based contracting, continuous quality improvement, and accountability.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2014 – As an interim measure, CPS updated the current risk assessment tool and oversight practices contract staff use to monitor residential childcare contractors to more safety-focused and include additional financial reviews to determine providers’ overall operational health. • August 31, 2015 – CPS created a detailed work plan to strengthen residential-contracts monitoring.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 1, 2016 – DFPS started the Residential Contracts Demonstration Project. The project is designed to enhance the safety, permanency, normalcy, and well-being of all children in residential foster care through the use of performance-based, outcome-focused measures and monitoring activities that focuses on preventive measures, quality services and fiscal viability. Data collection will continue through December 2016. The project focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A more effective and real-time approach to detecting potential children at-risk in care through predictive analytics and monitoring to ensure program and operational measures and systems are in place to prevent abuse and neglect. ○ Developing enhanced outcome focused performance measures with input and agreement from provider partners and Safety-Based Contract Monitoring Protocols. ○ Scorecard that allows for transparent reporting on the performance of providers to increase public awareness and public accountability for the foster care system. • Continuous Quality Improvement in which Contract Monitors use information from the agency’s data collection systems to assist and guide providers in a

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<p>supportive environment in which providers focus on improving outcomes for children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2017 – Performance targets will be determined. • August 2017 – First scorecards will be issued. • FY 2018 – Full demonstration project will roll out statewide.

Office of Child Safety

Abuse/neglect fatalities and near-fatal events occur in every program within DFPS. Historically, CPS, APS, and CCL have been independently responsible for identifying and addressing issues relating to fatalities affecting people served in their programs. There has not been a centralized mechanism for ensuring an independent case review, coordination of efforts, development of an agency perspective of systemic issues, or for targeting prevention efforts to reduce fatalities. This has resulted in fragmented responses from DFPS and a perception that the agency is unable to provide unbiased reviews of its own work. The Office of Child Safety (OCS), housed within the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division, is charged with objectively analyzing individual child abuse and neglect fatalities, near fatalities and serious injuries, and looking for patterns and issues in the system. With the goal of supporting implementation of prevention and intervention strategies to address and reduce fatal and serious child maltreatment, OCS reviews state and national data, trends, best practices, prevention programs used elsewhere, and makes recommendations for implementation in Texas and provide transparency to the public.

OCS has partnered with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to use birth/death records and community data to build richer prevention/intervention maps and target resources by risk factors and location. The second round of data matching will compare all confirmed child maltreatment to DSHS records in spring 2017.

Table 14: Implementation Status of Office of Child Safety Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Establish Office of Child Safety to house the child fatality review process within the Prevention and Early Intervention Division. This office will support independent data analysis, identification of systematic issues, and support cross-program (CPS, APS, CCL) initiatives to address preventable child fatalities, serious injuries and increase overall child safety. Policies and procedures for both investigations and reviews will be centralized and made available to all staff and the general public.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 1, 2014 – DFPS created the Office of Child Safety and staffed first positions as of January 6, 2015. • December 2014 - Ongoing – DFPS participates in the <i>Forum on Improving Safety and Preventing Child Fatalities: Application of Predictive Risk Modeling</i> along with the Department of State Health Services, Health and Human Services Commission, and the Honorable Judge Karen Sage. DFPS also continues to work with the Protect Our Kids Commission to address child fatalities. The Commission’s final report was published in December 2015. • January 2015 – OCS began conducting case reviews for child fatalities suspected to be abuse/neglect-related and where the family is involved with

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<p>CPS. In April 2015, OCS started its online data and information webpage, which includes the publicly releasable reports prepared by OCS and data related to its ongoing work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2015 – DFPS produced a DFPS/DSHS strategic plan to reduce abuse/neglect fatalities using public health data. Texas is leading the national effort to use public health data to address child fatalities, as more than half of families are not known to CPS before the fatality. OCS will complete a second round of data matching in spring 2017. • March 2015 – DFPS produced an analysis of child abuse and neglect fatalities from FY 2010-2013, which was released with the strategic plan. • September 2, 2015 – DFPS participated in DSHS’ training seminars/"Grand Rounds" for Texas physicians on the OCS DFPS/DSHS Strategic Plan to Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities and the risk factors identified by the DSHS/DFPS research. • September 29, 2015 – OCS held the first DFPS Safety Summit for all management teams across Texas to focus on child fatality trends and areas to support child safety across DFPS. • October 1- 2, 2015 – OCS participated in the Partners in Prevention Conference to support the work of prevention services as part of the efforts to address child safety. • October 2015 – December 2015 - OCS led the PEI Research think tank, which

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<p>brought together leaders in education, research, prevention services, and intervention services to strategically plan on how to measure and support strong outcomes across prevention and early intervention services to address child maltreatment and family resiliency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2015 – OCS worked with the Protect Our Kids Commission to develop ongoing recommendations to support a public health approach in Texas to address child fatalities and maltreatment. • Fall 2015 – Summer 2016 - OCS served as a member of the ProjectSAFE grant with the Texas Council on Family Violence to address domestic violence and the need for collaboration across various providers and stakeholders to have an informed, inclusive, and coordinated approach to addressing domestic violence while supporting child safety and family attachment. • March 2016 – DFPS produced an analysis of child abuse and neglect fatalities from FY 2014 to FY 2015. • Spring 2016 – DFPS launched updated prevention campaigns through social media specifically around high-risk issues such as handling fussy babies, potty training, temper tantrums, water safety, and teen behaviors. • Spring 2016 – DFPS worked to revamp outreach and media campaigns around safe sleep with infants. This campaign will launch in fall (October/November) 2016.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2016 – August 2016 - OCS held the second annual DFPS Safety Summit for all management teams across Texas to focus on child fatality trends and areas to support child safety across DFPS. The safety summits included all supervisors and above from CPS, all regional staff for Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL), and staff from Purchased Client Services. • August 2016 – OCS presented at the Crimes against Children Conference on child fatality review to improve policy, practice, and prevention initiatives in communities.

Prevention and Early Intervention

The DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division supports healthy social, emotional and cognitive development of children and youth in stable family relationships and nurturing community environments. Through programs and services designed to improve parenting skills, strengthen family relationships and build resiliency, PEI strives to reduce child abuse, enhance school readiness, improve social-emotional and physical health, and strengthen communities.

The Sunset Advisory Commission recommended prioritizing prevention programming at DFPS, which until recently has been a contracting function within CPS Purchased Client Services. Elevating PEI to report to the Commissioner allows prevention to administer programs that maintain a connection to both the agency's critical child welfare function and with community and public health partners who participate in broader prevention efforts. PEI benefits from Office of Child Safety data and research. Better use of data and partner involvement in the agency's prevention strategy will improve programs serving at-risk families. PEI also merged with the Texas Home Visiting program May 1, 2016, and was co-located by July 2016.

Table 15: Implementation Status of Prevention and Early Intervention Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Reorganize DFPS to elevate Prevention and Early Intervention efforts as a direct report to the Commissioner.</p> <p>Better use existing data to focus on programmatic outcomes, and develop a comprehensive strategic plan for PEI programs.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 1, 2014 – PEI placed in a separate division that reports to the DFPS Commissioner. • October 1, 2014 – Executed a contract with The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work to complete an analysis of PEI data as well as the Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) Program. • October 31, 2014 – Established the Texas Prevention Network as a structure for gathering input and prioritizing issues for a five-year strategic plan, due September 1, 2016. • November 1, 2014 – Reorganized PEI Office to report directly to the DFPS Executive Commissioner. • April 2015 – Conducted joint application design sessions for new PEI IT system. • May 2015 – The 84th Legislature provided funding for PEI to grow the

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<p>HOPES and Community Youth and Development programs, to pilot a family support for military families, and to fund a safe baby initiative to prevent incidence of shaken baby syndrome. Enacted the Sunset Advisory Commission's recommendation to consolidate the Texas Home Visitation Program (currently housed at HHSC), into the PEI Division.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2015 – Begin developing a new PEI IT system to collect client data and produce effective reports. The new PEI application is planned for deployment in spring 2017 and will allow for automated payments and advanced reporting in August 2017. • July 2015 – Create six think tanks to address topics relevant to the PEI Strategic Plan. • September 2015 – Execute a contract with UT LBJ School of Public Affairs to measure the effectiveness of efforts to engage and support fathers and promote protective factors within the PEI program. • September 2015 – Execute a contract with SUMA Social Marketing, Inc., to conduct focus groups (across the state with various stakeholders (parents, military families, grandmothers, child care providers). • December 2015 – Execute a contract with the UT LBJ school of Public Affairs to evaluate the Military Families and Veterans Prevention Pilot program funded as a result of HB19 (84R). • December 15, 2016 – Think tank reports due.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2016 – Execute a contract with Texas A&M to evaluate the Community Youth Development (CYD) Program, identify meaningful data elements to collect and analyze for both the CYD program and the Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR) program. • March 2016 – Community meetings held to gather information for the Strategic Plan. • March 2016 – Met with research partners to discuss PEI outcome measures. • March 2016 – Conducted a contractor survey to gather information for the Strategic Plan. • April 2016 – Received and reviewed an analysis of 10 years of PEI program data produced by the UT School of Social Work to develop research initiatives and performance outcomes. • May 2016 – Texas Home Visiting (THV) staff became DFPS employees under the Prevention and Early Intervention Division. • May 2016 – Met with research partners to continue discussion about outcome measures. • May 2016 – The Prevention Advisory Committee held its first meeting. This new high-level stakeholder group will meet quarterly to advise and support DFPS's prevention and early intervention work. Rules are expected to be adopted by HHSC Executive Council in November 2016 and effective March 2017.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2016 – PEI and THV staff moved into joint space office space. • September 2016 – Final Strategic Plan published. • December 2016 – Outcomes Report.

Faith-Based Programs

DFPS collaborates with faith-based organizations and community partners statewide to serve children and families involved with or at risk of involvement with the CPS system. In the Texas faith-based model, DFPS provides local churches with data specific to the needs of children, youth, and families in their area that help determine the type of ministry to develop from “prevention to permanency.” DFPS has received national attention for its success in galvanizing the resources of faith-based communities.

One opportunity for faith communities to support children and families is through the Care Portal, a web-based tool that allows CPS staff to connect with the faith community. CPS staff use the portal to request church support for children and families’ needs. The portal began on August 1, 2014, in Bell, Williamson and Travis Counties. It has since expanded to 19 counties in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10 and 11.

Additionally, faith communities may support children and families through Orphan Care Solutions of Texas. Orphan Care Solutions of Texas acts as a bridge for the community's foster care stakeholders in Regions 1, 6A, and 6B, focusing on:

- Recruitment and retention of caregivers and sustainable programs.
- Permanency adoption initiatives.
- Initiatives for the aging-out foster youth population.
- Normalcy initiatives.
- Kinship initiatives.

CPS surveyed participating churches in February 2015. Thirty-seven of 96 churches responded (39 percent). They indicated that overall collaborations with CPS were positive. They stated they understand the CPS mission and vision and are satisfied with staff they work with. Over half said CPS does not maximize the use of all services their churches provide, suggesting there is opportunity for expanding this initiative. To maximize the services provided by the church to families, and as a result of the survey, CPS trained Faith-Based Specialists on engaging churches and faith-based organizations in April 2016. Faith-Based Specialists will train regional staff on how to collaborate, engage, and use faith community services. In addition, CPS is making some organizational changes to ensure these specialists have more uniform direction and to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

Table 16: Implementation Status of Faith-Based Program Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
Increase the number of churches establishing ministries to serve children and families involved with the child welfare system. Recent faith-based expansion efforts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPS has identified staff in each region to help grow the number of 	In Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 1, 2014 – Launched the Care Portal. To date, 416 faith-based organizations have signed on to participate in the Care Portal. Currently, 151 faith-based organizations are active participants of the Care Portal, and 259 faith organizations are working with DFPS

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>faith-based organizations willing to partner with CPS.</p> <p>Continue the work of the Advisory Committee for the Promotion of Adoption of Minority Children (ACPAMC) to support faith-based work.</p>		<p>while waiting for the Care Portal to activate in their local area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 31, 2014 – Completed a chronicle of the evolution of the Texas faith-based model and collaborative work underway between churches and the state child welfare system. The document has been published as a national resource. • August 2015 – Statewide, 475 faith-based organizations began collaborating with DFPS to develop an orphan care ministry to help children and families in all stages of services, from prevention to permanency. • The ACPAMC continues to hold community forums to encourage, faith leaders statewide to collaborate with DFPS. There will be a total of four community forums held in 2016 (calendar year), in Dallas, Lubbock, Austin, and San Antonio. • August 2016 – Created a detailed faith-based work plan. • On August 1, 2016 the 90 by 90 Faith Initiative was launched. The initiative focuses on activating 90 faith organizations within the Care Portal in 90 days. The initiative started with 151 faith organizations active within the Care Portal. • Fall 2016 – CPS created a Division Administrator position for faith-based work. CPS leadership anticipates filling this position in fall 2016. All regional faith-based specialists will report to the Division Administrator.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">On November 2, 2016, a Faith-Based Summit will be held at the State's Capitol. The Summit will welcome faith leaders around the state to come, share, and collaborate with DFPS in helping the children and families in the foster care system.

Priority C: Establish Effective Organization and Operations

One of the Sunset Advisory Commission's recommendations was for CPS to effectively manage and do a better job of planning, communicating, and listening to field staff. To do so, CPS has:

1. Reorganized state office to align with the field’s organizational structure and maximize use of existing resources.
2. Tested restructuring of regional units to improve the case transfer process and delivery of services to children and families.
3. Paused non-critical policy updates and adopted a more effective policy development and communication strategy.
4. Prioritized information technology changes that will most significantly improve field casework as the agency works toward modernization of IMPACT, CPS’ data system.
5. Expanded the use of predictive analytics to address emerging problems more strategically and is developing a comprehensive quality improvement system.

Organization and Operations

The operational review found that CPS needs a stronger team focus across disciplines to support day-to-day field operations. For state office, CPS must eliminate silos, sharpen the focus on field support, align and coordinate changes in policy, practice, technology, and training for the field, and enhance communications. These efforts will result in a more mission-focused state office that provides greater regional support.

Table 17: Implementation Status of Organization and Operations Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p><u>Organization</u></p> <p>Restructure state office and regional functional units to better align stages of services and functions.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 28, 2014 – CPS adopted a new state office organizational structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consolidated permanency functions. ○ Consolidated quality management functions. ○ Created positions to coordinate and guide policy development and best practice innovation. ○ These structural changes included integrated Alternative Response, investigations and family reunification services. • September 1, 2014 – CPS ended non-critical policy updates and paused

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<p>non-critical training to the field outside of transformation efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2014 - January 2015 – Piloted solutions to better integrate stages of service in the field. All regions have implemented the KIN/CVS worker pairing initiative, and by November, CPS will implement the INV/FBSS case transfer in all regions. CPS leadership will continue to evaluate further restructuring as the need arises.
<p><u>Operations</u></p> <p>Pause non mission-critical CPS policy updates and training and realign quality initiatives and projects with transformation goals.</p> <p>Eliminate duplicate approvals across points in a case, shifting more decision-making to workers and supervisors and freeing time for management staff.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 1, 2014 – Eliminated non-safety-related duplicative approvals. Also identified safety-related duplicative approvals for possible elimination as part of transitioning more critical decision-making to workers and supervisors once new supervisor training is completed. November 2015 – CPS launched an “Approved Supervisors” pilot program in Region 3. This pilot is testing the feasibility and effectiveness of shifting certain decision-making responsibility to a group of supervisors who meet criteria.
<p><u>Information Technology</u></p> <p>Prioritize current and future technology projects that support transformation efforts or improve worker efficiency. IMPACT Modernization will provide a new technology platform for easier and less costly system enhancements in the future and a better user experience.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2014 – DFPS created new data fields in IMPACT to capture “time with families.” Workers began capturing initial data in April 2015; however, this has not proven effective as a mechanism to capture comprehensive data on how caseworkers spend their time. December 2014 – Identified exceptional items for technology improvements that support transformation goals and workers spending more time with families.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2015 and August 2015 – Implemented new Structured Decision Making safety tool and assessment tool into IMPACT. • May 2015 – The 84th Legislature funded Transformation technology initiatives. CPS prioritized initiatives to improve caseworker time with families, such as streamlining and improving the process for requesting and monitoring contracted services, re-engineering caseworker key functions, improved access to case history information, and allow multiple stages to be open simultaneously to aid in the transfer of cases and ensure services to families can be initiated sooner. • August 2016 – DFPS has an open procurement for completing IMPACT Modernization and Transformation requirements in this report. DFPS has not yet awarded the contract.
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Communicate transformation efforts to internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Revise form letters to parents, youth and reporters so they communicate DFPS involvement and decisions in plain language and align with the CPS practice model.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2014 - January 23, 2015 – Held 11 regional staff meetings and 13 stakeholder meetings and webinars. • October 2014 - Ongoing – Released monthly CPS “Meeting in a Box” to implement change in the field through supervisor-led communication and training. • July 2015 – Identified priority form letters in the Investigations stage that go to parents and guardians, as well as reporters/other third parties. Reviewed accuracy of legal content and simplified language for improved readability. Additional feedback will be collected from the Parent Collaboration Group.

Initiative	Status	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">July 2016 – Some letters updated and being translated into Spanish.

Policy Strategy

CPS continued its policy streamlining efforts in FY 2016. With the new process, CPS updated its policy manual by December 2015 with changes from the legislative session. CPS is streamlining the Placement and Conservatorship sections of the Handbook and expects to publish the streamlined versions in Fiscal Year 2017.

Table 18: Implementation Status of Policy Strategy Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
Streamline the current CPS policy handbook by separating policy from practice and create a more effective and efficient process for revising, disseminating and implementing policy and practice in the future.	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 11, 2014 – Revised definitions of policy and practice and established a new process of policy development including centralized review. • October 31, 2014 – Implemented a new process to provide policy to field staff. • December 11, 2014 – Completed streamlining of policy and practice for Investigations and Family Based Safety Services. New policy effective February 15, 2015. • February 2015 – Began streamlining of policy and practice for Conservatorship to take effect January 1, 2017. • April 2016 - Completed and published streamlined Education policy. • March 2016 – Began streamlining of policy and practice for the Placement Section of the Handbook. Projected publication is October 2016.

Using Data to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families

DFPS creates and maintains hundreds of data reports along with information gathered through the regional investigation and Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) case reads. To effectively use this information to improve outcomes, CPS must create a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) structure. To do so, CPS must integrate and analyze the data to help field and state office effectively use it to manage staff and improve. CPS also must train staff to use the integrated data and information to make decisions and continuing improving.

During FY 2016, CQI efforts included:

- Expanding use of predictive analytics to identify children in foster care who are at a higher risk of being reported for maltreatment and implementing a structured monitoring and follow-up process for those children as part of the RCC demonstration project.
- Analyzing and aggregating information through case reviews to identify areas to improve and strengthen casework.
- Evaluating all new initiatives, including Alternative Response, FBSS real-time case reads, SDM implementation, the initial rollout of the Residential Child Care Contracts Demonstration project, and the Performance Merit program for more tenured staff. Based on the evaluations, CPS has adjusted the initiatives and continues to monitor progress and outcomes.

To extend and embed a CQI structure into the field to help sustain Transformation, CPS in FY 2016 created the Regional Systems Improvement (RSI) Team, which is part of the CPS Systems Improvement Division under the Deputy Associate Commissioner for CPS. This team works with CPS regional leadership to proactively and strategically build an experienced and tenured workforce and improve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families CPS serves. Using integrated data and reports, the team helps regional leadership identify what's working well and what needs improving. Working with regional staff and, when appropriate, external stakeholders, the team devises solutions, helps to implement plans, and tracks and reports progress.

An example of the RSIs recent work includes using qualitative data from live case reads on high-risk FBSS cases. The case reads highlighted that staff were not always addressing safe sleep practices for the majority of cases with children under the age of 1, or conducting background checks in the majority of reviewed cases. During a strategy meeting with regional leadership, the RSIs discovered that the issues actually began in the investigation before the case was transferred to FBSS. The RSIs worked with regional leadership to develop a process to ensure that staff address these issues before transferring the case. Within two months of implementation, there was 50% improvement in addressing safe sleep and 14% improvement in background checks.

RSIs will continue this type of work and help support regional management develop annual business plans and conduct quarterly regional improvement team meetings.

Table 19: Implementation Status of Using Data to Improve Outcomes for Child and Families Initiatives

Initiative	Status	Comments
<p>Coordinate and align investigation CFSR quality assurance case reads. Integrate information and data gathered through investigation and CFSR quality assurance case reads, data analysis, predictive analytics, and program evaluation.</p> <p>Dedicate staff to support field and state office in strategically using the integrated information for planning and decision-making.</p> <p>Expand the use of data analysis and predictive analytics to identify emerging problems and high-risk cases.</p> <p>Support evaluation of CPS Transformation efforts through short-term analysis that allows CPS to adjust during the course of implementation and evaluation of outcome data over time.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2015 – Completed inventory of all information and data gathered through case reads and identify gaps and areas of overlap. • July 2015 – Created Regional Systems Improvement Division to extend the CQI structure into the field to help sustain Transformation. CPS hired the Division Administrator and is in the process of hiring 11 specialist positions. • July 2015 – Family Based Safety Services Real-Time Case Reads rolled out statewide. • August 2015 – Develop structured case reading tool for Child Safety Specialist reviews. • August 2015 – Completed initial evaluations of all key Transformation initiatives and pilots.

Evaluation of Transformation Efforts as of August 2016

Since Transformation began in August 2014 and as evidenced in this report, CPS continually evaluates the implementation and outcomes of these efforts to improve their effectiveness. In addition, CPS tracks their collective impact on key outcome measures on an ongoing basis.

Transformation created a needed sense of urgency to make changes to improve outcomes for children and families. In FY 2015-2016, CPS rolled out:

1. A new training model for caseworkers and supervisors.
2. New performance evaluations for caseworkers and supervisors.
3. More than 15 substantial new practice changes ranging from revamping the Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP) process and new Structured Decision Making tools in all stages of service to new ways of assigning FBSS and CVS caseworkers on investigations being opened for services to overhauling the Investigations and FBSS policy manual.

Many of these changes within Transformation do not show improved outcomes overnight and much of the work over the past two years has been to help staff absorb and adapt to the changes, which have already demonstrated gradual improvements.

With much of the initial roll-outs complete, CPS is now in a good place to evaluate, as recommended in the Sunset report, and take stock of what works and what doesn't and move forward in a more targeted and focused way through its annual business-planning process. The annual business plan incorporates all the Transformation metrics and sets specific targets for improvement in the upcoming year.

Average Time to Case Closure

CPS has reduced the average time to close an investigation by 14% between FY 2014 and FY 2016, a substantial improvement in a critical measure. Time to FBSS case closure has remained constant and average time children stay in conservatorship declined slightly.

Table 20: Average Time to Closure

Time to Closure	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
Average time to investigation closure (in days)	52.9	48.2	45.6
Average time to FBSS closure (in months)	7.1	7.0	7.1
Average time to conservatorship closure (in months)	21.3	20.9	20.8

Turnover Staff Recruiting, Hiring and Retention¹

The agency has focused on recruitment of former military members. The agency has increased the number of military recruiting events by 20% in FY 2016 (through July) compared to all of FY 2015.

Table 21: Military Events

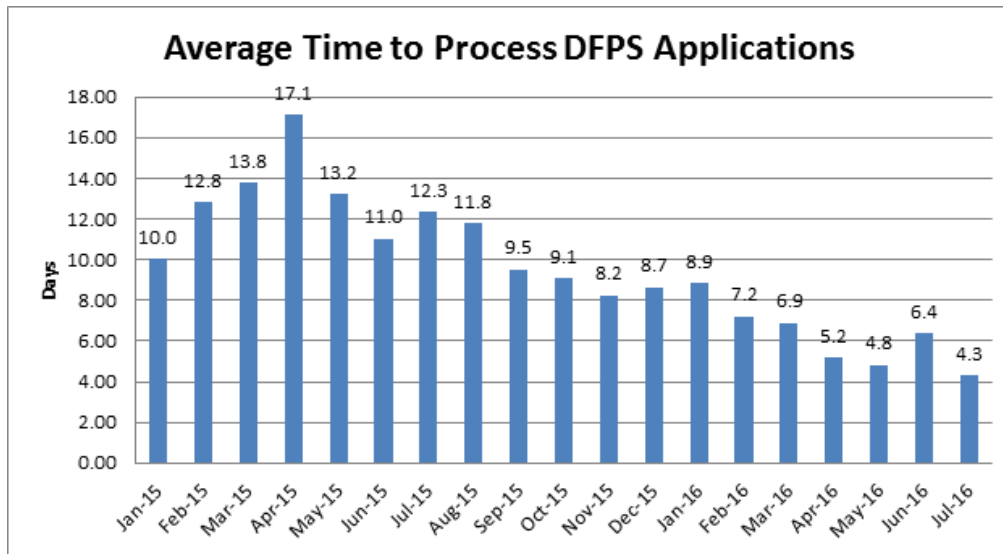
Fiscal Year	Military Events
2015	30
2016 (YTD - July 2016)	36
Total	66

The agency has also refined its screening process, which has resulted in selecting more candidates for review. From January 2015 through June 2016, the agency selected 34% of all applicants for review. In the third quarter of FY 2016, the agency selected 47% of all applicants for review.

The agency has reduced the time it takes to get staff hired. Since September 2015, process improvements on the front end of the application process have resulted in a 55% decrease in the time it takes from receiving the application to referring the candidate to the hiring team. This shift has allowed DFPS to improve the average time to fill a vacancy from 65 calendar days in FY 2015 to 43 calendar days at the end of the third quarter of FY 2016, a 34% reduction.

¹ Data on recruitment and hiring reflects performance for DFPS overall, not just CPS.

Figure 1: Average Time to Process DFPS Applications



Turnover

Turnover across all stages at the statewide level remains consistent with recent years, with the exception of FBSS, which is slightly better than this time last year. It should be noted, however, that turnover only captures when an employee leaves the agency.

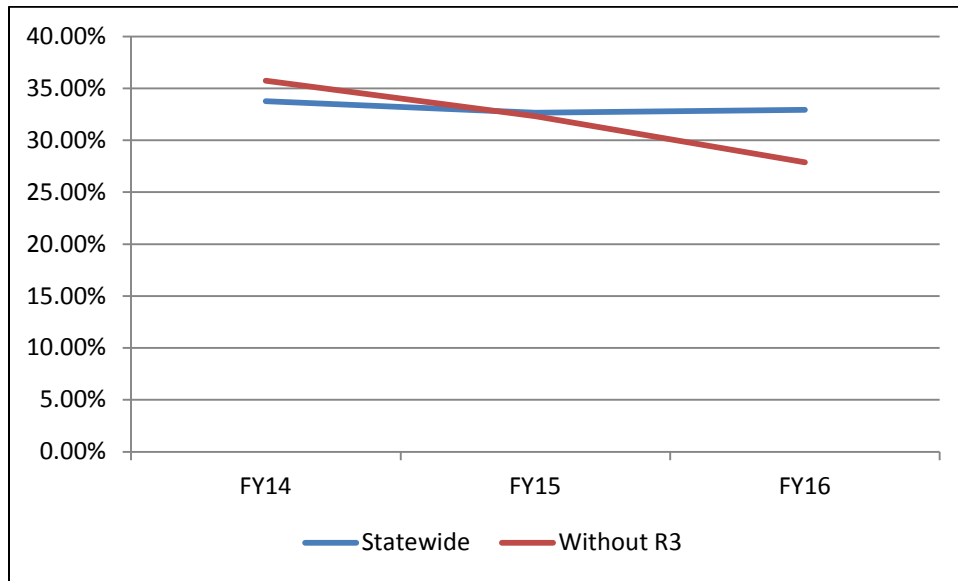
Table 22: Turnover by Stage of Service

Turnover by Stage of Service	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
Turnover for CPS overall	25%	26%	26%
Turnover for Investigations	34%	33%	33%
Turnover for Family Based Safety Services	23%	28%	25%
Turnover for Conservatorship	23%	23%	23%

When looking at turnover at the regional level, there are signs of improvement in several areas of the state. Between FY 2015 and FY 2016, five regions experienced decreases in Investigations turnover, six regions saw decreases in Family Based Safety Services turnover, and five regions experienced decreases in Conservatorship worker turnover (charts follow at the end of this section).

Further, because turnover has increased so significantly in some of the state’s largest regions during FY 2016 (in particular, among Region 3 Investigations staff), the state’s overall turnover rate and Investigations turnover rate have been depressed as a result. When removing Region 3’s turnover from the statewide CPS turnover rate, the adjusted statewide turnover would be over 2% lower in FY 2016. When adjusting for the Investigations turnover in Region 3, the statewide Investigations turnover rate in FY 2016 would be 4.4% lower than in FY 2015 (as shown below). CPS and DFPS leadership is currently evaluating the specifics surrounding Region 3, to understand and respond to this outlier.

Figure 2: Investigation Caseworker Turnover



Source: DFPS, "Turnover and HR-related Data," FY14-16,

This exercise reinforces the point that turnover remains a significant issue but one that varies substantially in certain areas of the state. The state needs to look at turnover both through the lens of global issues as well as localized situations to develop a complete understanding of implications and remedies.

Although statewide turnover has remained relatively consistent, another important trend that currently occurring is that the timeframe for when caseworkers are leaving has shifted. Compared to FY 2014, the turnover rate for new staff (employed less than 3 months), has increased across all stages.

With the redesigned training and mentor model, new caseworkers get a more realistic preview of the job in the early months and those who are not a good fit appear to be opting out early. When caseworkers leave the agency in the first three months of employment, there is less of an impact on agency resources and on the workload for caseworkers who remain.

Table 23: Turnover for new staff (0-3 months)-Prior to Carrying a Caseload

Stage of Service	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
INV	23%	34%	32%
FBSS	21%	22%	24%
CVS	20%	23%	29%

Compared to FY 2014, turnover for staff after they become case carrying (employed 3-18 months) has increased in Investigations and FBSS but remained flat for CVS. This group continues to have the highest rate of turnover. Ultimately, it will take time to determine if those who have self-selected out in the first three months result in reduced turnover among staff with 3-18 months of tenure.

Table 24: Turnover for staff (3-18 months)-After authorized to carry a caseload

Stage of Service	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
INV	49%	45%	48%
FBSS	27%	40%	33%
CVS	18%	17%	18%

Turnover for tenured staff (employed 19 months or longer) remained relatively unchanged across stages. Tenured staff getting promoted or transferring to another division in the agency is not included.

Table 25: Turnover for Tenured Staff (19+ months)

Stage of Service	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
INV	23%	21%	24%
FBSS	21%	22%	22%
CVS	18%	17%	18%

Recidivism, Placement, and Permanency

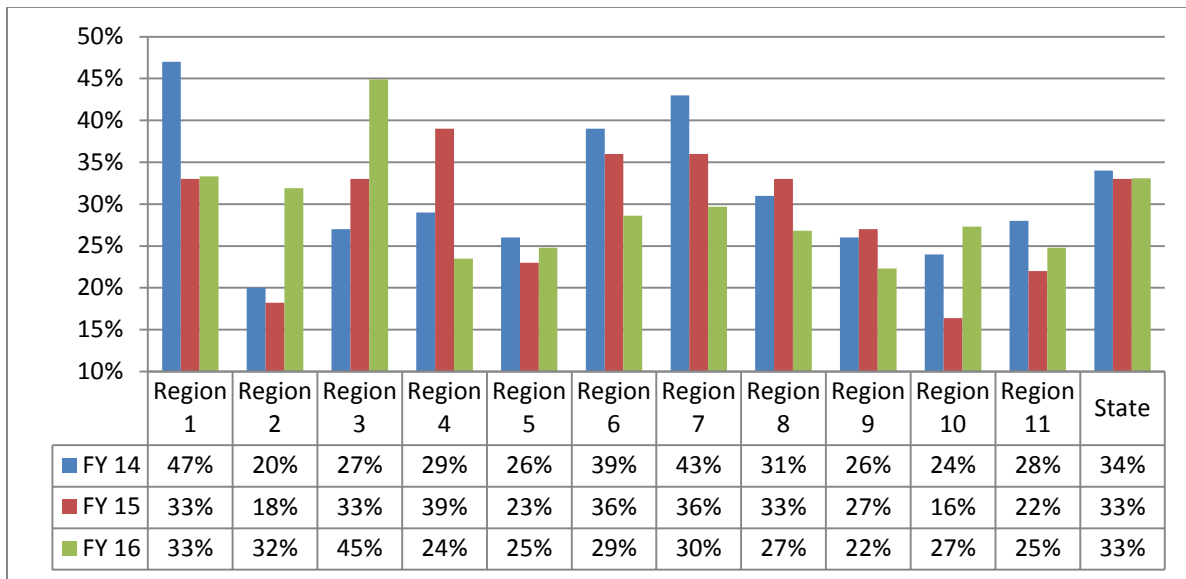
Recidivism is down slightly from FY 2014 in FBSS and CVS but remained unchanged in investigations. Placement stability improved slightly and CPS is finding permanent homes more quickly for more children.

Table 26: Transformation Outcome Metrics

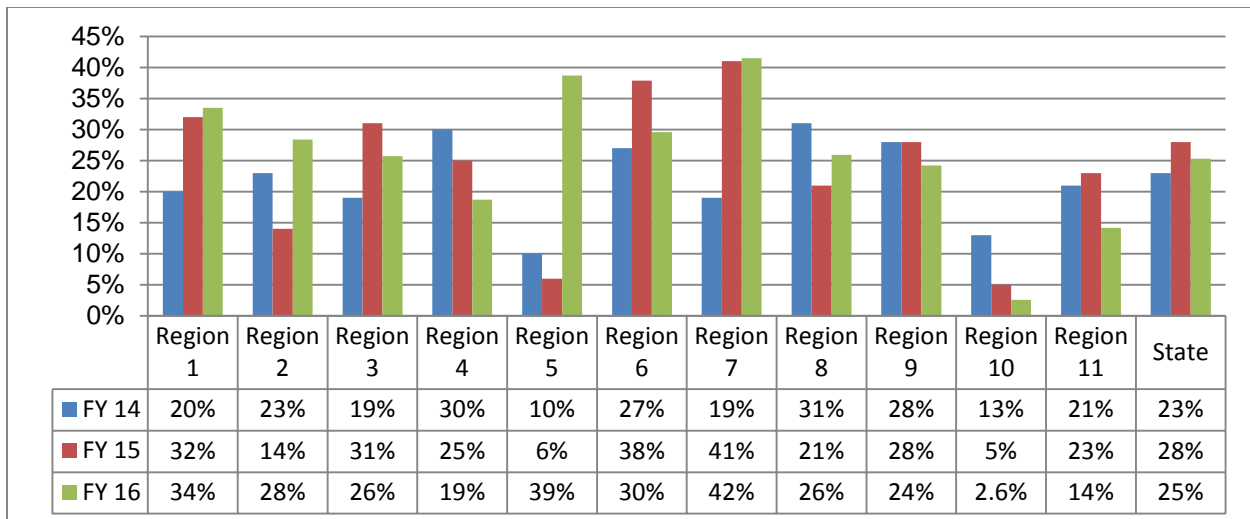
Transformation Outcome Metrics	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
Recidivism from Investigation	7.5%	7.7%	7.5%
Recidivism from Family Based Safety Services	7.8%	7.6%	7.6%
Recidivism from Reunification	11.9%	11.5%	11.7%
Average Number of Placements	3.2	3.2	3.1
Exits to Permanency	91.4%	92.2%	92.1%
Average Time to Exit to Permanency (in months)	18.8	18.5	18.4

Data on turnover and outcomes for each region follows:

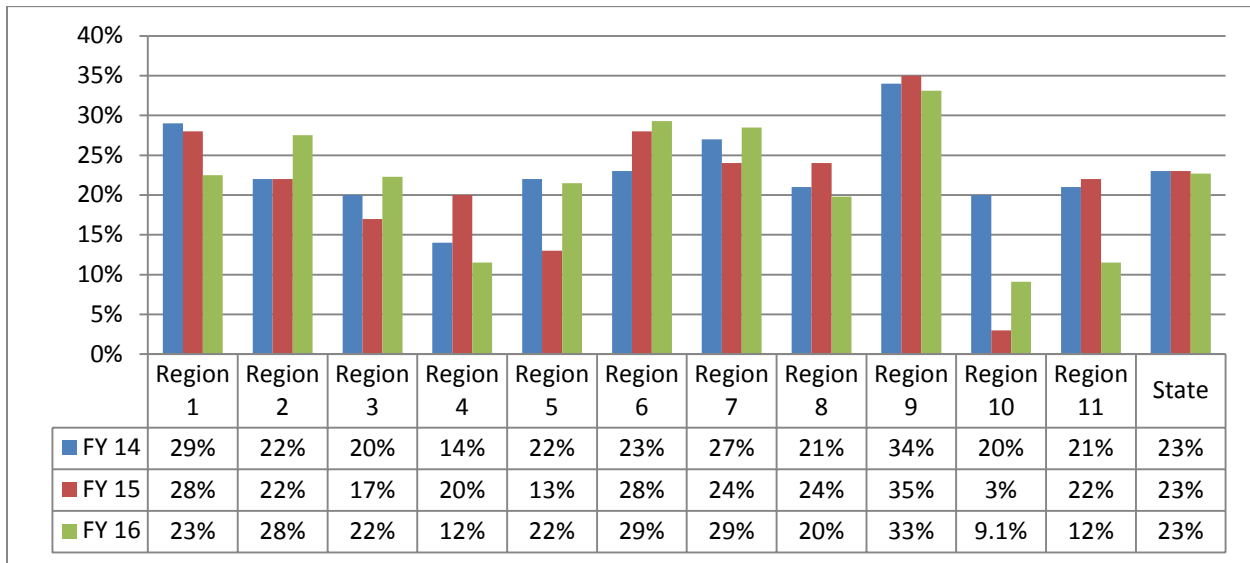
Turnover Rates for Investigations



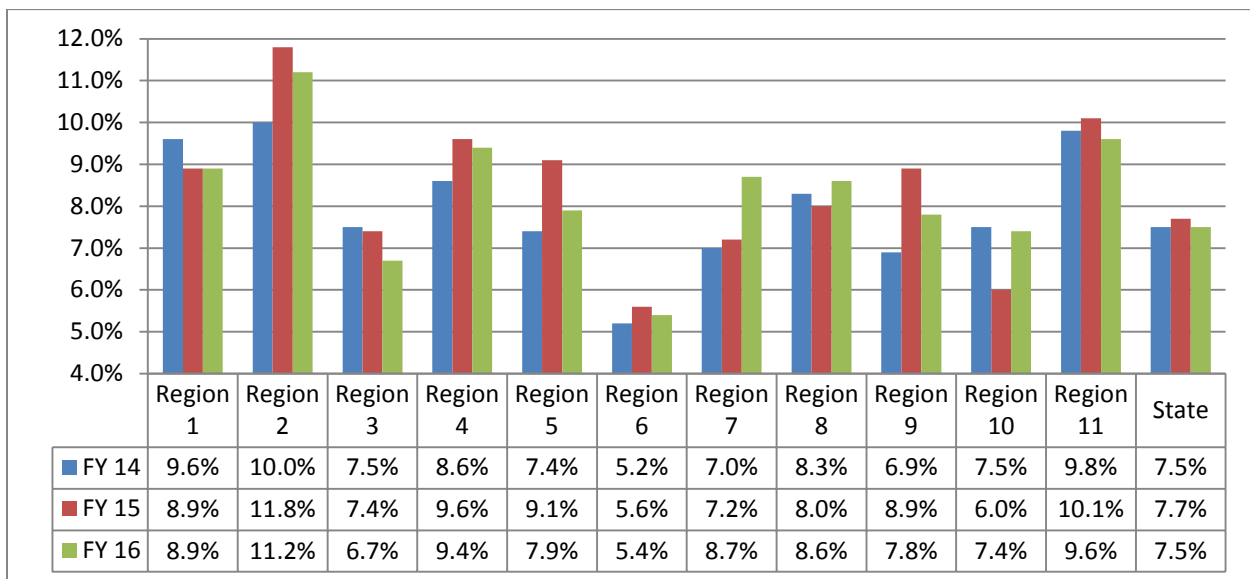
Turnover Rates for Family Based Safety Services



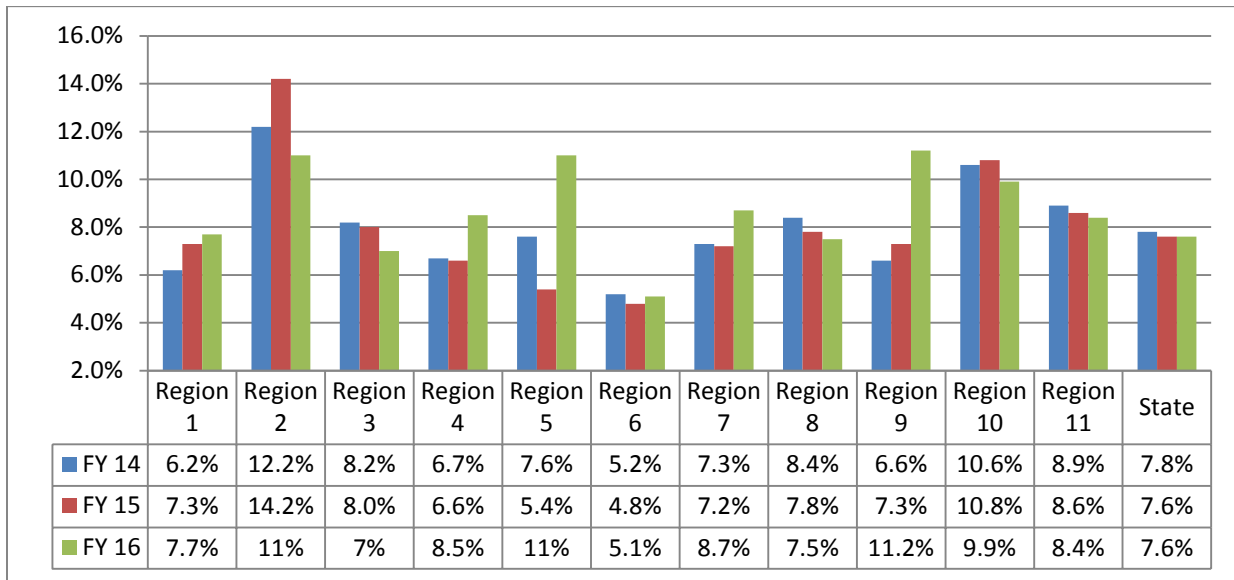
Turnover Rates for Conservatorship



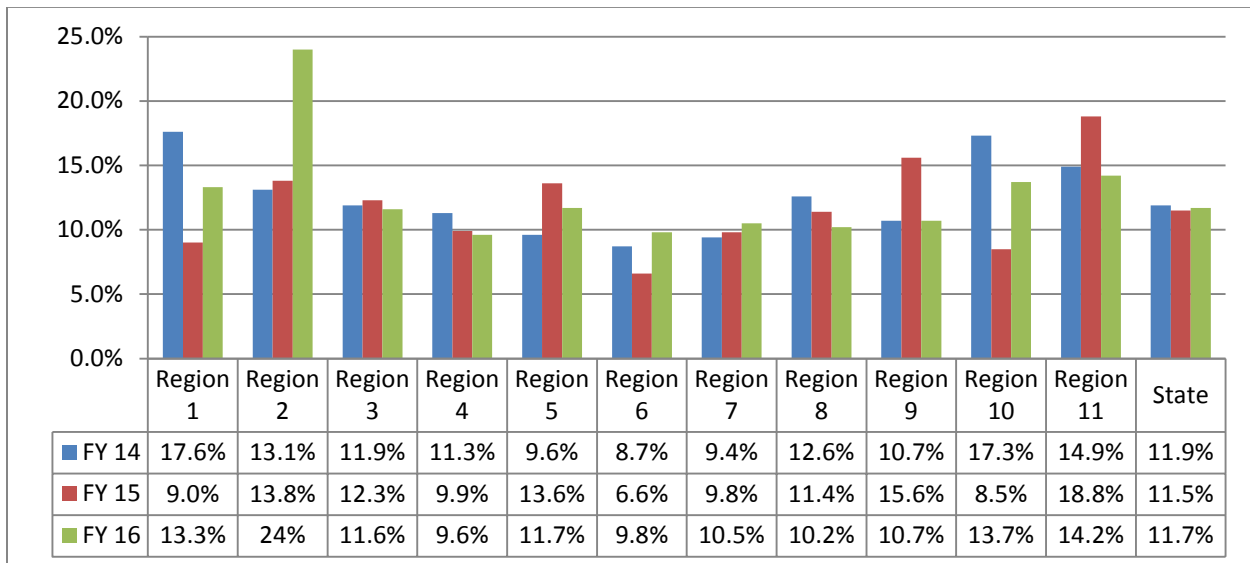
Recidivism Rates for Investigations



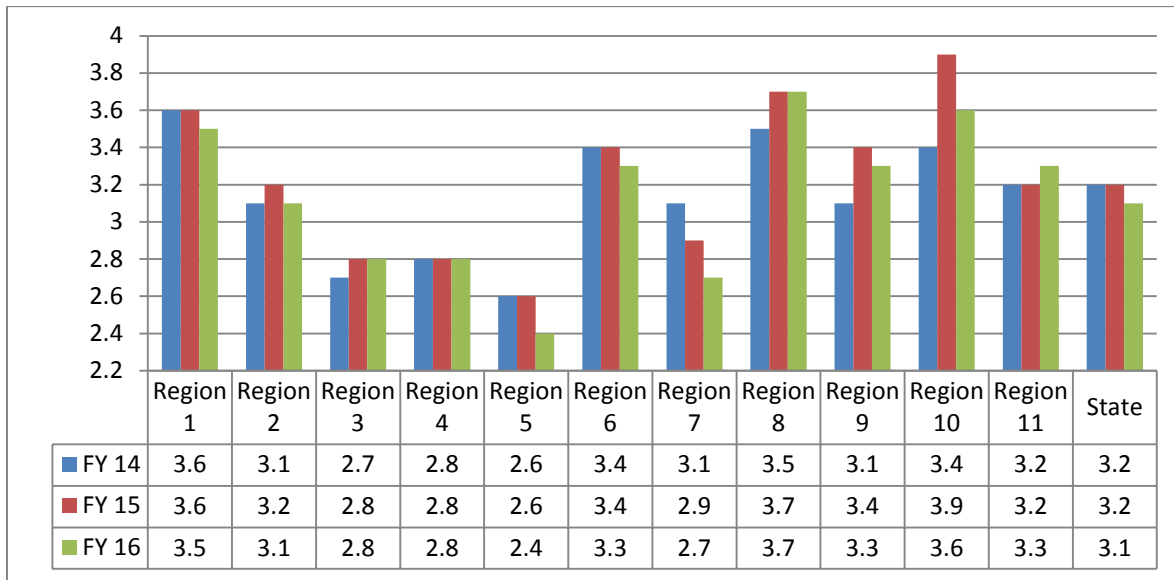
Recidivism Rates for Family Based Safety Services



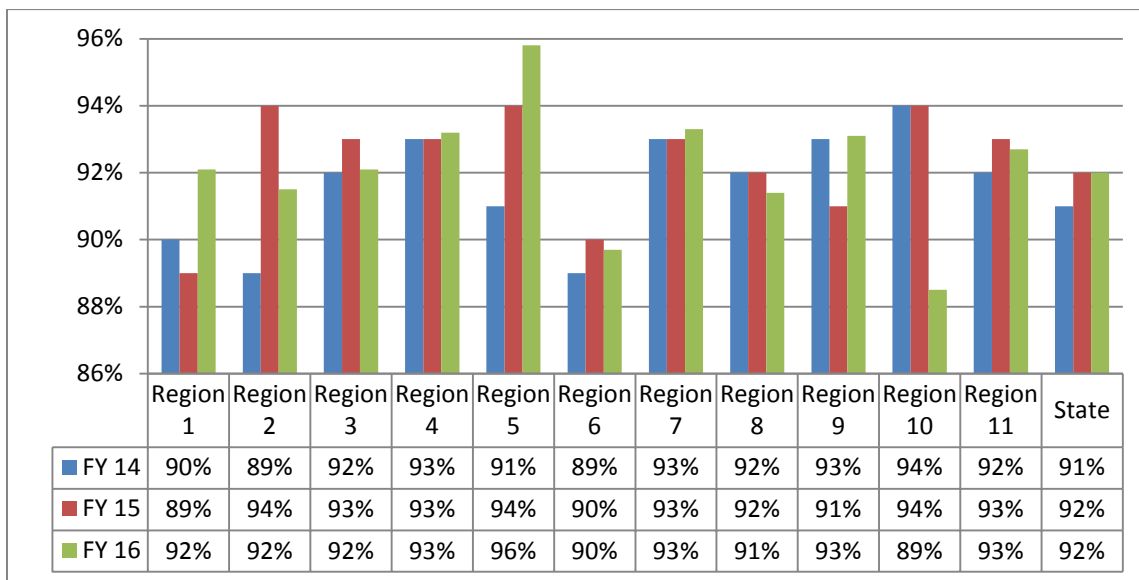
Recidivism Rates for Conservatorship



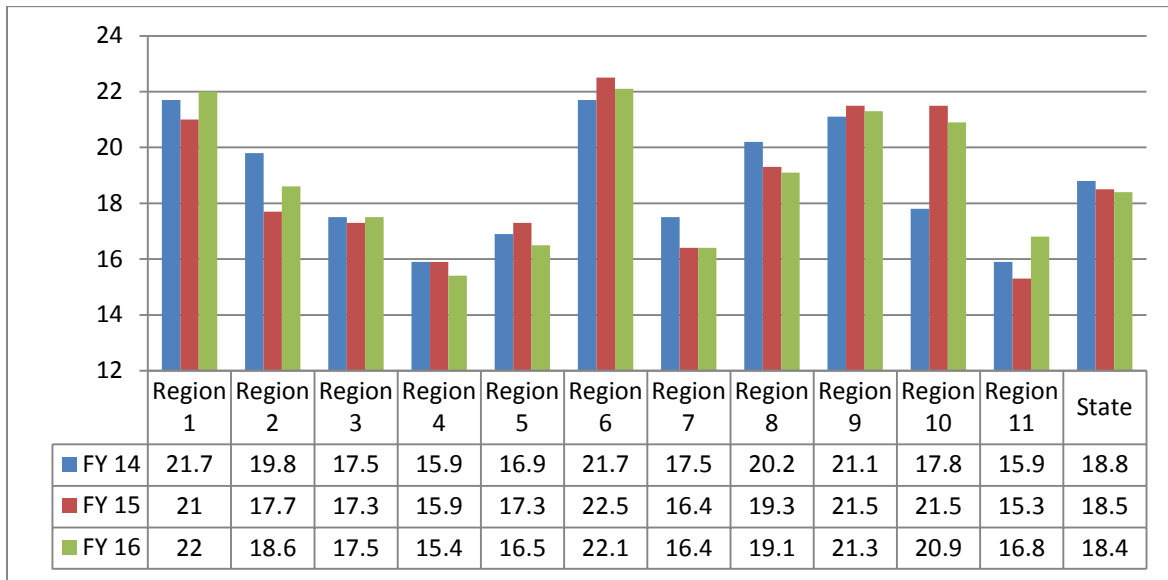
Permanency: Average Number of Placements



Exits to Permanency



Average Time to Exit to Permanency (in months)



Appendix A: Validation of the Human Services Index or STARK, Tool

STARK was distributed a survey to 133 Supervisors and based on supervisor feedback:

- 91% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for high performers.
- 72% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for long-term career fit.
- 88% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for overall behavioral traits (HSI).
- 95% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for client interactions and effects.
- 90% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for professional commitment.
- 90% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for receptivity.
- 85% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for stress tolerance/resilience/coping.
- 77% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for intent to remain employed.
- 91% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for overall skills.
- 90% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for analytical skills.
- 93% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for math and reasoning skills.
- 97% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for reading comprehension.
- 84% of Program supervisors sampled agreed with STARK recommendations for writing ability.