

# Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

## FFPSA Webinar Transcript

September 29, 2020

**Heather Thorpe:** Hi, welcome. Thank you so much for joining us for the FFPSA Webinar. Today we're going to talk about just an update on the Federal Family First Prevention Services Act and give an overview of the FFPSA Strategic plan published on September first, 2020. Our presenters today are Sasha Rasco, the Associate Commissioner for Prevention and Early Intervention, and Deneen Dryden, the Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Services. Just to go over a few housekeeping items before we get started. You can submit questions during the webinar through the question tab on the control panel, and we'll do our best to answer any questions.

0:55

If you have questions after the webinar or we can't get to them, there will be a website at the end of the presentation where you can submit questions at any time to the FFPSA mailbox. We will also archive this webinar on the DFPS FFPSA webpage for those who aren't able to participate today. And now I'm going to turn it over to Deneen Dryden to get us started.

1:23

**Deneen Dryden:** As Heather stated, we'll provide a brief overview of FFPSA and then discuss the strategic plan DFPS published on September first. We will leave time at the end of the presentation to answer questions received through the chat box.

1:39

The webinar is being recorded and it will be made available on the DFPS Public website.

1:47

FFPSA was signed into law as a part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018.

1:55

This law among other changes, restructured child welfare funding, particularly Title IV-E and Title four B of the Social Security Act, which Texas uses to pay for the care of children in foster care and their families, FFPSA targets, improved services, and outcomes for four main population.

2:19

Children placed in congregate care.

2:22

Kinship caregivers and the children they care for. Parents who struggle with substance abuse and their children and children who are at imminent risk as defined by Texas for entering foster care.

2:37

The prevention services encouraged under FFPSA are meant to be delivered to families involved in the child welfare system that are at a significantly higher risk than the services provided by the Department's Prevention and Early Intervention Division, which are delivered by community providers, and families with the hope of diverting them from any type of involvement in the child welfare system.

3:05

FFPSA aims to elevate the quality of specific types of prevention services provided to families, with children at risk of entering foster care.

3:18

It also aims to encourage and support Kin placement, support pregnant and parenting foster care youth, decrease the use of and spent time in congregate care setting, and allow children to be placed with their parents and substance abuse treatment facilities.

3:39

November 2018, Texas notified the Federal Administration for Children and Families that it intended to delay implementation of certain provisions of FFPSA until September 2021.

3:55

The delay allowed Texas to gain more clarity on the requirements of FFPSA as the Federal Government continues to provide additional guidance on implementation to state, engage stakeholders, examine the resources needed to enhance evidenced based prevention services and determine the best path forward for the children and families of Texas.

4:23

During the 85th legislative session a bill passed that required DSPS to complete a strategic plan.

4:33

Senate Bill 365 requires the DFPS to submit a strategic plan for implementation of the prevention services provision about the FFPSA.

4:44

Senate Bill 781 requires DFPS to submit an analysis and recommendations associated with the placement provision of FFPSA.

4:57

These two strategic plans were combined and submitted to the legislature on September first, 2020.

5:05

The strategic plan provides information on the existing Texas Landscape the programs affected by FFPSA, and the provisions of this important federal legislation and present opportunities for its implementation in Texas.

5:23

DSPS will be awaiting legislative direction during the 87th Legislative session.

5:32

FFPSA includes five required provisions.

5:37

Texas is complying or has a plan to comply with each of the following: the creation of an interstate compact on the placement of children, National Electronic inter-state Compact enterprise system, to quickly and securely exchange data and documents for children in place across state lines.

6:03

This system must be operational by 2027, but Texas anticipates compliance by 2023 as work is already underway.

6:15

Creation of a statewide fatality prevention plan to prevent abuse and neglect fatalities, and pectin is complying with the federal guidelines.

Establishment of protocols to prevent children from being inappropriately diagnosed and to ensure appropriate placement.

6:36

Texas is complying with federal guidelines.

Implementation of procedures for providers to conduct abuse and neglect, registry and criminal records checks, including fingerprints, finger print, Background check. Texas is also complying with the federal guidelines.

6:59

Compliance with proposed Federal model licensing standards submitted a title for each state plan amendment for approval to the Federal Administration for Children and Families, addressing which of Texas, the standards, are consistent with the model licensing standards Which standards the deviate from the model standards, including the reason for the deviation. And whether Texas will update the State standards.

7:31

ACF informed Texas that it had approved, the revised title for each State plan, addressing the model licensing standards, and will be updating the minimum standard administrative rules, as noted in DSPS, Title for a State Plan Amendment.

7:56

**Sasha Rasco:** Good Morning, this is Sasha Rasco. So I'm going to talk a little bit about the option for funding evidence-based prevention services, which is one of the transformational pieces of the Family First Prevention Services Act. The allowance to Title IV-E dollars on services that might prevent the entry of foster care by bolstering mental health substance abuse, treatment needs or parenting skills and families. So FFPSA would allow a 50% match of state investment.

8:34

For services, evidenced based prevention services for families to, the state determined to be imminent risk of entering the foster care system, including children, is adoption or guardianship, is at risk of disruption of the solution, as well as pregnant and parenting foster youth. The Federal Administration, or the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, is maintaining a clearinghouse. Those evidence-based programs do have to meet their criteria of either being well supported, supported, or promising in order to receive that IV-E funding.

9:10

We're not going to go through the entire list, but more programs are continually approved to date. The programs listed on the next three slides are those programs eligible for IV-E funds. Under mental health. You'll see things that I think are already available in many organizations and communities throughout Texas like Child Parent Psychotherapy. Incredible Years Triple P, multi-dimensional family therapist supported. But these are the types of models already allowed under FFPSA and the substance abuse there are fewer models already cleared the FFPSA Clearinghouse but there are some and we're hoping that list will grow under in what they call in home parenting parenting skills and supports are several home visiting models already funded throughout Texas, and such as Parents as Teachers, and Safe Care. As well as some other models of building parenting skills that the state has some experience with. Like, homebuilders and, again, multidimensional family therapy.

10:18

And the last category of programs that are those that might help navigate kinship providers services.

10:24

There is not yet an approved program for Kinship Navigator Services, but we are piloting some efforts, and we hope that others in other states might come forward with the level of evidence that FFPSA that the Administration is looking for to meet criteria.

10:44

Perfect.

10:45

**Deneen Dryden:** Looking now at FFPSA Optional Provision, FFPSA does not disallow any placements currently authorized and utilized in Texas. It does, however, limit and change the placement type eligible for reimbursement of title IV-E funding.

11:04

Texas will no longer be able to claim Title four E Foster care maintenance payments for IV-E eligible children and some congregate care settings.

11:16

Effective September 29th, 2021, Title four E reimbursement is limited to two weeks in those settings.

11:26

The funding limitations of FFPSA will apply once a child is moved to a new placement after September 29, 2021.

11:37

As of the last day of fiscal Year, 2019, 3,396 children were in a non QR TP congregate care setting.

11:49

And approximately 42% of the care days provided to these children was four E eligible.

11:57

The loss of eligibility for these placements is projected to cost approximately \$26 million per year.

12:07

The placement type eligible for consideration of title IV-E funding under FFPSA are identified below family foster home providers specializing in providing prenatal quotes, hire them, or parenting support for you.

12:26

Supervised settings for young adults over the age of 18, who are living independently, residential care for children and youth who are found to be, or at risk of being sex trafficking victims.

12:40

And the last one is QRTP, because of the change an allowable for IV-E placement impact will need to be updated prior to September 29th, 2021. The necessary changes will be complex in nature and DFPS has already begun prioritization of this project.

13:02

In order for a provider to have a program that is considered to be a QRTP, the program must meet all prescribed criteria as set out in FFPSA.

13:15

These include a trauma informed treatment model.

13:20

The registered or licensed nurses, staff and other clinical staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and on-site during business hours.

13:32

A program that facilitates participation of family members in the child's treatment program.

13:39

A program that facilitates outreach to the family members of the child, including siblings, and involves documenting and maintaining contact information for any known biological, family, and fictive kin of the child.

13:56

Documentation demonstrating how the family members were integrated into the treatment process, including post discharge and how sibling connections are maintained.

14:08

Also, a program that provides discharge planning and family based after care for at least six months post discharge.

14:18

Accreditation by one of the three listed accrediting bodies, Council of Accreditation, Joint Commission, or CAR, or any independent, not for-profit accrediting organization as approved by ACF.

14:38

As you can see, this is a wide-ranging bill that is also a lot about complex financing, and placements, and substance abuse treatment facilities is another area allowed for, IV-E funding under FFPSA. Texas Reclaim Title for a Reimbursement for Foster Care Maintenance Expenses.

14:55

For up to 12 months for a Child and DSPS Conservatorships would place or the parent and a residential family based treatment facility for substance abuse without regard to the child for

Eligibility as of July 20, 2010, residential providers of all types of parents, Not just, those in the child welfare system for substance abuse disorders, while allowing their children to remain in care, under kinship navigation, allows also, for the provision of services to families not involved in child welfare. It allows for the benefits and services, including information referral to follow up services, counseling, and other assistance to kinship providers, regardless of whether they are involved or the children they are caring for are involved in child welfare, there are currently no approved kinship navigator programs, as we already mentioned. So no option right now to draw down federal funds, but it's an area where obviously DFPS is already Funding Services and we'll keep an eye out for that opportunity.

16:00

Another, a later development, after the adoption of the Family First Prevention Services Act, the federal government created a Family First Transition Act and provided funding. And in 2019 signed into law, the Act, which allows or pays for implementation efforts that are one time and cost.

16:22

By providing safe transition funding, the federal legislature recognized that there were upfront investments that they would need to make to services help lead this transformation of the child welfare system. And the funding must be used to advance the goals the FFPSA and is not eligible for additional federal match, federal dollars. And DFPS has received \$50,265,902 back in funding under FFPSA to send through federal fiscal year 2025.

17:01

Next area of considerable discussion for every day and also within Texas are other or the foster care candidacies.

17:11

Currently, Texas has as it IV-E foster candidate, a focus on children at imminent risk of foster care.

17:21

And we have the ability to expand that definition under FFPSA.

17:28

What you can see in the strategic plan is a proposal for consideration with our legislative partners to consider a slight expansion of that candidacy to include families in the FBSS stage of service or current candidacy, but with an addition of families were already working with, which are those families We're reunify and families who have adopted a child and might, might benefit from post adoption services if those services will prevent the removal of that child for foster care.

18:01

So it's a, it's that the theory of change there being that that evidenced based FBSS a service would stabilize the family and prevent a need for for removal.

18:14

These changes will determine the eligible population, but a conversation is still taking place at the legislature.

18:24

Pregnant and parenting foster youth are their own candidacy in FFPSA and are not a part of the imminent foster risk candidacy.

18:38

Also, there was a lot of stakeholder input, and considering the types of prevention services that could be funded for the proposed candidacy. And, and also have a mechanism for that funding. You can see in the plan several options laid out for our legislative members to consider as they would need to provide the state match in order to draw down the 40 in the future. The first option laid out, it is the option of waiting and coupling the provision of FFPSA prevention services with the addition of FBSS in the community-based care model that sort of ties both FFPSA Prevention services together with FBSS provided at the CBC level and would fund those prevention services as part of community-based Care.

19:34

Another option, which could begin more quickly, would be, for the FBSS or CPS, to have funding, to purchase services, and the model, it does now, which is through open enrollment for needed mental health, substance abuse treatment, or parenting services.

20:06

Per the provision of Senate Bill 355, DFPS explore the resources necessary to co-ordinate prevention as they exist now with CBC implementation.

20:15

The coordination of FBSS services in the catchment area is unrelated to as PSA on the one hand but could be coordinated estimated eligible matching funds. Prevention service options, and the Q R T P Pilot will be discussed in more detail on the next slide.

20:37

I think this is the option I already mentioned. Sorry, you guys. So this is the co-ordination of services and CBC, and then the FBSS capacity I already mentioned. And then the third option is the co-ordination of FBSS Services to just study it as something we could do now in the short run, with a long-term plan of financing it as a part of CBC.

21:02

A fourth option is for to pilot community driven models of FFPSA, which looks similar to maybe a PEI hope model, where a lead agency would propose any variety of services allowed under FFPSA, A connection that community needs, but would be would be provided for in contracts, separate from community-based care. Perhaps and coordination at a later date. Another option is to expand the helping through intervention and prevention services program, which already serving pregnant and parenting foster youth to allow that provision statewide.

21:42

Then the last model is to expand capacity for PEI's in-home parenting programs that are evidence based and the FFPSA criteria but with reserved slots for candidate families.

21:59

Last option in the plan is to pilot rural service option for evidence-based services that would include the training of FBSS caseworkers and chosen evidence-based parenting models and would give to say a distinct idea of how provision would look different in rural areas as well as service providers.

22:21

**Deneen Dryden:** The QRTP pilot qualified residential treatment program pilot, there is a small subset of children and youth in care that have extraordinarily high needs.

22:37

And they are the ones for whom a QRTP may be appropriate.

22:41

The DFPS will use the results of the pilot to help inform an appropriate rate to reflect the requirements in the QRTP. This would include an appropriate daily rate that included provider costs for maintaining the necessary medical staff.

23:00

Funding for provider accreditation costs, DFPS resources required to ensure federal reporting and placement requirements, including clinical administration staff to ensure appropriate placements and associated training and IT costs for creating any type of placement.

23:23

The state could benefit from more information learned through the pilot and with minimal state investment of federal funds could be used to complete this work. At the end of the pilot period, we would have the information necessary to make recommendations about the costs and the benefits of the full implementation throughout the state.

23:45

The estimated timeline is listed here. We first will hire staff to project manage and oversee the QRTP pilot program.

23:56

This is now through December 20th, 2020.

24:01

Develop and release the RFA, design processes, and protocols, procure RTC pilot program, including independent assessment port requirements.

24:12

This is January 2021 through January 2022.

24:18

Post the RFA, January to March 2022, to enter into contract or contracts for QRTP pilot program. April 2022.

24:31

QRTP DFPS Court readiness work, April to June of 2022.

24:39

This option was already included in the intended FFPSA expenditures in a request submitted to the governor and the Legislative Budget board.

24:50

DFPS anticipates a total cost of eight million.

24:58

**Sasha:** So, DFPS, along with HHSC agency and other community partners, have already begun to use Federal funding grants to explore how best to serve this population DFPS received kinship



Navigator grants. Authorized by FFPSA enactment in 2018, and it was awarded funding for three consecutive grant years. We've spent those times in three different ways, a lot of enhancements to 211 to help families navigate to services through that mechanism. There has been funding for the evaluation of Kinship Navigator approaches. And, lastly, we just awarded four grants to community-based providers to pilot service provision to kinship providers involved, or not involved with.

25:50

Now is the time where we are going to read questions in the chat room and answer them.

25:58

So, do we have any questions?

26:15

Another option is you can always send questions even after this webinar to the e-mail on your screen. We're checking right now for the chat room, we're not seeing anything, do give us a moment.

27:01

We are not seeing any questions in the chat room right now. Give a couple more minutes for folks to perhaps chat in a question, but otherwise, please, e-mail.

27:27

There is one question. Is the QRTP pilot fully paid for by federal funds?

27:33

And the answer to that is yes.

27:36

It's part of our FFPSA plan.

27:42

Another question has come in about how FFPSA will affect emergency shelters.

27:48

And as mentioned, on a previous slide, the first two weeks of a day in congregate care qualify for federal funding under FFPSA, as well as children were in an emergency shelter prior to September of 2021, 2022, 2021. Sorry, prior to September of 2021.

28:14

There stay would also be covered through federal funds beyond those two weeks, or any placements that were grandfathered in prior to the implementation of FFPSA, those placements would no longer be allowed for federal claiming. It doesn't prohibit the agency from continuing to play in emergency shelters. It just impacts the way that we draw down our federal funds.

28:45

Here's a question about whether any of the prevention services would change the nature of the current PEI prevention programs, and the answer is no that there are distinctly different funding sources, and we see the work that PEI does now as being upstream from entry to child welfare.

29:04

Abd to be offered in the community to families who have not yet been involved in the system, And the only the only impact would be if any of the organization providing those services were contracted to expand their service provision, to add these families.

29:31

Just digesting the comments and reading them as we go.

29:43

So, if there is, there are several pilot programs, I think proposed, and the question is: How do you apply to be a part of them? So, just to be clear, these are all proposals for the legislature to consider nothing has been approved. We would have, still need to submit a plan to the federal government before we implement any of these. So, these are all just for consideration. But, once approved by both our legislature and the Administration for Children and Families, we would put out a request for application like we do for any other service provision. And you would be, we would send our broad notification through all the regular channels about this opportunity to be clear. There are no opportunities currently, other than the Kinship Navigator pilot, we already funded because those funds were already available to us.

30:39

We're still reading you guys. Sorry for the lag. So, thank you for your questions.

30:59

One of the questions is: Will there be any money available to start up the programs or start agencies, or will be mostly focused on programs, or agencies already operating and, or licensed? I think it depends. I don't think it's any different than any other opportunity we've put out, If it's a brand-new agency. It will depend on the criterion RFA about experience and readiness.

31:26

So I don't think anything is ruled out that there are just some practical practicalities of being ready to implement within a certain timeframe that might lean more heavily towards programs that already have experience or infrastructure. But there's no hard line about that in any of these models.

31:46

The next question is, how do you apply to be part of the pilot program?

31:50

And so, as mentioned on a previous slide, there is anticipated that we would release a request for applications for advice to be a QRPT.

32:04

And so we would be notifying stakeholder as much as we did for this webinar if, there, when an opportunity, presented itself, when we released the Request for Applications.

32:18

And so, for funding for all of these is different, depending on the type of program, but, but most of this requires both an investment from our state legislature and then approval from our federal partners. So, there is quite a ramp up time before we make funds available to the public. So, again, just a reminder. None of this funding is available now, none of these proposals have been approved or made final. We're just sharing our deliberations at this stage based on all the input

we've already received, and as directed by the legislature and the strategic plan to September one.

33:08

We have a question about what current PEI programs...will be replaced by these efforts. Now, that is not the idea that, as I've said, the prevention programs already funded. What would retain their purpose at serving families earlier and earlier stages of crisis?

33:28

The HOPE program is not a deliberate part of any of these proposals. It's more maybe just a model or a framework we borrowed from, but HIP program and the providers providing services, I don't think they will be replaced. But, they will be required to come into compliance with FFPSA, if they in terms of the evidence-based models are choosing, and that might involve additional data entry as well.

33:56

But we don't anticipate a new procurement, per se, more, an expansion into areas we do not currently have.

34:20

There's a question. Will FFPSA apply to anyone outside of foster care services that provide services to children in foster care?

34:28

And I think the answer is, it could, depending on the type of services made available and an opportunity to bid.

34:36

So, if, well, I think, depending on what the legislature approved, then we decide to fund, then we will decide the right applicant base for the RFAs, and they might be broad and inclusive. They might be included to certain types of organizations, a certain experience. But I do think there's room for organizations that are serving families and children outside of child welfare to begin serving families under FFPSA. It will not be, depending on which of the many options we've presented, it will, it will not be excluded to only those agencies currently serving foster care children and their families. Thanks for the question.

35:44

OK, there's a question about, there are no funds for kinship navigator at this time, and the answer is, we just made available an opportunity for the PEI star program or that we've just rename to the Family and Youth Success Program, for those of you who do know that. To apply, to add funds to their contract to pilot a kinship navigator. So, this is an example of funding opportunity that did go out to a narrow group of providers our PEI Star program is already serving families in crisis and youth in crisis, and it has services available in all 254 counties.

36:27

So, we made the opportunity to work specifically with kinship providers available to only that network as a way of expediting the, ramp up of those services. And because they are already serving can providers, about 17% of the family therapy program are kin, grandparents, uncles. So that opera, there is funding available that went out and that way it has already been awarded for different providers. There is not new money available at this time.

36:59

Next question is, will these changes decrease the need for foster families? And as far as children in foster care services, is the opposite. Actually, in that it will increase, increases, the ability for the state to drawdown, it will increase the ability, let me rephrase that.

37:21

Foster family care, there'll be an eligible placement setting breath to draw down federal funding. I think the hope and the vision behind FFPSA is that an investment in prevention services could lead to fewer children coming into care, but that is something that we would we would hope for down the road depending on how FFPSA is implemented in the state of Texas. But it does not change the need currently, or in the near future for foster families.

37:56

I would just add, I think that sort of the flavor of the various options we provided is that we want to take the opportunity to pilot several different approaches and see what does seem to impact family's ability to stay together without the need for foster care intervention. And we know the state full of diverse types of families, diverse types of organizations, and, and that's why we have a diverse set of proposals with the idea that there's a lot of evaluation down the road so Texas could never scale up any one particular approach.

38:36

Content to additional questions, I'll try to answer the first list. When do we anticipate the federal approval to come in? Just to re-iterate, the question was sharing that we are sharing with you, our plans on out through the strategic plan. We look forward to our legislative session, and we'll hear more about those options.

38:56

Once we know those decisions then we'll move forward and go through a process with our federal partners, lengthy against a process in which we will compose our, our populations and evaluation methods, so we still have a ways to go there, but I know we have a commitment to continuing to communicate with all our stakeholders through process.

39:21

Second question was more specific. I think it was just wanting to assure that the child lives in a setting for eligible setting. on September 29th, 2021, how long they stay eligible for IV-E, in that setting, and our understanding of federal regulations, that they will be IV-E allowable, as long as they stay in that original setting that they were in.

39:47

So, that's that status.

39:49

I think we, again, want to clarify, though, that as long as the child has need for that setting... family...

40:09

The next question is, Are the accreditation standards and accreditation process for QRTPs available yet?

40:15

And so, um, the FFPSA outlined three accrediting bodies that would be accepted for QRTPs. And then if the state, which is not part of our strategic plan at the time, as they could propose an accreditation process to the federal government that is not part of the plan at this time.

41:05

We're mining through the questions. OK, I'm going to read this question. Do you anticipate, SAVE that's the former PEI program STAR, do you anticipate that programming relating to or interacting with any of the proposals that the legislature will be evaluating?

41:27

And so, I think, I think any organization that is currently working with the DFPS on any of that Continuum of work whether prevention services, whether it's foster care services, all those organizations probably have reason to apply for a variety of these models. But I don't think, other than the Kinship Navigator program and the HIPP program, I don't anticipate we will be working directly with those models... But rather, they would just be eligible to apply for grants or contracts like they would now.

42:07

But certainly, you know, organizations that are working with children and families and all of these capacities all have something to bring to the table.

43:04

We're going to take a few more questions. And then the rest that we can't get to, we're going to consolidate, and some of them are starting to have repeat repetitive themes, and we will put them in an FAQ section as a follow-up to this webinar. So, we'll just take a few more.

43:24

Or just give us a minute, because they were just reading through them to determine what, what's a new question we haven't yet answered.

44:07

OK, it seems like the only remaining questions are also all again about when and how and for whom the money and funds will become available, and so we will put all of these questions online under an FAQ and are frequently asked questions, headline, and send out a link to everyone who is registered for this webinar, and we appreciate your questions. And just to kind of repeat a few themes.

44:30

A strategic plan is really our agency's proposal for the legislature to consider and nothing has yet been finalized. and the next step would be the submission of our plan to the federal government. We also need their approval. So, we're just being transparent and sharing with you our current thoughts about potential ways in which FFPSA could be implemented in Texas, and any availability of funds will be made through the usual procurement channel. So, make sure you're signed up for all the gondoic options, which will put, again, in the frequently asked questions, so you'll know when there are opportunities for funding made available. But I think our biggest requests, as we've talked about, FFPSA over the last couple years, has been have these conversations in your community with families. Get that experience or talk to your child protective services colleagues. And be thinking boldly and innovatively about how to better serve children and families and how to do it in partnership with the agency and with all the different service providers in your community. So, you know, certainly you'll want to wait and see what the agency can make available through funding, but don't don't wait just to see what we want. Think visionary about what you think families in your community need and be ready when those grant opportunities become available.

We appreciate your time and attention and partnership. This plan was made with a lot of input from lots of different entities, folks over, and I'm sure many of you on the call, over the last months and years. So, we appreciate the partnership and look forward to sharing more when there is more to share.

Have a great Tuesday.