



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Capacity Strategic Plan

Region 6A and 6B

October 1, 2018

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Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 264.1261, of the Texas Family Code, “appropriate management personnel from a child protective services region in which community-based care has not been implemented, in collaboration with foster care providers, faith-based entities, and child advocates in that region, shall use data collected by the department on foster care capacity needs and availability of each type of foster care and kinship placement in the region to create a plan to address the substitute care capacity needs in the region.”

The statewide foster care needs assessment was completed in August 2018 and helped to inform the goals and objectives outlined in this plan, which specifically addresses the needs of each Catchment/Region.

Each region, led by regional DFPS leadership, has met with their regional stakeholders to develop a strategic plan. In addition, each region has partnered with a local provider contracted by CPS, to continue oversight and recommend changes as needed based on progress of goals established.

Foster Care Placement Forecast and Assessment of Capacity Need

The Foster Care Needs Assessment can be accessed [here](#).

A stakeholder/provider meeting for Regions 6A and 6B occurred on September 17, 2018 where the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed and a Power Point of regional/catchment data was presented focusing on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for Fiscal Year 2019.

On September 26, 2018, a Capacity Think Tank was created to address the regions’ foster care needs and to develop the regional strategic plan. While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating:

Arms Wide Adoption Services, Arrow Child & Family Ministries of Texas, Bridgeway Home-Montgomery County Youth Services, Carson Parke, Carter's Kids Residential Treatment Center, Depelchin Children’s Center, Good Hearts Youth & Family Services, Kinder Emergency Center, Monarch Family Services,

Pathways Youth and Family Services, Promise Rose Residential Care Home, The Care Cottage, and Trinity Youth Services.

In collaboration, all the participants committed to dedicating the necessary time and resources to implementing the Regional strategic plan.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Regional Plan to Increase Capacity

Goal 1: Increase Basic Foster Home Capacity for Preschool Age Children

While there may be an adequate supply of basic foster homes there were several barriers to successfully use that capacity:

- The frequency and location of parental, child, and sibling visits
- The potential underutilization of all available basic foster homes
- The increased number of employed foster parents
- The ever changing face of foster families
- Recruitment challenges

Objective 1.1: Create Centralized Locations for Visitation

- Providers and CPS will work collaboratively to address visitation and transportation issues
- Providers will ensure foster families are adequately informed and trained on visitation and transportation expectations
- CPS Faith-Based Specialist will explore utilization of faith based partners to identify possible visitation locations and support for children and families
- CPS Faith-Based Specialist and Community Initiative Specialist will explore recruitment of volunteers to support transportation needs of parents

Objective 1.2: Utilization of Existing Placements

- CPS will review the current practices of the placement team to ensure all appropriate agencies are contacted for placement options
- Region 6 Child Placing Agency (CPA) Collaborative Meetings will be opened to all providers to include Residential Treatment Centers (RTC), Shelters, and GROs. Quarterly, the meeting will focus on reviewing the Capacity Strategic Plan

Objective 1.3: Explore Daycare Opportunities

- The Capacity Think Tank will explore options for daycare funding with Texas Workforce Commission – Child Care Services as our partner for situations in which daycare needs cannot be met by CPS

Objective 1.4: Increase Data Sharing

- Enhance communication with CPAs by sharing data on a consistent basis (such as removal numbers, children in shelters, etc.)
- CPS and providers will share their census with each other on a quarterly bases at the Child Placing Agency Regional Collaborative Meetings
- Providers will utilize CPS county removal data to target specific areas for foster care recruitment based upon removal needs

Goal 2: Increase Emergency Placement Options

The collaboration found Region 6 youth are in shelter placements for periods longer than 90 days without preparation for future placements. Barriers include:

- Providers not participating in CPS placement staffings, which hinders the sharing of pertinent placement information needed for successful placements
- There appears to be a lack of consistent communication regarding children in shelter placements
- Caregivers are not adequately prepared to care for youth with moderate and specialized level of care

Objective 2.1: Reduce Time in Shelter Placements

- While at the shelter, the provider will ensure they assess the child's needs (psychological, etc.) and provide information which helps to prepare the child for their next placement
- CPS caseworkers will communicate frequently with shelter staff to ensure the child is being assessed appropriately
- CPS will review placement practices for children and youth that are in shelters to ensure a placement search is ongoing
- CPS will ensure all children or youth in shelter placements are included in weekly placement staffing meetings
- CPS Program Administrators will develop protocols related to children placed in shelters
- CPS placement staff will meet with the shelter providers to discuss the philosophy shift in how shelter placements will be used

- The Capacity Think Tank, along with shelters, will review how we currently utilize shelters

Objective 2.2: Improve Transitions from Residential Treatment Centers (RTC)

- RTC Providers and CPS will collaborate to reduce the number of youth that transition from RTCs to shelters
- Meet with RTC providers to discuss discharges and how together we can better prepare children for subsequent placements
- The Capacity Think Tank will be used to improve the communication and partnership between Shelters, RTCs, and CPAs
- Providers/placements will share information at the time of placement changes
- Create a sense of urgency in regards to improving capacity in the region by sharing needs and demographics of the children that are in need of placement
- Region 6 CPA Regional Collaborative meeting will be opened to all providers to include RTC, Shelters, and GROs. Quarterly, the meeting will focus on our Capacity Plan
- DFPS and Providers will share their census with each other on a quarterly basis at the CPA Regional Collaborative meeting

Goal 3: Increase Placements within Region

For both Region 6A and 6B, increase the number of children placed in their county of removal or in an adjacent county.

Objective 3.1: Focus of Placements with Closest Proximity

- Children who are placed outside of Region 6 and who are identified as appropriate to return to the region (i.e. discharge from an RTC out of region) will be discussed in a monthly meeting with providers in an attempt to secure a placement within 60 days of the staffing
- CPS will meet with provider agencies to develop the monthly meeting process
- A communication plan will be developed so that CPS and providers are communicating regarding the identified children
- CPS will identify and assess the children placed outside the region and will then coordinate meetings which will include the current placement provider, potential placements, and the caseworker in an attempt to secure a placement in closer proximity to the removal county

- Providers expressed that they are not familiar with the other placement options and resources in Region 6. As such, the providers will develop a plan to learn more about each other and the available resources that surround their placements. They will use this information to better support caregivers and children.