
Rider 13 - Human Resources Management Plan

A Report from

**The Texas Department of Family and
Protective Services**

October 19, 2007

Introduction

Senate Bill 1, Rider 15, from the 79th Regular Legislative Session and currently, House Bill 1, Rider 13, from the 80th Regular Legislative Session, direct the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop a Human Resources Management Plan designed to improve employee morale and retention. The plan must focus on reducing employee turnover through better management. The effectiveness of the agency's plan shall be measured by whether there is a reduction in annual employee turnover rates at the agency, specifically by the reduction in the turnover rates for caseworkers.

The past two legislative sessions have ushered in an era of tremendous change and reform for the agency. Recognizing that the provision of effective client services is heavily dependent on a trained and dedicated workforce, many of the reforms are directed at attracting and retaining high quality staff in the department's Child Protective Services (CPS) program, as well as in the other two large programs, Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Care Licensing (CCL). The Human Resources Management Plans reflect both the investment in retention and employee morale as a result of reform efforts and the continuing challenges DFPS experiences in attempting to reduce turnover.

In an effort to review the new FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan within the context of the past year, this document includes the following:

- Final Rider 15 report detailing the progress made on the FY 2007 Human Resources Management Plan
- Discussion of the turnover statistics for FY 2007
- Analysis of workforce retention challenges
- Rider 13 report outlining the FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan
- Appendix: Turnover and HR-Related Data for Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007

FY 2007 Human Resources Management Plan

The agency's Rider 15 FY 2007 Human Resources Management Plan consisted of four interrelated initiatives that were added to the ongoing 2005 and 2006 initiatives:

1. Actively pursue the development of policy and implementation of flexible work schedules and/or teleworking/telecommuting for appropriate staff.
2. Expand structures proven to help in addressing field staff burnout and stress.
3. In addition to the existing emphasis on case management, expand supervisory development, training and support to increase the focus on human resource management.

4. Increase the agency's capacity to use data to pinpoint barriers to staff retention and use this to pilot a program in which high-performing, high-retention units are paired with and able to mentor units that are less successful.

Initiative 1. Actively pursue the development of policy and implementation of flexible work schedules and/or teleworking/telecommuting for appropriate staff.

Overview

Over the past two years, DFPS has equipped all APS caseworkers and is currently in the process of equipping CPS investigative and Family Based Safety Services caseworkers with tablet PCs, digital cameras and other "mobile" technology so they are able to maximize their time in the field and streamline their documentation process. In essence, their "office" is with them at all times, thereby making it possible to consider flexible scheduling and a variety of work environments. DFPS would like to pursue various options that would reduce travel time, reduce the need for expensive office space, and further streamline the work of the caseworkers. The Department will develop the appropriate supervisory skills and accountability tools to insure this can be implemented while still achieving core agency functions.

End-of-Year Update:

- A. Changes in Work Schedules** - The nature of the work in most areas of DFPS requires staff to be available to clients beyond the normal 8-5 business hours.
 - To ensure a timely response to prioritized incidents without overtaxing staff time and caseloads, programs began to look at assigning and hiring staff for differing work schedules (nights, weekends).
 - Statewide Intake gives staff the ability to trade shifts when appropriate and received authority from the 80th legislature to pay a shift differential to nighttime workers.
 - CPS piloted a variety of work schedules enabling investigative caseworkers to meet the mandated 72-hour response time for Priority 2 referrals and implemented these work schedules where appropriate.
 - APS piloted the "out stationing" of workers to hospital campuses.
 - The distribution of Tablet PCs to caseworkers and investigators enables the workers to be less dependent on office space and office equipment and is being leveraged in a Mobile Caseworker Initiative (defined below).
- B. Mobile Caseworker Initiative** - DFPS chartered the Mobile Caseworker Initiative as an agency-wide project and is currently in the pilot phase of this effort. The purpose is to maximize the existing mobile technology investment by providing greater quality and efficient service to DFPS clients in a manner that best uses state resources. Approximately 40 caseworkers and their supervisors are participating in the pilot, which began in September 2007 and will run for a minimum of six months.

Initiative 2. Expand structures proven to help in addressing field staff burnout and stress.

- **Implementing the STARS program (a program that provides many opportunities for feedback and communication between new workers and supervisors that is designed to retain workers) for all supervisors and caseworkers in all regions and programs.**

Overview

The Supporting, Training and Retaining Staff (STARS) program was developed within CPS several years ago and was successful in retaining workers. It encourages caseworkers who recently completed their basic skills training to provide online and in-person feedback on their experience and provides timely assistance from the supervisor on problems and issues. DFPS would like to implement this program in all regions and among all programs.

End-of-Year Update:

STARS - DFPS chartered the Supporting, Training and Retaining Staff (STARS) initiative as an agency-wide project. The desired outcome of this initiative was to provide information and support to new supervisors in order to develop their supervisory skills, ensure success in their roles, and ultimately improve staff retention.

As of September 2007, the initiative was fully explored and designed. Facilitation of its implementation is currently managed by the Center for Policy and Innovation Professional Development Division. Toolkits and meeting structures for regional programs are being developed. Topics include: Making the Transition; Managing for High Performance; Time Management; Availability and Accountability; Building the Team; Recognition, Reward, and Retention; Communication Skills; and Unit and Self Care. While a portion of each session is structured, regional programs will have the flexibility to include topics that are compelling for their region.

- **In addition to our existing employee assistance program, develop internal resources that will address causes of “burnout” and worker stress.**

Overview

Commonly, caseworkers cite stress and/or burnout as a reason for leaving their jobs. Going into dangerous or violent situations, addressing unsafe living conditions, managing high caseloads, and fearing that a mistake can cause harm to a client are all daily realities for caseworkers. DFPS would like to research ways in which it can provide additional support to its caseworkers for the type of stress or burnout that can result.

End-of-Year Update:

PIC - In addition to the STARS initiative (defined above), DFPS chartered the Program Improvement Committee (PIC) initiative as an agency-wide project. Both initiatives address employee stress by providing tools for extra support and training when needed.

The purposes of the PIC project are to ensure at least one program improvement committee for every program exists in every regional office within DFPS, and to establish an agency-wide escalation/ communication process for ideas and issues that cannot be resolved at a local level. Once the committees and communication structures are in place and functional, each staff member of DFPS can expect to have an avenue to articulate their concerns and suggestions, have their issues escalated to the appropriate resolution level in the agency, and have a method of tracking their issues until a conclusion is reached.

As of September 2007, all DFPS programs have fully implemented their local office PIC structures. Agency-wide escalation processes and PICs are scheduled for full implementation by November 2007.

Initiative 3. In addition to the existing emphasis on case management, expand supervisory development, training and support to increase the focus on human resource management.

- **Further enhancing the DFPS supervisory training program to include more focus on retaining staff and coaching/mentoring staff.**

Overview

Studies on worker retention consistently show the importance of the relationship with the supervisor. Workers in difficult situations often manage quite well and are committed to stay when they feel they have the support of their supervisors. Current supervisory training will be further enhanced by focusing on techniques that retain staff and mentor them. Additionally the Department would like to build the capacity of supervisors to recognize and address the signs of worker burnout and stress.

End-of-Year Update:

- A. Guide to Unit Operations** - In November 2006, all new supervisors began receiving letters with the Guide to Unit Operations attached. The Guide describes specific techniques new supervisors may use to lay a foundation for retention, including learning the existing strengths and development needs of new members, setting clear expectations, and establishing lines of communication.
 - B. Review of Current Supervisory Training** - An internal workgroup was established to conduct a comprehensive inventory of the DFPS supervisory training track, as well as a review of relevant research findings in the human resources literature. Though the required courses for new supervisors do contain material related to retention, opportunities for strengthening the curriculum were identified, particularly in the areas of team building and career counseling.
 - C. Retention Plans** - APS and CPS Regional Directors developed Retention Plans for their respective regions tailored to the specific factors in their areas affecting retention.
- **Develop training for all program workers who are interested in moving into supervisory positions.**

Overview

Currently, when a DFPS caseworker is promoted to a supervisory position, s/he is given a list of certified courses that are available to help the individual learn supervisory skills. The Department will begin training on supervisory skills earlier so that newly hired supervisors are better prepared to address the challenges of unit supervision.

End-of-Year Update:

- A. **Training for Staff Interested in Becoming Supervisors** - An internal workgroup was assigned to determine appropriate goals, objectives and delivery methods for a new training program for workers interested in eventually moving into supervisory roles.
- B. **DFPS Tomorrow** - The DFPS Tomorrow program, whose focus is preparation for senior leadership, is under evaluation for possibly expanding its mission to include preparation for supervision roles. As of Fall 2007, the Center for Policy and Innovation is redesigning all supervisor and leadership training to provide a continuum of leadership training that begins at the worker level and extends to the executive tiers. All levels of training will include topics designed to better engage employees in the organizational culture as well as teach them their roles as “retention agents.” First phases of the new leadership development program will begin in Summer 2008.
- C. **CPS Basic Skills Development Review** - DFPS worked with an outside consultant to review the CPS Basic Skills Development (BSD) training process/schedule and advise us on how we can make it more tailored to the needs of new caseworkers over time. The review was completed in August 2007, and plans for revising BSD are underway. By improving the initial training experience, new workers may feel better equipped to handle the stressors and demands of the job and be less likely to leave.

Initiative 4. Increase the agency’s capacity to use data to pinpoint barriers to staff retention and use this to pilot a program in which high-performing, high-retention units are paired with and able to mentor units that are less successful.

Overview

DFPS caseworkers are always challenged by high caseloads and work under difficult circumstances. Statewide performance reports show that some units are able to successfully manage high caseloads and retain workers, while others are not. DFPS would like to implement a pilot that would allow staff from the successful units to advise and coach the less successful units so that skills and knowledge could be transferred and hopefully retained. This project will be designed through in-depth analysis of the characteristics of staff and units who are successful and those who have departed the agency.

End-of-Year Update:

- A. **Unit Partnering Pilot** - DFPS planned to implement a pilot to partner supervisors from high performing units with those in less successful units for skill and knowledge transfer. Units with higher and lower turnover rates were identified for each DFPS region and division. This information was used by the agency’s divisions to more fully analyze site-specific causes of retention and turnover. Each program presented to the Deputy Commissioner this analysis along with initial action plans for addressing concerns. However, the challenges of startup and sustainability of this proposed pilot led to a decision to focus agency efforts on more immediately achievable initiatives. Though internal resource constraints prevented this from becoming fully operational, many elements of the plan will be incorporated into ongoing efforts.

- B. Performance Management Initiative** - The Performance Management Initiative worked with the various programs and divisions to develop performance measures and tools for tracking progress. The APS and CPS programs have fully implemented their performance management system. Licensing has established measures and other areas of the department are in different stages of development.
- C. Termination Statistics** - In early FY 2007, DFPS created the Termination Statistics report, which gives managers the ability to review and compare monthly agency retention statistics down to a unit level. This report, in concert with existing performance management tools, allows managers to pinpoint high achieving areas and areas needing improvement. In FY 2008, DFPS plans to use this data to develop specialized strategies for reducing turnover.

Additional Efforts

In addition to completing tasks toward the implementation of the FY 2007 Initiatives, DFPS also identified other ways to improve retention through data analysis, committees dedicated to improving the caseworker's environment, and new office space.

- A. Cultural Competency** - The Cultural Competency Leadership Team was formed in November 2006 and continues to meet quarterly. The group's mission is to promote a respectful and supportive work environment for proactive discussion of culturally diverse issues that impact staff and the people we serve. During FY 2007, the team focused on developing an agency-wide assessment to collect data about staff's opinions on cultural competency issues, and evaluating current cultural competency training classes offered to staff. Based on the information gathered, in FY 2008, the group expects to recommend and implement improvements to cultural competency training requirements and classes.
- B. Pre-Employment Testing Validation** - As a part of DFPS Renewal efforts, the legislature required that the agency improve retention and turnover by doing a better job of initially choosing staff that will be more successful in providing protective services and therefore will be more likely to stay in DFPS positions. As part of this effort, DFPS worked with the Performance Assessment Network (PAN) to design a pre-employment test for caseworker applicants. This test was implemented to help the agency become more proficient at hiring the right staff in a timely manner, and by doing so, allowing supervisors more time for their primary task of ensuring quality casework in their units.

During FY 2007 the agency worked with PAN to validate that the use of the test did not adversely impact protected groups and that the test was working to help the selection of qualified caseworkers.

Multiple statistical analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between test scores and performance ratings. The results indicated that test scores were positively correlated with performance ratings. Accordingly, individuals who earned higher test scores received better objective performance ratings than those who earned lower test scores. In addition, the test scores were positively correlated with subjective ratings of the individual competencies by the caseworker's direct supervisor.

C. **Workforce Management** - Bi-monthly workforce management meetings are held with representatives from training, operations, facilities, finance, as well as executive staff to keep management informed of the status of our hiring efforts and associated operational support such as training and space needs. Through these meetings, workforce issues are identified and addressed. For instance, DFPS reviewed its hiring practices for direct-delivery staff and established a detailed, ongoing analysis for those practices as well as set performance metrics for the hiring authorities in order to more effectively fill vacant positions. DFPS reviewed its caseworker-level hiring practices and established a more detailed ongoing analysis plan and metrics for the hiring staff.

Acquiring adequate office space has been an important element of workforce management. Through coordination with HHSC and the Texas Building and Procurement Commission, DFPS acquired new space for 656 employees at 24 sites by August 31, 2007. Region 8 experienced the greatest impact, opening three new sites housing over 250 employees, and enabling DFPS to branch into the San Antonio community. The space acquisitions also have allowed DFPS to replace offices that have long been overcrowded and poorly maintained.

D. **Health and Safety** - The DFPS Health and Safety Committee works to identify health and safety problems, consider their solutions, and formulate recommendations. In FY 2007, the workgroup finalized the implementation of secondary auto insurance for staff who use their vehicles to travel for work, self-defense course offerings, and procedures for ordering health and safety products. The group continues to meet on a quarterly basis.

E. **Turnover Rates Regarding New Hire Cohorts** - In FY 2007, DFPS began gathering statistics regarding the turnover rates of new employees by month during the first year of hire. This data is used to pinpoint times during orientation and training processes when staff are most likely to leave the agency, and improve the processes accordingly. In data gathered on employees at one year of hire, CPS saw a decrease in cumulative turnover from 39.9% in FY 2005 to 32.6 % in FY 2006. Decreases in cumulative turnover rates from FY 2005 to FY 2006 were also seen in APS (29.5% to 27.3%) and CCL (21.7% to 21.5%).

FY 2007 Turnover Results

Despite the agency's implementation of the 2007 Human Resources Management Plan, the Turnover and HR-Related Data for Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 (see Appendix) show that the overall DFPS turnover rate increased from 19.2% in FY 2006 to 21.2% in FY 2007. Particularly concerning was the overall turnover rate in the area of CPS Investigations, which saw an increase from 34.8% in FY 2006 to 40.7%. However, some areas of the agency saw decreased turnover, for example:

- All DFPS programs saw overall increases in turnover from FY 2006 to FY 2007 with the exception of CCL, which saw an overall decrease from 16.6% to 15.4%. The turnover rate for CCL Worker positions specifically decreased from 19.7% in FY 2006 to 15.8% in FY 2007.
- Although turnover rates for CPS increased for most job types, the program saw a decrease in turnover for Specialist V positions from 23.9% in FY 2006 to 20.9% in FY 2007. The program also saw an overall decrease in turnover from FY 2006 to FY 2007 in Region 2 (from 25% to 19.2%), Region 5 (from 17.4% to 17.0%) and Region 9 (from 32.9% to 32.0%).
- While turnover rates for APS increased in some areas from FY 2006 to FY 2007, the program saw a decrease in turnover for Supervisors (from 5.5% to 4.2%), Worker Is (from 31.2% to 29.5%), and Worker IVs (from 13.9% to 12.9%).
- Although the overall turnover rate for Statewide Intake increased from 14.7% in FY 2006 to 20.0% in FY 2007, the turnover rate for Supervisors decreased from 4.0% to 3.6%

DFPS Analysis of Workforce Retention Challenges

In order to better address the continuing challenges of improving retention, DFPS has directed resources toward identifying the root causes of turnover. Prior to the outsourcing of Health and Human Services' human resources functions, DFPS conducted exit interviews with departing staff, providing detailed qualitative information. Review of these materials supported an underlying principle in analyzing turnover data. While labor markets, job conditions, and workforce demographics may change, departure of an individual employee is rarely attributable to a single reason.

In these past qualitative reviews, for example, pay was frequently an issue in an employee's decision to leave, but was often a secondary or tertiary motivation for seeking other employment. Systems that gather turnover data on the assumption of a single underlying cause of turnover may not have a complete picture of the turnover challenge. With this in mind, DFPS analyzed, and continues to use, multiple sources of information about why employees leave and why employees stay. Among these sources are:

The Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE)

The data gathered through the SOE assists DFPS to understand, from the viewpoint of the employee, what the organization is doing well, where improvement efforts should be targeted, and how employees perceive various aspects of the workplace. The SOE is conducted in state agencies every two years by a research team at the University of Texas and was last administered in 2006. DFPS was judged to have a "high" response rate by the researchers with over 5000 DFPS employees responding to the survey.

The State Auditor's Office Survey of Exiting Employees

In 2001, legislation was passed requiring the State Auditor's Office (SAO) to develop an employee on-line exit survey as a direct source for employees to provide feedback about their reasons for leaving state employment. HHS agencies have had some challenges in getting these surveys completed by departing staff and the data is of somewhat limited use, as currently collected and presented by the SAO. DFPS does review and analyze all responses received, about 350 in fiscal year 2007.

Qualitative Focus Groups

As part of a commitment to DFPS field staff, the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Executive Team of DFPS have, over the last two years, conducted multiple site visits in offices in every region of the state. During these meetings, staff are given the opportunity to provide candid feedback about morale and conditions in the agency. Employees are also given opportunities to provide more detailed feedback in structured focus group settings. In the first set of focus groups, retention was the focus for discussion in every region with staff representing all levels of the organization and all DFPS programs.

Independent Studies

A variety of external studies are done on employee retention in the human services in general and several on DFPS in particular. In the past year, these have included theses by Master's and PhD-level researchers, focused on CPS worker retention.

Out of these various sources of information, a core group of underlying causes of turnover were identified and grouped into six general categories:

◆ Workload Concerns

DFPS employees perceive that high workloads have made it difficult to perform adequate work. Workload is cited as a significant factor in over a third of the fiscal year 2007 SAO exit survey responses. The Survey of Organizational Excellence results showed declines in employee satisfaction in questions dealing with time and stress. And in a qualitative study of organizational resilience in CPS, 40% of staff cited "unrealistic expectations" as a negative aspect of working for the Department, the most widespread dissatisfaction of the organizational stressors measured.

◆ Compensation Concerns

Confirming earlier analysis, dissatisfaction with compensation is rarely the sole reason for turnover, but is at least a contributing factor for substantial numbers of staff. Concerns about pay are cited as a primary factor for leaving DFPS in 14% of the fiscal year 2007 SAO exit survey responses. The Survey of Organizational Excellence results were more telling: of 20 factors analyzed, pay was the greatest source of dissatisfaction of the over 5000 employees who responded. Independent analysis of the DFPS results found that, "In some situations pay does not meet comparables in similar organizations. In other cases, individuals may perceive that pay levels are not appropriately set to work demands, experience and ability."

◆ **Organizational Challenges in Recognizing Good Work**

Employees expressed concerns that the agency struggles to measure and recognize good work. SOE results were only in the average range for “the extent to which employees perceive that a level playing field exists for all members of the organization and that judgment of performance is based on fair, open, and job-based criteria.” Further independent analysis found that “scores suggest that room for improvement exists... Fairness perception stems from these factors: hiring; work assignment; promotion; the selection, support and training of supervisors; the maturity and experience of employees; and the nature of the specific work being performed.” SOE results also found some pockets of the agency in which favoritism was perceived as an issue in raises or promotions. Anecdotal reporting in the SAO exit survey results frequently echoes these concerns, citing management practices focused on factors other than employee performance.

◆ **Employee Input**

The past two years have been a time of major and rapid organizational change due to legislatively directed agency reform. Though employee input was used in developing HHSC’s recommendations for the first major reform effort and ideas and best practices from DFPS employees were used in Reform Continued, staff may not perceive their role in shaping agency policies and procedures. Responses to the Survey of Organizational Excellence reflected employee perceptions that frontline staff were not being included in decision-making or were not effectively heard when management developed new policies and procedures. In some parts of the state, almost half of the employees were dissatisfied with their opportunities to participate in the agency’s goal-setting processes.

◆ **Supervisory Support**

Employees routinely express concerns about the level of support and guidance provided by their direct supervisor. As the agency has grown rapidly, the average tenure and experience of frontline supervisors has decreased, presenting challenges in the ability to manage and support field staff. The Survey of Organizational Excellence measured satisfaction to be only in the “average” range for employees ranking supervisory effectiveness. Management concerns were cited as primary reasons for leaving the agency by about one in six employees responding to the SAO exit surveys. One qualitative study focused primarily on the DFPS supervisory level and found 20% of supervisors contemplating leaving the agency within five years. Concerns about further development of the agency’s supervisory level competencies accounted for half of the study’s recommendations.

◆ **Concerns About Appropriate Resources and Physical Space to Conduct Work**

Responses to the Survey of Organizational Excellence indicated that there were divisions of the agency in which there were low levels of satisfaction with the amount of resources available to assist staff in performing their jobs. Also, employee perception of DFPS physical plants was the area of the largest decline in satisfaction over prior surveys. To some degree, this discontent is attributable to new external standards that resulted in employees moving from hard-walled offices into cubicle environments. There is a strong perception among agency employees that the work of the agency is hampered in these

office arrangements. For example, staff have concerns about their inability to adequately conduct interviews with victims and alleged perpetrators of abuse and neglect without appropriate levels of privacy. Further, the several thousand new positions, while a welcome addition to the agency, have created challenges in quickly developing space and technological infrastructure to support new employees.

FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan

Due to the limited success of the FY 2007 Human Resources Management Plan, DFPS is taking a new approach by organizing its 2008 retention strategies to correspond with some of the causes of turnover identified by staff and discussed above. The agency's Rider 13 FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan consists of the following five interrelated initiatives:

1. **Managing Workloads:** With the assistance provided through CPS Reform Continued, reduce CPS caseloads by reducing the number of children who enter the foster care system, and continue the progress made from the APS Caseload Management Reduction Plan.
2. **Valuing Employees through Compensation, Recognition, and Input:** Support an organizational culture where good performance by employees is recognized and the opinions of dedicated employees are appreciated.
3. **Providing Better Supervisory/Management Support:** Better equip agency supervisors/managers/leaders to perform their job duties and support their staff by strengthening their understanding of leadership and retention and adding "peer trainer" positions.
4. **Enhancing Work Environment and Resources:** Research the policy and practice of flexible work schedules and telecommuting in the agency, as well as continue efforts to improve employees' physical and mobile work environment.
5. **Improving Internal Processes:** Use termination data and improved recruitment and hiring practices to develop strategies to reduce turnover. Conduct a pilot project coordinating research activities aimed at identifying the various causes of turnover in Region 8 and taking a systems approach in designing intervention options for each of them.

Initiative 1. Managing Workloads

With the assistance provided through CPS Reform Continued, reduce CPS caseloads by reducing the number of children who enter the foster care system, and continue the progress made from the APS Caseload Management Reduction Plan.

- A. **APS Caseload Reduction Plan** - Section 2.18 of Senate Bill 6, 79th Regular Session, directs HHSC to develop, subject to the availability of funds, a caseload management reduction plan

to reduce, not later than January 1, 2011, caseloads for APS workers to a level that does not exceed professional caseload standards by more than five cases per caseworker. The first plan was completed on December 31, 2006. Reasonable caseloads promote quality casework with positive outcomes and assist in the retention of staff. The plan outlines an average daily caseload per caseworker of 39.2 at the end of fiscal year 2009. As of June 2007, the YTD average daily caseload for APS In-Home Services was 37.5. The successful reduction of caseloads is due to several factors. The intake growth for FY 2007 is less than projected; regional staff have focused their efforts on reducing the duration of pending cases; and a high percentage of the additional staff that were allocated in the beginning of FY 2007 have completed training and are now able to maintain a full workload. An update to the 2006 Caseload Reduction Plan will be completed in December of 2008 and efforts to balance reasonable caseloads will continue.

- B. CPS Caseloads** - As part of CPS Reform Continued, reflected in the budget and SB 758, the Legislature allocated additional staff and funding to reduce Family Based Safety Services and Substitute Care caseloads. CPS Reform Continued also targets conservatorship caseload reduction through the use of:
- Family Group Decision Making during investigations and after removal;
 - The funding and services provided through the new Enhanced In-Home Support Program that assists children and families in child neglect cases where poverty is a significant factor;
 - More workers and support services for kinship care; and
 - Additional purchased services to keep children safe in their homes or reunite families faster.

These aspects of the CPS Improvement Plan in SB 758 should result in fewer children entering foster care and shorter stays for children in foster care, bringing down caseloads.

- C. Strengthening Residential Child Care Licensing** - The 80th Legislature also gave the Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) program additional resources, including 84 new staff. RCCL will create a performance management division with case analysts who will focus on the performance of Licensing workers, and risk analysts who will concentrate on the performance of facilities and child-placing agencies. A new investigations unit and Division Administrator of Investigations will oversee investigations policy and support caseworkers in their investigations of all residential child-care facilities and child-placing agencies. The addition of these staff should provide significant support to RCCL caseworkers in managing their investigations and caseloads.

Initiative 2. Valuing Employees through Compensation, Recognition, and Input

Support an organizational culture where good performance by employees is recognized and the opinions of dedicated employees are considered.

- **Continue efforts to improve compensation for and recognition of all successful staff.**

Compensation is an area in which DFPS is constrained by both state human resources rules and limited resources. Within these constraints, DFPS has several strategies it is implementing to attract and retain qualified staff.

- A. **Stipends for CPS Investigators** - DFPS will continue to pay stipends to attract and retain staff in the critical investigator roles in Child Protective Services. This job function has been the area of most significant challenge in retaining staff. The stipend program provides investigation caseworkers and supervisors a \$5,000 annual stipend, paid in monthly increments of \$416.67.
 - B. **Merit Raises** - DFPS structured its budget priorities in the current biennium to allow for a merit program to recognize employees for jobs well done in supporting or delivering services to clients. These raises are deployed in quarterly allocations of merit slots to all DFPS divisions and regions. Resources are available to provide for recognition of about one quarter of DFPS staff. Each slot may be given as a merit salary increase of either 2.5 percent or 5.0 percent of the employee's monthly salary, or a one-time merit payment of 3.5 percent of the employee's annual salary. Employees must be performing the job at a level above that which is normally expected or required and be in compliance with agency work rules.
 - C. **Other Compensation-Related Factors** - DFPS will provide a pay differential to staff at the Statewide Intake hotline who work the hard-to-fill overnight and weekend shifts. The Department will also be exploring a tiered approach to compensation for newly hired staff, as well as continuing stipends to encourage APS caseworkers to attain a higher level of education in APS-related fields.
- **Use performance management to identify outstanding employees.**
- A. **Performance Management** - The Performance Management Initiative worked with the various programs and divisions to develop performance measures and tools for tracking progress. During FY 2008 DFPS expects to complete the implementations of performance management systems for Licensing, Purchased Client Services, Contract Oversight and Support, the Human Resources Customer Interface, Statewide Intake, the Center for Policy and Innovation, and the Office of General Counsel. Additionally in FY 2008, DFPS will begin working with Management Reporting and Statistics, Finance, Information Resources, Program Support, the Center for Program Coordination, and the Center for Consumer and External Affairs on their performance management systems.
- **Increase and expand opportunities for staff to report problems, suggest innovations, and communicate with agency leaders.**
- A. **Continuation of Program Improvement Committees (PICs)** - The purposes of the PIC project are to ensure at least one program improvement committee for every program exists in every regional office within DFPS, and to establish an agency-wide escalation/communication process for ideas and issues that cannot be resolved at a local level. Once the committees and communication structures are in place and functional, each staff member of DFPS can expect to have an avenue to articulate their concerns and suggestions, have their

issues escalated to the appropriate resolution level in the agency, and have a method of tracking their issues until a conclusion is reached. All DFPS programs have fully implemented their local office PIC structures. Agency-wide escalation processes and PICs are scheduled for full implementation by November 2007. During FY 2008, DFPS will continue refining their PIC processes by incorporating improvements solicited from agency staff and measuring the timeliness/effectiveness of how ideas/issues brought forth to PICs are resolved.

- B. **Employee Intranet** - DFPS continues to recognize outstanding caseworkers and seek statewide suggestions for content in DFPS Delivers, the agency's bi-weekly, online Intranet newsletter. In October 2007, the Operations division launched a "How Do I...?" Intranet subdirectory designed to get DFPS staff the information they need as soon as possible. This collection of pages recognizes the challenges of keeping up with the volume of changes in the agency over the last several years and provides direct answers to assist caseworkers regarding issues like travel, purchasing, and HR and legal issues. Any staff member can submit a topic or question to this subdirectory, just as staff can continue to e-mail the Commissioner in his regularly updated Q & A.

- C. **Expansion of SOE Questions** - The Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE) is administered to all state agencies as a way of gathering employee input. Survey results are collected and analyzed by an independent research team at the University of Texas. While the vast majority of questions are standardized across organizations, DFPS does have the ability to customize parts of the SOE to meet organizational needs. Questions specifically regarding the retention issue will be included in the Spring 2008 release of the survey to staff.

- D. **Commissioner's Tour** - As he has done since the beginning of his tenure, DFPS Commissioner Carey Cockerell and members of the executive team will continue to travel to DFPS regional offices to visit with regional leadership and frontline staff. At each stop, the Commissioner holds an all-staff meeting in which attendees—from administrative technicians to caseworker supervisors—can ask the Commissioner questions face to face. The FY 2008 tour also includes a Regional Management Meeting in which regional representatives from all programs and divisions of the agency can raise issues and concerns particular to their area. All questions or concerns are logged and pursued, as appropriate.

Initiative 3. Providing Better Supervisory/Management Support

Better equip agency supervisors/managers/leaders to perform their job duties and support their staff by strengthening their understanding of leadership and retention and adding "peer trainer" positions.

- A. **STARS** - The Supporting, Training and Retaining Staff (STARS) program encourages supervisors who recently completed their basic skills training to provide online and in-person feedback on their experience and provides timely follow-up training and support. In FY 2007, DFPS redesigned STARS for implementation in all regions and all programs. In FY 2008, DFPS would like to continue implementation of the STARS program with an emphasis on

measuring the program's effectiveness on supervisor retention and revising the program when necessary.

- B. **CPI Redesigning Supervisor/Leadership Training** - In FY 2008, the Center for Policy and Innovation (CPI) will begin redesigning all supervisor and leadership training to provide a continuum of leadership training that begins at the worker level and extends to the executive tiers. All levels of training will include topics designed to better engage employees in the organizational culture as well as teach them their roles as "retention agents." First phases of the new leadership development program will begin in Summer 2008.
- C. **PD and PA Leadership Training** - The CPS program will focus on strengthening Program Director (PD) and Program Administrator (PA) roles. Program Directors and Administrators will begin attending leadership development training and activities with a primary focus on methods for shifting all areas of CPS to more family-centered practices. Although all CPS PAs and PDs will participate, leadership development work will occur most intensively as a pilot test in Harris County (Houston) with the Conservatorship program. By instilling PAs and PDs with effective leadership skills, DFPS hopes that they will feel encouraged to employ new cultural change techniques and work with staff to positively affect retention.
- D. **Peer Training and Job Development** - Although Basic Skills Development (BSD) was expanded to 12 weeks as part of CPS Reform, many investigators complete BSD lacking practical experience working cases. An On-the-Job Training (OJT) program was incorporated into BSD to provide trainees with actual casework experience, but the volume of trainees and few OJT supervisors make one-on-one training difficult. Beginning in November 2007, DFPS will roll out a plan to fully utilize the special investigator positions that were allocated but that have been difficult to hire and retain. Part of the proposal includes converting 50 of those positions to statewide CPS peer trainers. These peer trainers will ensure that trainees are able to accompany caseworkers on cases and take part in the investigation. New investigators will have practical field experience before completing BSD and managing a caseload of their own. Through improved peer training, investigators will be more prepared for their job and will have more confidence in their abilities, which may decrease turnover.

Initiative 4. Enhancing Work Environment and Resources

Research the policy and practice of flexible work schedules and telecommuting in the agency, as well as continue efforts to improve employees' physical and mobile work environment.

- A. **Expand Mobile Technology Efforts** - DFPS is providing Tablet PCs for substitute care and licensing staff to facilitate timely and accurate data entry and improve the quality of assessments and decision-making. CCL monitoring and investigative staff will start receiving their tablets in early 2008, and tablets are being phased in for half of substitute care caseworkers throughout the biennium. This will assist with meeting the more stringent timeliness standards for those programs.

- B. Mobile Caseworker Initiative** - DFPS chartered the Mobile Caseworker Initiative as an agency-wide project and is currently in the pilot phase of this effort. The purpose is to maximize the existing mobile technology investment by providing greater quality and efficient service to DFPS clients in a manner that best uses state resources. Approximately 40 caseworkers and their supervisors are participating in the pilot, which begins in September 2007 and will run for a minimum of six months. In FY 2008, effectiveness of this pilot on efficiency and retention will be studied and, if successful, the initiative will be expanded to other agency areas.
- C. Tablet and Desktop Refresh** - The “tablet and desktop refresh” is currently underway and describes the replacement of outdated equipment for staff in DFPS. The new equipment includes an increase in system memory (RAM) to 1GB, a video card with 256MB of RAM, the Microsoft XP operating system, Microsoft Office 2003, and more disk storage for files, documents, and pictures. These features will enhance DFPS staff's ability to perform their work due to increased speed, stability, security, and the compatibility to share documents with external contacts. This first phase replaces approximately 6700 desktops and laptops.

The new tablet PCs that will be used to refresh the older APS devices are sturdier and offer better performance. The new sturdy design and improved performance should decrease the amount of repairs needed, thus keeping the tablets in the hands of the caseworkers with less downtime. The wireless cards for the agency's main vendor are built into the tablet, which should minimize issues with lost or broken cards.

- D. Expand Office Space** - DFPS will acquire space for nearly 1500 employees during FY 2008. These include replacement of the Amarillo site, consolidating multiple leases into one and providing room for staff growth. The Brownwood lease will also be replaced, with an expanded new location. Region 3 is expected to see the most change, with new space in 10 different locations for 341 staff. In all, DFPS has requested new or additional space in 51 locations throughout the state for staff needs. These include new locations in Lubbock, Sweetwater, Carrollton, Cleburne, Dallas, Denton, Greenville, North Richland Hills, Plano, Athens, Canton, Henderson, Jacksonville, Houston, Pearland, Austin, Lockhart, Madisonville, Andrews, and Brownsville. Other requests will add space to already existing sites to make room for DFPS positions and the support space required to serve the client base, such as visitations, clinical showers and rainbow rooms.
- E. Formalize Processes for Flexible Work Schedules** - HHSC HR policy creates the opportunity to use flexible work schedules to accommodate staff needs within agency needs. In FY 2008, DFPS will develop an internal formalized process for requests for flex schedules, compressed workweeks, and part-time and job sharing opportunities. The goal of this is to allow and track the usage of alternative work schedules or arrangements for employees in certain situations. Policy will be designed to allow flexibility for employees while maintaining the operational efficiency of the agency or of the departments of the agency. The agency will also track the use of alternative schedules and compare data to determine if this increases staff retention/satisfaction.

Initiative 5. Improving Internal Processes

Use termination data and improved recruitment and hiring practices to develop strategies to reduce turnover. Conduct a pilot project coordinating research activities aimed at identifying the various causes of turnover in Region 8 and taking a systems approach in designing intervention options for each of them.

- A. **Expansion of PET and Continued Evaluation** - In 2008 DFPS will expand its use of pre-employment testing (PET) to the Child Care Licensing (Daycare and Residential) and Statewide Intake programs. In FY 2007, staff began to establish the appropriate tests and scoring for these programs. The tests will be available in the fall of FY 2008.

The use of the ABLE test by CPS and APS programs was evaluated in February 2007. Phase II of this evaluation will be expanded in FY 2008 to include performance metrics, turnover and longevity data across FY 2005-2007.

- B. **Targeted Degree Recruitment** - SB 758 directs DFPS to target recruitment efforts toward individuals who hold a bachelor's degree or advanced degree in at least one of the following academic areas:

- Social work
- Counseling
- Early childhood education
- Psychology
- Criminal Justice
- Elementary or Secondary Education
- Sociology
- Human Services

DFPS will work with HHSC to track this information and monitor if targeted recruitment affects job suitability and ultimately, retention.

- C. **Termination Statistics Report** - In early FY 2007, DFPS created the Termination Statistics report, which gives managers the ability to review and compare monthly agency retention statistics down to a unit level. This report, in concert with existing performance management tools, allows managers to pinpoint high achieving areas and areas needing improvement. In FY 2008, DFPS plans to train managers on the use of this data for ongoing review of areas in need of targeted response by the agency.
- D. **Workforce Stabilization** - A Workforce Stabilization workgroup has been initiated with the purpose of reviewing the DFPS hiring process of CPS caseworkers from recruitment through assumption of full caseload. Once the review is completed, the group will recommend and implement process improvements and establish measures to evaluate effects on retention of staff within the first year of hire.

- E. **Job and Task Analysis** - Historically, the results of a job and task analysis have been used for a wide variety of training and many HR-related functions such as job restructuring, salary determination, and employee retention through improved hiring criteria and ensuring that new employees have the necessary skills for job performance. A job and task analysis involves analysts observing jobholders as they accomplish their job tasks. Each step, or action, of the job is noted and described in detail. The analysis includes gathering information on the tools the jobholder needs to be successful, the conditions of task performance, the knowledge and skills necessary for performing all critical tasks, and the standards for successful task performance. For DFPS, the completed job and task analysis will permit CPI curriculum developers to design training that develops specific knowledge, skills and abilities to match job and performance expectations. Once training is developed consistent with the analysis, the agency will be able to state with defensible certainty that the quality and consistency of training for caseworkers has been improved and the graduates of the training program will have the requisite skills, knowledge, and abilities to do their jobs.
- F. **Region 8 Retention Pilot** - The agency's Center for Policy and Innovation (CPI) has begun a new retention project in the San Antonio region (Region 8), where turnover has been higher than the state average in recent years. The Center's newly formed organizational development unit will coordinate research activities aimed at identifying the various causes of turnover in the region and take a systems approach in designing intervention options for each of them, including compensation, the recruitment and hiring process, working conditions, and an organizational culture that takes high turnover for granted. The organizational development specialists will first organize, analyze and present the wealth of quantitative and qualitative retention data that already exists. A first report, containing recommendations, will be issued in winter 2007.

Conclusion

Retaining workers remains an ongoing challenge for DFPS due to the nature and volume of the work—protecting children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. DFPS received a significant number of additional staff and resources over the 2006-2007 biennium, but has also experienced a tremendous amount of change—increased accountability, technology, and new policies than ever before. The reforms and added resources should improve retention in the long run; however, the amount of changes in such a short period of time may be a current contributor to workforce instability. As DFPS strives to manage and implement these changes in responsible and effective ways, APS and CPS may continue to experience high caseworker turnover.

Staff retention is critical to improving service delivery and to minimizing the impact of staff turnover. With the FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan, DFPS will continue efforts to hire and retain workers with the expectation that caseloads will become manageable and worker stress will be reduced. Though retention and workforce stability continue to present challenges,

DFPS is committed to targeted recruiting of employees, providing staff the training they need to do their jobs well, reducing caseloads, and providing staff with support systems and opportunities that will result in a tenured workforce.

APPENDIX: TURNOVER AND HR-RELATED DATA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

RIDER 15 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER REPORT

Functional Title	Average Employees	Turnover Rate¹
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)		
All Employees	7848.75	19.2%
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)		
CPS Workers	3331.0	29.8%
CPS Supervisors	610.5	6.9%
CPS Program ³	5504.0	21.6%
CPS Specialist II ²	1776.5	37.7%
CPS Specialist III	557.0	27.3%
CPS Specialist IV	839.5	13.8%
CPS Specialist V	50.3	23.9%
CPS Special Investigator	107.8	39.0%
CPS CVS Caseworker	1073.8	29.8%
CPS FBSS Caseworker	505.3	25.5%
CPS INV Caseworker	1305.3	34.8%
ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)		
APS Workers	486.3	19.7%
APS Supervisors	73.0	5.5%
APS Program ³	678.8	15.9%
CHILD CARE LICENSING (CCL)		
CCL Workers ⁴	321.8	19.6%
CCL Supervisors	45.5	6.6%
CCL Program ³	451.0	16.6%
STATEWIDE INTAKE (SWI)		
SWI Workers	231.3	17.3%
SWI Supervisors	25.3	4.0%
SWI Program ³	305.3	14.7%

¹NOTE: DFPS turnover is calculated using the method required by the LBB performance measure for CPS caseworker turnover: (the total number of full time, regular employees who terminated during the period and remain terminated DIVIDED BY the average number of full time, regular active employees on the last day of each quarter in the period) TIMES 100 to produce a percentage. As a result, the State Auditor's Office turnover calculation varies slightly from DFPS due to methodological differences in calculating the average number of active employees and the total number of terminated employees.

²Entry level for CPS workers is CPS Specialist II. The state classification for this level is Protective Services Specialist II.

³Because program group totals include **all** employees in that program, this number will exceed the total number of workers and supervisors in the program.

⁴All CCL counts include CCL, CCI, and RCCL employees.

TURNOVER AND HR-RELATED DATA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

RIDER 13 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER REPORT

Functional Title	Average Employees	Turnover Rate ¹
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)		
All Employees	9233.00	21.2%
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)		
CPS Workers	3752.0	34.1%
CPS Supervisors	742.8	7.4%
CPS Program ³	6580.0	23.8%
CPS Specialist II ²	2206.5	40.8%
CPS Specialist III	634.3	27.7%
CPS Specialist IV	680.8	16.7%
CPS Specialist V	28.8	20.9%
CPS Special Investigator	201.8	41.1%
CPS CVS Caseworker	1192.0	33.8%
CPS FBSS Caseworker	543.8	27.4%
CPS INV Caseworker	1479.5	40.7%
ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)		
APS Workers	628.5	22.3%
APS Supervisors	95.0	4.2%
APS Program ³	863.5	17.7%
CHILD CARE LICENSING (CCL)		
CCL Workers ⁴	336.5	15.8%
CCL Supervisors	47.8	14.7%
CCL Program ³	466.8	15.4%
STATEWIDE INTAKE (SWI)		
SWI Workers	245.8	26.4%
SWI Supervisors	28.0	3.6%
SWI Program ³	329.5	20.0%

¹NOTE: DFPS turnover is calculated using the method required by the LBB performance measure for CPS caseworker turnover: (the total number of full time, regular employees who terminated during the period and remain terminated DIVIDED BY the average number of full time, regular active employees on the last day of each quarter in the period) TIMES 100 to produce a percentage. As a result, the State Auditor's Office turnover calculation varies slightly from DFPS due to methodological differences in calculating the average number of active employees and the total number of terminated employees.

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[Return to Table of Contents](#)