



**TEXAS**  
Department of Family  
and Protective Services

**Fiscal Years 2019 - 2023**  
**Strategic Plan**

**VOLUME I:**

**Agency Strategic Plan and Redundancies & Impediments**

**Approved June 8, 2018**



**H. L. Whitman, Jr., Commissioner**

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## Agency Mission, Vision, and Values

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### **DFPS Mission**

We promote safe and healthy families and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

### **DFPS Vision**

Improving the lives of those we serve.

### **DFPS Values**

- **Accountable:** We act with a sense of urgency to deliver results in an accountable, ethical, and transparent manner.
- **Respectful:** We recognize the value of each person and act timely, value privacy, and treat all with respect.
- **Diverse:** We promote diversity, inclusion, and equality by honoring individual differences.
- **Collaborative:** Whether through our staff or contractors, we work in partnership with clients, families, and communities to ensure our mutual success.
- **Professional:** We value our staff and strive for excellence while being professional, passionate, and innovative.

## Goal 1: Client Services

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*Improve direct delivery services to meet client, family, and community needs.*

Our agency exists to protect vulnerable Texans from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Continuous improvement to client services is central to our mission and should be proactive, data-driven, and constantly evolving.

### Goal 1: Client Services

<b>Action Item 1:</b> Improve practices for better client outcomes to maximize the safety, permanency, and well-being of clients, families, and communities served through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 2:</b> Build placement capacity to help ensure clients can stay in their local communities and achieve permanency through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 3:</b> Promote evidence-informed practices in service delivery through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 4:</b> Reduce the average time to achieve permanency for children in CPS conservatorship to 15.4 months by August 31, 2022.
<b>Action Item 5:</b> Improve placement resources and services through staged implementation of redesign of the Texas foster care system and targeted capacity-building efforts across the state through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 6:</b> Improve the quality of services to CPS clients by implementing performance-based contracting and testing, and evaluating the use of brokered services through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 7:</b> Develop and implement a strategy for the administration of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) contracts to enhance positive outcomes for children and families through the required use of community needs assessments by September 1, 2020.
<b>Action Item 8:</b> Fully engage fathers through funding, caseworker training, tools, and conferences as the agency and its community-based prevention partners work with children and families by August 31, 2019.
<b>Action Item 9:</b> Decrease Statewide Intake (SWI) call hold times and rate of abandoned calls by August 31, 2021.

## How Goal 1 Action Items Support Statewide Objectives

### Accountability

As a client-focused, public-facing agency, DFPS's accountability to Texans will always be one of its most critical components. DFPS promotes accountability to the public by focusing on continually improving client services and outcomes. The public expects DFPS to make client services as effective, accessible, and responsive as possible. Additionally, contracts will be assigned to trained and certified contract management staff in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 2262.053 and DFPS Operating Policy OP-1104.

### Efficiency

By focusing on providing the best client services and outcomes and increasing placement capacity, DFPS is committed to better and more efficient operations. Better client services means more clients served in less time, which translates into more efficient use of agency resources. Additional placement capacity closer to local communities serves a dual role of improving client outcomes while minimizing inefficiencies.

### Effectiveness

DFPS prioritizes effectiveness by proactively seeking to maximize client safety, permanency, and satisfaction with our work. By continuously improving services and promoting evidence-informed practices in service delivery, the agency can more directly and effectively serve client needs.

### Excellence in Customer Service

With a constant focus on improvement of client services, DFPS strives for optimal customer service. This includes encouraging client and community feedback, and using this information to make meaningful improvements to customer service delivery.

### Transparency

Effectiveness and efficiency of client services is dependent on steady and clear feedback from client and community groups, which in turn requires DFPS to be transparent with these groups and use this information to continually improve customer service delivery. DFPS seeks input from clients to improve operations, and provides information on services on its website. Transparency is central to maximizing client satisfaction with services provided, and DFPS strives to keep stakeholders informed and incorporate family and community needs into client service delivery.

### Other Considerations

DFPS has no other considerations to report for this goal.

## Goal 2: Workforce Stability

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Increase workforce stability and retention of institutional knowledge by focusing on attracting, retaining, and developing highly qualified staff.

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Staff carry out the agency’s mission, provide continuity of services, and are the face of the agency to clients, families, and communities. Staff turnover threatens client outcomes as well as agency effectiveness and efficiency. It is in the best interest of both the agency and our clients to attract and retain the most qualified employees possible.

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## Goal 2: Workforce Stability

<b>Action Item 1:</b> Build the agency’s mission, vision, and values into agency culture so that it guides employee actions and directs policy decisions through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 2:</b> Continuously examine the drivers of turnover and identify feasible reduction solutions through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 3:</b> Continuously evaluate staff development programs, including staff orientation and cross-training of established staff, with particular attention to management and leadership development for supervisors through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 4:</b> Explore opportunities to provide support to deal with or respond to the effects of secondary trauma through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 5:</b> Use the Special Investigator positions statewide to mentor Investigations staff and provide consistent training on proper forensic investigation techniques by through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 6:</b> Expand operational capacity to maximize SWI service availability by establishing a satellite location and increasing the use of telework by August 31, 2021.

## How Goal 2 Action Items Support Statewide Objectives

### Accountability

Employee morale and longevity is directly tied to quality of services. When DFPS employees feel supported in their work and develop a solid knowledge base and set of skills, they become more effective at their jobs and better serve vulnerable Texans. Accountability to both clients and the general public requires a commitment to supporting staff and providing workforce stability.

### Efficiency

High staff turnover and low employee morale are an enormous cost to any organization, and even more so to large organizations. DFPS requires large numbers of competent, detailed, and determined workers. Hiring and training new staff disrupts continuity of operations and requires an investment of resources that would be better spent developing existing staff. Tenured staff maintain larger caseloads which provides savings associated with longevity across the entire system. DFPS has an obligation to minimize turnover and maximize employee morale to be efficient stewards of taxpayer funds.

### Effectiveness

Tenured staff not only are more efficient, due to the complex nature of the work performed by DFPS, they are also more effective. Developing skills and knowledge base takes time and experience. The better skilled a person is when they enter DFPS employment and the longer they develop and grow within the agency, the more effective they become in their work. It is therefore incumbent upon DFPS to attract and retain the most highly qualified staff possible to most effectively fulfill its mission.

### Excellence in Customer Service

Better employees result in better customer service. Staff with more training and experience provide faster and more effective services, resulting in better client outcomes and reduced hold times at intake. DFPS has an opportunity to provide superior services by attracting and retaining the highest quality staff possible.

### Transparency

Fulfilling the agency's mission involves constant public engagement, whether at intake, while assessing client safety, or when providing services. By optimizing the quality and morale of staff, DFPS can better fulfill its promise of transparent, effective service delivery to the public.

### Other Considerations

DFPS has no other considerations to report for this goal.

## Goal 3: Process Improvement

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Strengthen internal processes by better analyzing agency operations and identifying and correcting areas for more efficient and effective operations.

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The agency strives to continuously evolve and provide the best services possible with maximum efficiency. This requires a constant focus on reviewing processes, correcting inefficiencies, and adapting to change.

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## Goal 3: Process Improvement

<b>Action Item 1:</b> Identify and reinforce existing policies that allow for efficient and productive work through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 2:</b> Incorporate staff feedback to agency processes and policies and monitor for effectiveness. Include planning on how to insulate productivity from short-term adjustments and emergencies through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 3:</b> Identify and evaluate the potential for innovative service delivery options through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 4:</b> Maximize the use of data in agency processes and continue data-driven improvements through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 5:</b> Implement innovative provider contracting and procurement with simplified and consistent processes by September 1, 2020.



## How Goal 3 Action Items Support Statewide Objectives

### Accountability

By continuously reviewing and improving internal operations, DFPS maximizes its utility to Texans. Accountability requires a commitment to improvement and innovation. DFPS strives to embody this by seeking out new ways to refine and evolve, including simplifying procurement processes and innovating better contracting practices. Procurement and contracting that is accountable, efficient, and cost-effective is a critical responsibility for any organization.

### Efficiency

Efficiency is central to DFPS's commitment to process improvement. A formalized, proactive process to review operations and make improvements ensures optimal effectiveness at a minimal cost. DFPS recognizes the importance of qualitative and quantitative data, and seeks to incorporate data-driven improvements whenever possible.

### Effectiveness

Maximizing the effectiveness of operations is built into process improvement. By continuously seeking out areas of inefficiency and potential for improvement and innovation, DFPS strives to constantly improve client outcomes and delivery of services. Whether through identifying and reinforcing existing policies that encourage productive work, using staff feedback to review changes to agency processes, seeking innovative service delivery options, or becoming more data driven, all of these efforts can increase agency effectiveness when properly executed.

### Excellence in Customer Service

DFPS recognizes its role in service to Texans, and that providing the best customer service possible is central to the agency's goals. DFPS seeks to provide excellence in customer service through its commitment to evolve and improve at every opportunity. Seeking out improved service delivery options and innovating with provider contracting will help ensure that client facing resources work better.

### Transparency

DFPS incorporates outcome data along with staff and client feedback into decision-making. DFPS exists to protect Texas' most vulnerable populations, and welcomes outside and inside perspectives as it reviews and improves its operations.

### Other Considerations

DFPS has no other considerations to report for this goal.

## Goal 4: Teamwork

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Enhance internal communications to ensure cohesion among divisions.

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The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services serves a large, diverse, and populous state through a wide array of functions and services. Optimize communication and relations across divisions and functional areas.

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## Goal 4: Teamwork

<b>Action Item 1:</b> Actively promote more collaboration between divisions in the agency to close communication gaps and prevent a silo culture through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 2:</b> Strengthen communication between administrative divisions and program areas to foster better support and context for legal, finance, and operations decision through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 3:</b> Ensure all internal stakeholders are represented when establishing new programs and processes to build staff buy-in and to make sure all perspectives are considered through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 4:</b> Report annually the progress of PEI-funded services and plans for improvements through August 31, 2023.

## How Goal 4 Action Items Support Statewide Objectives

### Accountability

Teamwork and collaboration represent the most positive aspects of organizational and peer-to-peer accountability. These links between agency divisions and individual staff are integral to meeting the needs of vulnerable Texans. DFPS serves many distinct populations with unique opportunities and strengths. Seamless coordination of services is necessary to meet their needs and, in turn, the expectations of the public.

### Efficiency

Teamwork is a necessary part of efficient operations. If the agency is too rigid in its organization, the divisions lack the flexibility to quickly address unique challenges. If divisions are too autonomous, services lack consistency and vulnerable Texans can inadvertently fail to receive needed services. Collaboration and teamwork across divisions allows the organization to bridge this gap and provide services with optimal efficiency. Communication among divisions and program areas helps to break down silos and limit duplicated efforts.

### Effectiveness

DFPS is a large agency, and its divisions must simultaneously have the flexibility to face challenges as they arise while providing continuity of operations to ensure a solid network of assistance. Effectiveness of operations requires communication and teamwork across divisions to best meet client needs. This includes effective internal communication about legal, financial, and operational decisions as well as making sure that all internal stakeholders are consulted when beginning new programs.

### Excellence in Customer Service

DFPS strives to provide optimal customer service by ensuring access and continuity among services to all Texans. Effective teamwork encourages information sharing among staff, and provides coherent division of services between programs, avoiding duplication or overlap of services.

### Transparency

DFPS makes every effort to be open and communicative with clients and the public. Active collaboration between agency divisions assists in the ability to communicate with clients and community stakeholders in a clear and accurate manner.

### Other Considerations

DFPS has no other considerations to report for this goal.

## Goal 5: Community Relations

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Improve external communications and outreach to better inform the public and assist with protecting clients, families, and communities.

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Achieving the agency’s mission is aided by communication and collaboration with a variety of external entities. These include community groups, media organizations, local law enforcement, and the state Legislature.

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## Goal 5: Community Relations

<b>Action Item 1:</b> As a stand-alone agency, DFPS will work to better reflect the mission, vision, and values of the agency and the positive impact DFPS has on clients, families, and communities in Texas through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 2:</b> Use agency data to accurately portray the agency’s strengths and needs through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 3:</b> Continue agency presence at key public events to sustain collaborative relationships with external partners through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 4:</b> Use the Special Investigator positions to strengthen relationships with law enforcement entities through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 5:</b> Expand technical assistance and support to communities to help them plan, assess, choose appropriate evidence-based programs to support families, collaborate in the community, leverage private dollars, and sustain their efforts through August 31, 2023.
<b>Action Item 6:</b> Promote public awareness of protective factors for children, including topics such as safe sleep for infants, supervision to prevent drowning and hyperthermia deaths in cars, effective ways to nurture children, safe ways to manage the stress of parenting, and the need for early childhood immunizations through August 31, 2023.

## How Goal 5 Action Items Support Statewide Objectives

### Accountability

Pursuing community relations and promoting public awareness helps open up a dialogue with communities and stakeholders across Texas. This requires open communication with the families and communities that DFPS serves. By improving partnerships with the public and by increasing the visibility of agency services, DFPS has an opportunity to work more collaboratively with clients, families, and communities.

### Efficiency

Efforts to clarify the agency's role in the community and work on collaborative relationships ultimately increase the efficiency of responses. DFPS strives to work as collaboratively as possible with its client communities and promote its mission.

### Effectiveness

By working better with the community, there is a real and tangible effect on the lives of clients, families, and communities. DFPS serves vulnerable Texans across the state, while relying on the communities it serves to partner with the agency to more effectively promote its services. Collaboration with external entities allows the agency to magnify its impact and provide better outcomes for the clients it services.

### Excellence in Customer Service

Community engagement is a crucial component of customer service. By partnering with the public, DFPS can better promote its value to the community while simultaneously improving the way it interacts with clients and meets their needs. The commitment to excellence in customer service allows for a dialogue to happen across the state to ensure that the agency and the community better understand each other.

### Transparency

Transparency is at the core of the agency's goal of promoting its mission and the services it provides to the public. DFPS strives to work collaboratively with community groups, earning buy-in from clients, families, and communities. This effort includes better use of agency data to accurately portray the agency's strengths and needs, as well as attending public events to help build collaborative relationships.

### Other Considerations

DFPS has no other considerations to report for this goal.

## Redundancies and Impediments

Table 1: Redundancies and Impediments

<b>Service, Statute, Rule or Regulation (Provide Specific Citation if applicable)</b>	<b>Family Code §266.0041</b>	<b>Human Resources Code §40.05275</b>
Describe why the Service, Statute, Rule or regulation is Resulting in inefficient or ineffective Agency Operations	This is a reporting requirement for Foster Children in Drug Research program. Report has indicated that no foster children have participated in a drug research program since FY 2013.	CPS requests altering the statute to require a business plan be published October of even-numbered years. This will allow CPS to report on business plan activities in a frequency that our budget and legislative cycle runs. Several initiatives result from legislation and are tied to funds received over the course of a biennium. Making this change will result in the business plan working on a similar cycle.
Provide Agency Recommendation for Modification or Elimination	DFPS recommends deleting requirement for the report. If it cannot be deleted, then have due date moved from October 1st to November 1st annually to allow more time for the data to be pulled	2-year business plan due in October of even-numbered years instead of annually.
Describe the Estimated Cost Savings or Other Benefit Associated with Recommended Change	Reduce workload for MRS to pull data; Reduce workload producing a report with no results several years in a row.	This will result in the business plan lining up with our 2-year legislative cycle.