



**TEXAS**  
Department of Family  
and Protective Services

**Senate Bill 1, Article II, Department of Family  
Protective Services, Rider 8**

**88th Legislature, Regular Session Bi-Annual Report**

**Human Resources Management Plan**

**FY 2023**

**Second Quarter**

*March 2023*

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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.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), Rider 8, of the 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, directs the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop a Human Resources Management Plan (HRMP) designed to improve employee morale and retention. The plan must focus on reducing employee turnover through better management and to report employee turnover rates by job category for the preceding 12 months. The report must be sent to the Senate Committee on Finance, the House Committee on Appropriations, the Legislative Budget Board, and the Governor by March 31 and September 30 of each fiscal year (FY). SB 1 further indicates that the effectiveness of the agency's plan shall be measured by whether there is a reduction in employee turnover rates at the agency, specifically the reduction in the turnover rates for caseworkers.

To provide transparency and a comprehensive overview of the workforce, this report includes additional information beyond what is required by the Legislature. Additional reporting is provided on hiring and fill rates at the agency, as well as a summary of the results from the latest Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) and the State Auditor's Office (SAO) Exit Survey, when available. A comparison of turnover data by program is included in Appendix A of this report to ensure consistency in the data provided in the annual summary of employee turnover comparison report.

As new significant trends in turnover rates emerge, this report will provide a summary of DFPS's efforts to analyze the changes and monitor program initiatives adopted to address identified issues. In addition, this report will provide updates on key workforce division initiatives in place to sustain the overall health of the agency.

DFPS continues to experience a high rate of agency-wide turnover and it remains higher than the SAO statewide average for all agencies. Continued progress in implementing HRMP initiatives serves as evidence of the full commitment of executive leadership to ensuring the workforce can provide exceptional services to Texans in need. DFPS will continue to closely examine workforce trends across the program.

## TURNOVER AND RETENTION

Turnover data for the current fiscal year (FY 2023) is complete through the end of the second quarter (Q2). Turnover through Q2 FY 2023 is compared to turnover to the previous full fiscal year turnover. There is some seasonality in turnover that may affect the comparisons. Future reports will reflect programmatic changes implemented in FY 2023. Additional details on turnover and retention findings are provided in Appendix A. Details on agency and program tenure are provided in Appendix B.

According to the Texas State Auditor's Classified Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2022, the statewide turnover rate was 24.5 percent for all state agencies. In FY 2023 Q2, DFPS averaged 13,365 employees with a turnover rate of 26.6 percent.

### **DFPS Turnover and Retention Findings**

- In Figure 1, DFPS has reported an 8.3 percent decrease in turnover agency-wide from 29 percent in FY 2022 to 26.6 percent in Q2 FY 2023.

- On average, for the second quarter of FY 2023, 45 percent of all DFPS employees have five or more years of tenure with the agency.

**FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER COMPARISON REPORT (as of Q2 FY23)<sup>1</sup>**

Functional Title	Turnover Rate (FY19)	Turnover Rate (FY20)	Turnover Rate (FY21)	Turnover Rate (FY22)	Turnover Rate (FY23 YTD)	% Change FY22 to FY23 YTD
All Employees	19.3%	18.5%	23.8%	29.0%	26.6%	-8.3%
CPS Workers	17.3%	20.7%	21.2%	27.0%	27.6%	2.2%
CPS Supervisors	7.9%	9.2%	7.1%	12.3%	11.9%	-3.9%
CPS Program	16.1%	18.4%	19.8%	26.6%	25.5%	-4.3%
CPS CVS Caseworker	17.1%	24.7%	24.6%	34.9%	34.7%	-0.6%
CPS CVS Supervisor	7.7%	10.2%	5.7%	13.4%	11.8%	-11.8%
CPS CVS Program	16.6%	23.1%	23.5%	34.3%	33.3%	-2.7%
CPS FAD Caseworker	11.3%	5.9%	13.8%	13.2%	23.1%	75.3%
CPS FAD Supervisor	3.8%	4.2%	4.4%	10.8%	0.0%	-10.8%
CPS FAD Program	10.5%	5.9%	13.2%	14.5%	20.2%	39.1%
CPS FBSS Caseworker	23.3%	18.6%	21.3%	17.7%	21.0%	18.4%
CPS FBSS Supervisor	9.1%	7.1%	8.3%	9.7%	13.1%	34.9%
CPS FBSS Program	20.8%	16.1%	20.7%	20.3%	21.2%	4.0%
CPS KIN Caseworker	4.4%	14.6%	9.3%	20.0%	15.2%	-23.9%
CPS KIN Supervisor	8.2%	8.0%	0.0%	12.4%	17.0%	37.6%
CPS KIN Program	7.0%	14.0%	9.0%	21.0%	16.6%	-20.7%
CPS OTH Caseworker	7.6%	9.0%	6.6%	11.2%	9.8%	-12.4%
CPS OTH Supervisor	3.8%	11.9%	19.8%	15.4%	7.7%	-50.0%
CPS OTH Program	10.6%	9.4%	10.4%	14.1%	10.4%	-26.3%
CPS SI Investigator	13.2%	8.0%	17.1%	19.3%	20.5%	6.4%
CPI Workers			40.8%	43.2%	38.2%	-11.7%
CPI Workers (Non SI)	31.9%	28.8%	43.2%	45.7%	40.1%	-12.2%
CPI Supervisors	8.5%	10.3%	14.6%	14.9%	12.0%	-19.7%
CPI Program	25.1%	22.3%	34.9%	37.7%	34.1%	-9.6%
DCI Workers	24.8%	18.2%	48.9%	45.4%	42.1%	-7.2%
DCI Supervisors	16.7%	17.4%	50.0%	17.4%	40.0%	130.0%
DCI Program	19.0%	20.3%	36.4%	40.3%	37.5%	-6.9%
RCI Workers	29.8%	28.8%	26.4%	35.9%	25.5%	-29.1%
RCI Supervisors	10.3%	0.0%	14.8%	27.4%	11.1%	-59.4%
RCI Program	24.7%	21.6%	26.3%	33.0%	22.2%	-32.7%
APS Workers	20.7%	17.9%	25.1%	33.9%	28.3%	-16.5%
APS Supervisors	7.2%	1.2%	9.6%	10.3%	4.8%	-54.0%
APS Program	17.5%	15.2%	21.9%	28.7%	24.8%	-13.6%
SWI Workers	16.8%	7.2%	10.9%	15.2%	18.1%	19.2%
SWI Supervisors	5.5%	2.7%	4.5%	11.3%	8.9%	-21.3%
SWI Program	14.7%	6.8%	9.7%	14.4%	15.1%	4.7%

<sup>1</sup> Turnover is calculated using a method that mirrors the process the SAO uses. Specifically: Total number of Terminations of Regular Employees/Count of Average Active Regular Employees.

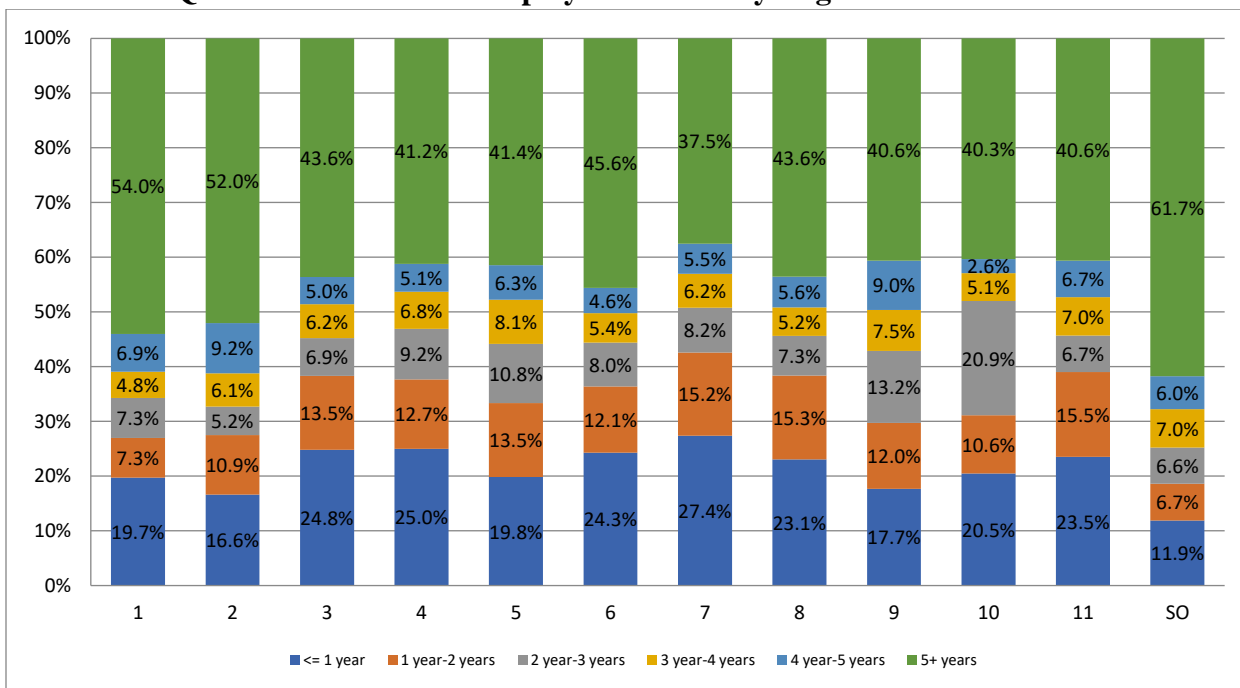
The CPS specialist I position was reintroduced in FY 2014, and CPI and CPS program specialist caseworkers were introduced in FY 2017. Prior to introduction or reintroduction, null records will be represented by shaded cells.

Prior to FY 2018, CPI staff were assigned to CPS Investigations units. Unit designation was determined by the staff's Department ID at the conclusion of the reporting period.

Prior to FY 2019, this report was referred to as Rider 11. Currently, the report is not a part of any rider. Older reports did not include separate data for different types of CPS caseworkers and included CPI numbers among the CPS results.

## DFPS and Program Tenure- Q2 FY 2023<sup>2</sup>

**FIGURE 2: Q2 FY2023 DFPS All Employees Tenure by Region\***



\*State Office (SO) houses limited direct delivery staff.

Tenure grouping is used to monitor the proportion of workers in each region based off being case assignable and is based off the LBB reporting requirements. For direct-delivery staff in CPI, Conservatorship (CVS), Family Based Safety Services (FBSS), Residential Child Care Investigations (RCCI), Day Care Investigations (DCI), and APS:

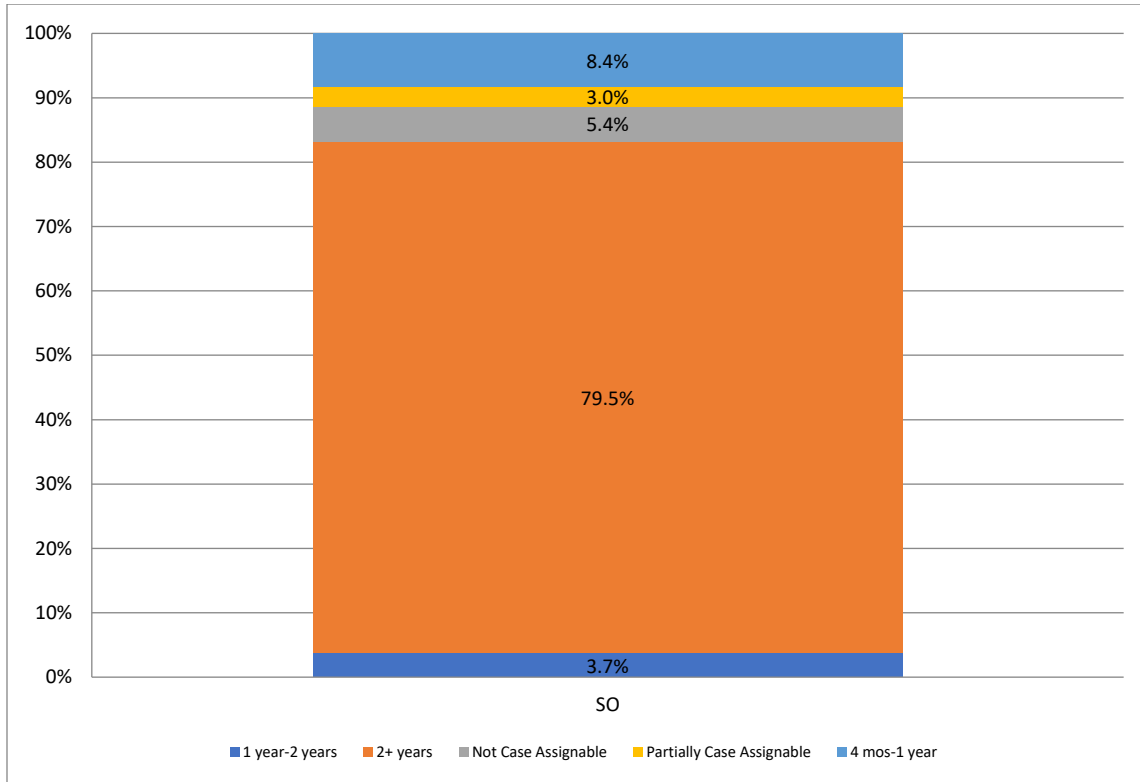
- Not case assignable is a tenure of less than 105 days.
- Partially case assignable is a tenure of 105 days to 135 days.
- Fully case assignable is a tenure of more than 135 days.
- Tenured refers to caseworkers with 2 or more years of state service.

<sup>2</sup> All tenure data as of March 2023.

For direct-delivery staff in CPI:

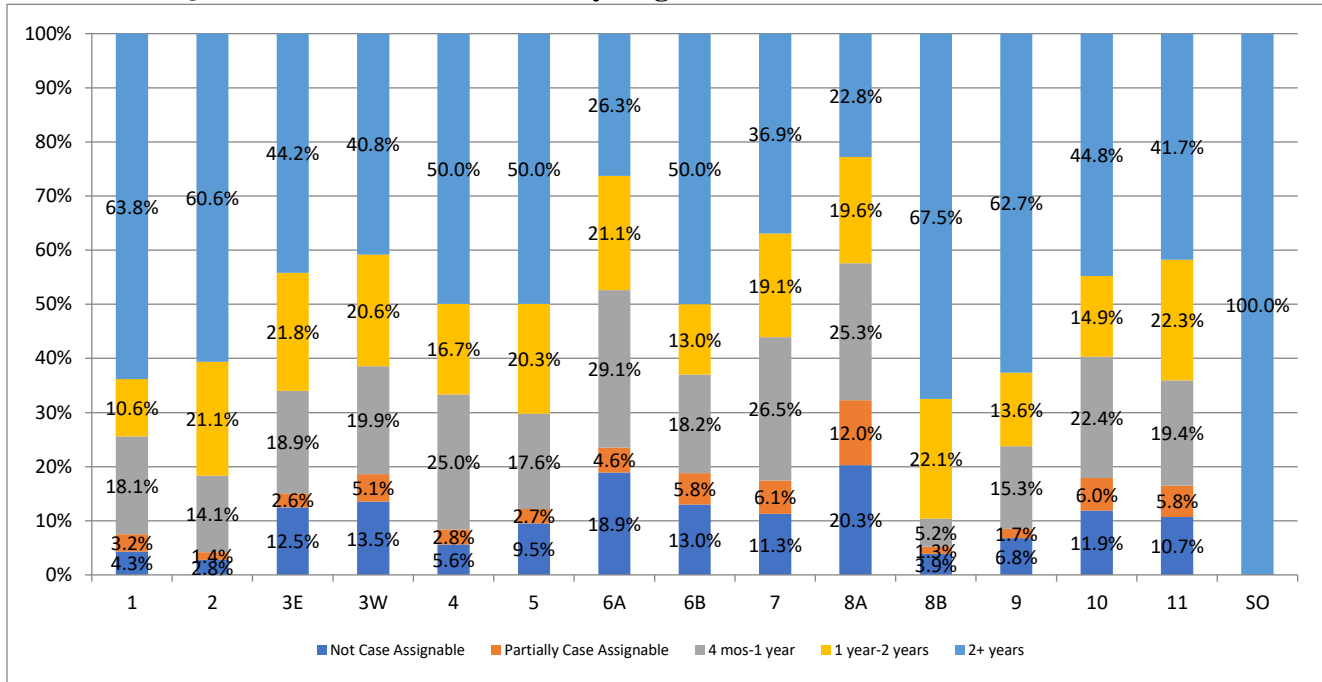
- Not case assignable is a tenure of less than 98 days.
- Partially case assignable is a tenure of 98 days to 128 days.
- Fully case assignable is a tenure of more than 128 days.
- Tenured refers to caseworkers with 2 or more years of state service.

**FIGURE 3: Q2 FY2023 SWI Tenure**



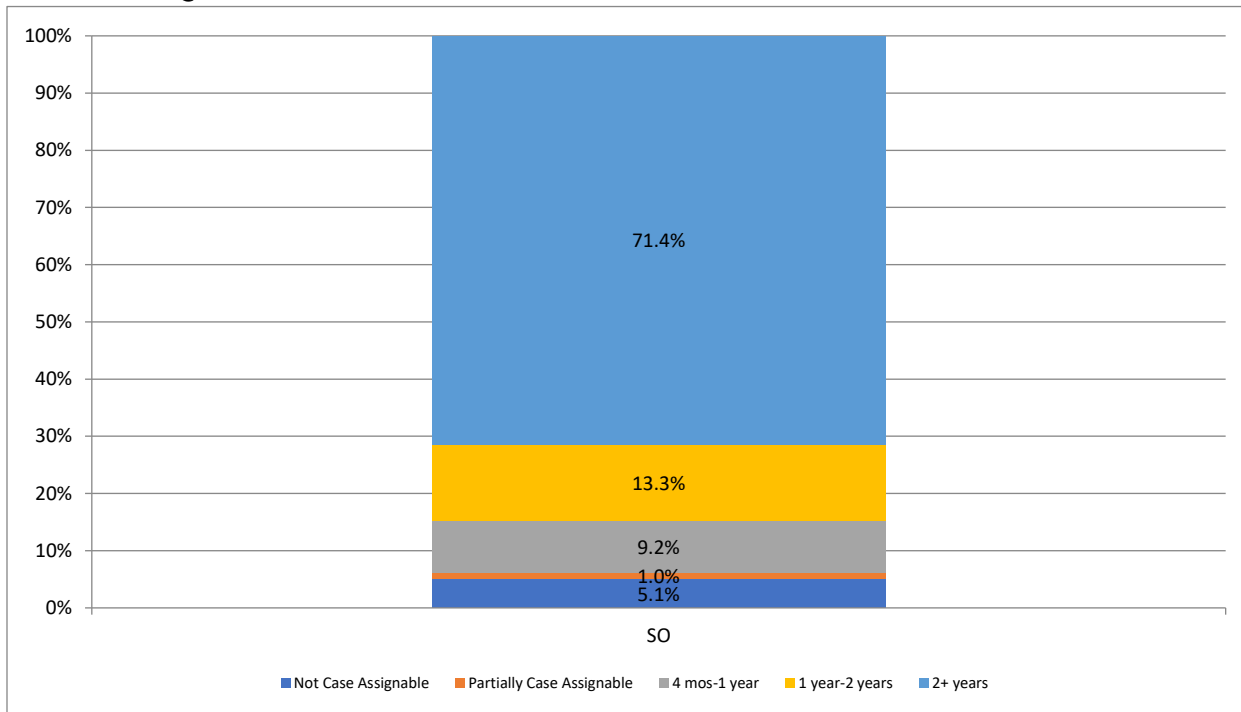
\*While these staff report to State Office, they are housed statewide.

**FIGURE 4: Q2 FY2023 CPI INV Tenure by Region\***



\*State Office (SO) houses limited direct delivery staff.

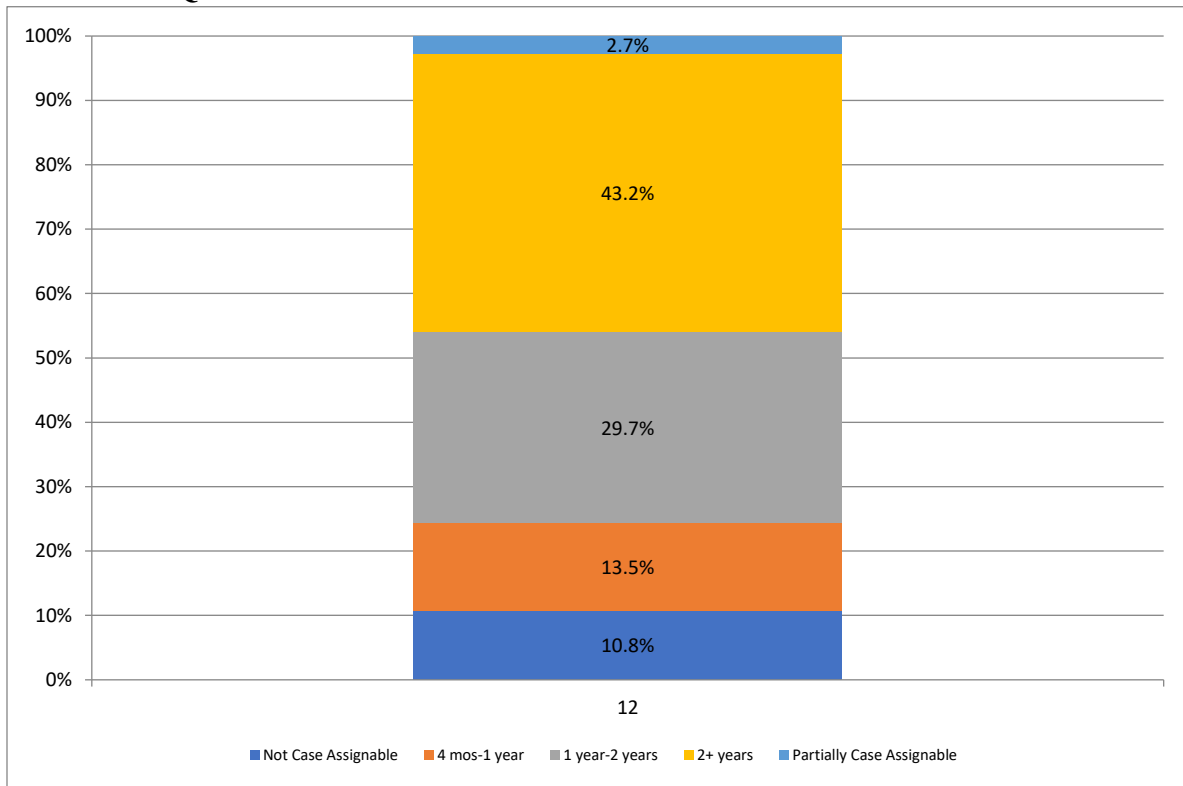
**FIGURE 5: Q2 FY2023 RCCI Tenure\***



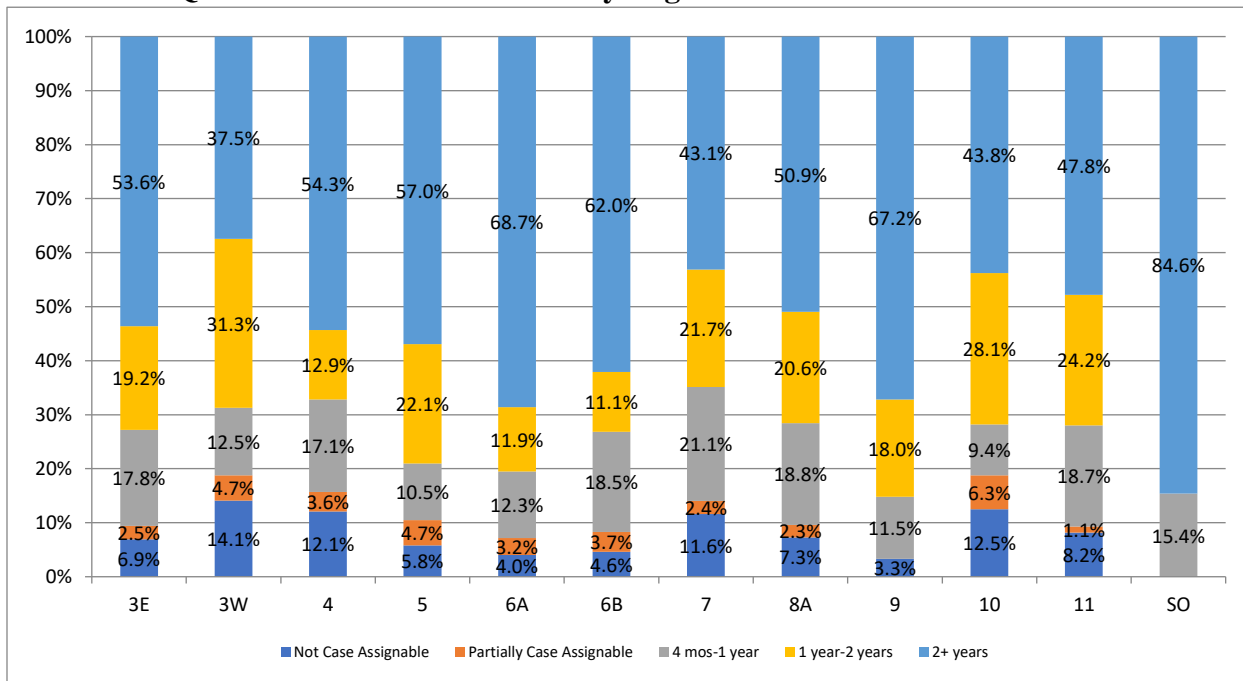
\*While these staff report to State Office, they are housed statewide.



**FIGURE 6: Q2 FY2023 DCI Tenure**

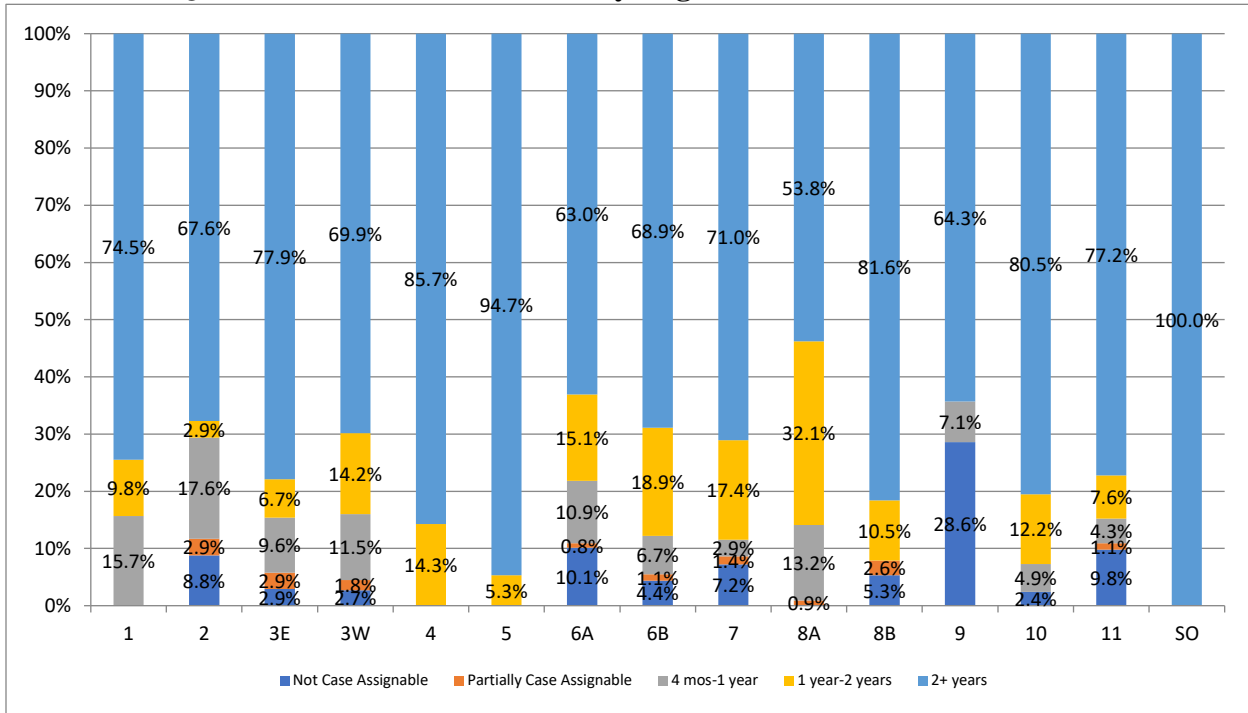


**FIGURE 7: Q2 FY2023 CPS CVS Tenure by Region\***



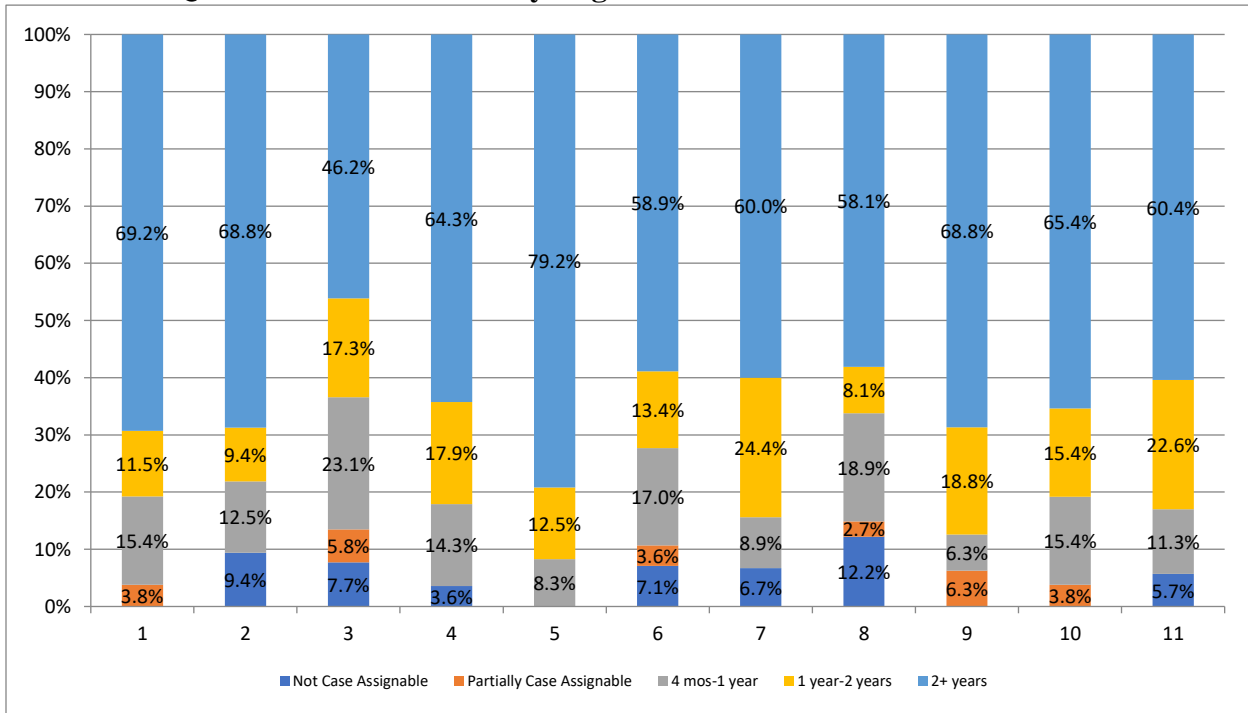
\*State Office (SO) houses limited direct delivery staff.

**FIGURE 8: Q2 FY2023 CPS FBSS Tenure by Region\***



\*State Office (SO) houses limited direct delivery staff.

**FIGURE 9: Q2 FY2023 APS Tenure by Region**



## **PROGRAM INITIATIVES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023**

To better address turnover trends in the SWI, CPI, CPS, and APS, DFPS has conducted analysis with program leadership in each program to understand changes by region and by the type of workers leaving the agency.

### **SWI program has implemented the following initiatives:**

#### **○ Management**

- To become fully staffed, as of the January 2022 Basic Skills Development (BSD) class, SWI began accepting applications from candidates all over the state. Class sizes grew from 4-6 graduates in Fall 2021 to an average of 11-12 graduates for classes in FY 2022 and FY 2023. Among these classes, 56 of the 84 graduates were from outside of the Central Texas area.
- Increased the salary of tenured Intake Specialist IVs, bringing them to the equivalent of what less tenured staff now make. In FY 2013 SWI increased the career ladder pay increases from 7% to 10%. While this has been overall beneficial to SWI operations, it inadvertently resulted in some tenured staff making less than newer staff while performing the same job duties at the same level of certification. Through salary increase, SWI was able to rectify this discrepancy.
- Awarded one-time merits to many meritorious intake staff and supervisors, conducting one round in early 2022 and a second round in the summer of 2022. There was a significant amount of payroll savings because of vacancies, so that funding was used to reward and retain the staff that got SWI through this period of being undermanned.

### **CPI Program has implemented the following initiatives:**

#### **○ Employee Engagement**

- Utilize the Peer Support Group to encourage members to share their own lived experiences and practical guidance. The purpose is to help their peers develop their own goals and strategies for self-empowerment, and to take concrete steps towards building fulfilling, self-determined lives for themselves while balancing their work and personal life.
- Continue utilization of feedback from regional and statewide supervisor advisory groups to make improvements to systems, policy/practice, or retention, and to improve communication between managers and staff.
- Continue to hold quarterly regional and statewide training councils hosted by Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE) and field staff to elicit feedback and make improvements to trainings for staff and leadership development, as well as retention.

○ **Management**

- CPI Regional Leadership meet quarterly with their system’s improvement staff to review and evaluate business plan metrics and adjust strategies for improvement and develop regional leadership by offering voluntary leadership workshops, as needed, or requested.
- Continue to hold quarterly regional and statewide training councils hosted by Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE) and field staff to elicit feedback and make improvements to trainings for staff and leadership development, as well as retention.

○ **Support**

- Statewide efforts to reduce case carrying rate for all CPI staff to improve work-life balance. The average daily CPI caseload has gone from 18.5 in 2022 to 14.2 in Q2 FY 2023.
- Mentor Program Specialists’ positions within CPI continue to focus on improving the support provided to new staff throughout their first year in the agency.
- Mentor Program Division is conducting a rolled approach for improvement efforts to support staff new to the program.
- The Master Investigation program has expanded in all regions across the state, working investigations, providing mentorship, and training to CPI field staff.

○ **Training**

- Leadership Advanced Management (LAM) team is conducting leadership trainings statewide to further develop supervisor and manager’s skills to support their teams.
- Continue implementation of an Engagement Series training for field staff. The training targets caseworkers understanding and use of engagement and engagement tools when working with families. For supervisors and above it provides an opportunity to explore how engagement is a part of the management process including what type of engagement practices are currently in place and what additional engagement methods might be beneficial to encourage staff development. This has been completed in region 6A and region 6B.
- CPI Mental Health specialists have conducted regional field trainings on skill enhancements for adolescent and teen mental health issues throughout the state to equip caseworkers with necessary tools for job performance.

**CPS program has implemented the following initiatives:**

○ **Employee Engagement**

- CPS Regional Leadership continues to meet quarterly with their Regional System’s Improvement staff to review and evaluate business plan metrics and adjust strategies for improvements throughout the fiscal year.
- The CPS Associate Commissioner along with the CPS Director of Field meet quarterly, face-to-face, with the Regional Directors across the state to strategize and work on business plan outcomes, retention, and caseloads.

- Statewide, average child assignments per caseworker continue to decline into FY 2023. Assigned child counts were down by 2.6 children per caseworker in February 2023 compared to February 2022. To continue to manage caseloads, CPS continues to use the following tools and processes to manage caseloads:
  - Analyzing root causes and implementing solutions aims to reduce average daily child counts and ensures continuous quality improvement. The team continues to monitor trends and patterns related to staff, vacancies, caseloads, completion and timeliness of critical tasks, and casework quality.
  - Using INSIGHT and the CVS caseload reports to track progress while considering the complexity of cases, including caseworker experience and child and family needs to support decisions about case assignments.
  - When allocating positions to different areas within a region, caseload size is examined, and managers continue to ensure that cases are closed timely in IMPACT (Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas).
- The CPS Director of Field meets weekly with the CPS Regional Directors to discuss updates, processes to implement, and allow space and time for the Regional Directors to provide feedback and discuss concerns within their regions.
- CPS Regional Directors continue to meet with caseworkers and supervisory level staff to get a pulse on the regional stressors. They use these meetings to work with their leadership on addressing any concerns and worries. Many of the regional changes that happen come from the ideas that the caseworkers and supervisors give during these meetings.
- The CPS Associate Commissioner and CPS Director of Field meet monthly with caseworkers and supervisors to promote leadership development and maintain a pulse on what is working well and any concerns/worries in the regions.
- **Management**
  - The CPS Director of Field, CPS Director of Conservatorship, CPS Deputy Associate Commissioner, and CPS Associate Commissioner continue to evaluate program structure and discuss potential programmatic alignment and a structure of support and oversight as the agency moves to Community Based Care to ensure effective communication and strategic goals are met within programs.
- **Support**
  - CPS has added six (6) Mentor Program Specialists (formerly Field Training Supervisors). These six (6) specialists transitioned to CPS from the Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE), and there were also two (2) Mentor Program Specialists that were hired. This has given the CPS program eight (8) total support mentoring positions to help with development and retention. Since having the staff in place, the following has occurred:
    - The Mentor Handbook has been revised and replaced with a Mentoring Resource Guide.
    - Staff have worked diligently to ensure all protégés are paired with a mentor during their first few weeks of training.

- Mentors have been provided with more support and recognition, to include additional training, individualized CPS mentor badges, and the development of a lead mentor program.
  - CPS hired seven (7) Quality Assurance Specialists and two (2) Compliance Specialists to support field staff in meeting and maintaining compliance with Foster Care Litigation Remedial Orders.
  - The Master CVS and FBSS teams continue to support the state in areas where caseloads and/or turnover are high. The teams also provide support to regions transitioning to Community Based Care.
- **Training**
- CPS has added training to better support staff when working with youth.

**APS Program has implemented the following initiatives:**

- **Management**
- Continue to provide one-time merits to meritorious staff through ACL grant funds in each quarter of FY 2022.
- **Support**
- APS continues to deal with the ever-changing global pandemic and surges in variants and provides Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to APS field staff upon request.
  - Continue use of lapsed salary dollars to hire frontline and supporting staff across the state. By utilizing these funds, APS can “hire ahead” and adjust hiring as needed to respond to current and anticipated turnover.
  - Created and filled three (3) pilot exploitation (EXPL) units using ACL grant funds. These units include one (1) supervisor II, six (6) APS caseworker Vs, one (1) administrative technician II, and one (1) evidence driven investigation subject matter expert (EDI SME).
    - These three (3) units work closely with local District Attorney offices and law enforcement and perform advanced financial exploitation investigations.
    - These three (3) units relieve other caseworkers of these cumbersome and lengthy investigations, allowing them to focus on investigations and service delivery in non-exploitation cases.
    - APS will look to create additional specialized units in the coming fiscal year to address increasingly complex client needs.
- **Training**
- Completed redesign of new worker training. The new “Training While Working” model is designed to be field-based and competency focused, to ensure that new workers are contributing to overall workload sooner.
    - Using grant funds from the Administration for Community Living (ACL), APS has created and filled 17 temporary grant-funded training supervisor positions to oversee and implement the new training program.

- As part of the redesign, APS will make any needed adjustments to its caseworker mentor program.
- Statewide rollout of the new training program is scheduled for 9/01/2023.
- Scheduled a follow up presentation and meeting with the Texas Education Agency to explore the concept of creating an internship model in East Texas with the Human Services Career and Technical Education program of study. Ongoing engagement with TEA is planned for FY 2023 as part of APS' efforts to develop a talent pipeline.

## **OTHER DFPS PROGRAM INITIATIVES**

### **Worker Safety Support**

DFPS Worker Safety Support team, established by the 84th legislature, provides customized coordination, process guidance, resource connections, and problem-solving to staff and managers in threat, assault, or aggressive situations so staff can focus on reducing stress and managing case priorities.

#### **○ Support**

- Participate in Ad hoc consultations and safety staffings on cases. Consultations plan for the possibility of a potential safety threats by creating a plan that puts preventative measures in place prior to an incident occurring.
- Enhance Incident Support for safety threats to staff including coordinating with HHSC for security guards, providing referrals to the employee assistance program, DFPS peer support program and creating personal safety plans and online safety reviews.
- Connect staff with human resources specialist when the incident involves internal staff safety issues.
- Refer staff to vendors that DFPS contracts with for additional security needs for children without placement.
- Provide staff that qualify as property owners the opportunity to restrict public access to their home address information to increase personal safety.

#### **○ Training**

- Administer and provide training on the SafeSignal application. SafeSignal is an easy to use mobile app and monitoring system designed to get first responders to staff quickly. The app allows staff to set a session which is monitored 24/7 by a live person. When staff need an emergency response, they hit the panic button or pull the tether or headphones signaling the monitoring center to send law enforcement to their location.
- Develop training and provide on the job consultation to staff about online security and protecting their information online. This includes removing information found on social media and data mining sites that make their information accessible to the public.
- Refer staff to vendors that DFPS contracts with for additional security needs for children without placement.
- Write policy that outlines safety process and protocols when worker safety incidents occur on the job.

- Trainings and Communications to build safety planning and situational awareness skills in staff, and safety support skills in management.
- DFPS continues to deliver in-person training to all new supervisors as part of the supervisor training curriculums conducted by the Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE), a one day *Protecting the Protectors* Training, and in-person, phone and webinar presentations to regional staff and management, and SafeSignal trainings.

The Human Resources Division will continue to monitor implementation of these initiatives and coordinate with programs to determine the impact of these efforts on turnover trends.

## HIRING AND FILL RATES

The DFPS Talent Acquisition Group (TAG) supports recruiting and hiring activities within SWI, CPI, CPS, and APS divisions. In addition to extensively recruiting through electronic means (LinkedIn, Handshake, Indeed, etc.), conducting monthly statewide hiring fairs with same day interviews, attending virtual and in-person job fairs in Texas and surrounding states, and through targeted program specific activities, TAG staff screen, interview, and hire the most qualified applicants from the current applicant pool to fill direct delivery program positions. TAG continues to resolve process questions, monitor screening services, and secure bilingual testing. In conjunction with Human Resources (HR) staff, TAG also provides policy interpretation for hiring related questions, as well as on-boarding for new employees in the Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS).

In FY 2022, TAG, along with hiring managers, filled 3,176 positions within SWI, CPI, CPS, and APS. More hired in FY 2022 than in any other fiscal year.

**Table 1: TAG Hires and Percent Increase per Fiscal Year**

Fiscal Year	TAG Hires	Percent Increase from Prior Year
2022	3,146	14.6%
2021	2,746	10.7%
2020	2,481	9.4%
2019	2,268	20.0%
2018	1,890	--

Note: In FY 2022, 22,870 applicants requested an interview.

Over the last 12-month period, TAG has experienced a considerable uptick in applicants denying interview requests, not showing up for the first day of work after being selected and hired and failing due diligence (references and background checks). Since September 2022, TAG has scheduled 8,936 interviews. Out of 8,936 interviews, 51.1 percent of applicants have either not responded to the invitation to interview, cancelled the interview, or no showed to the interview.



**Table 2: TAG Hiring Trends**

Month	Invited	No Response	Cancelled	No Show	Interviewed
Feb '23	1,695	29%	17%	9%	45%
Jan '23	1,738	22%	16%	9%	52%
Dec '22	1,367	19%	19%	8%	53%
Nov '22	1,169	22%	18%	9%	52%
Oct '22	1,421	19%	19%	10%	51%
Sep '22	1,546	27%	21%	9%	43%

Since the beginning of FY 2023, TAG has had a total of 1,032 applicants either decline the position or not make it through the background check process. The top reasons provided by applicants for declining are other employment and higher salary offered elsewhere. Most applicants who fail due diligence do so because of issues with references. These include negative references, falsified references, and unable to provide references.

The agency monitors the percentage of filled positions in comparison to the positions available to fill within each program, commonly referred to as fill rates, to evaluate the need for additional resources or to make adjustments to hiring strategies to prevent unnecessary delays in hiring. The number of filled Full time employees (FTE'S) is an indicator of the health of the program because too many vacancies can lead to higher caseloads, an increase in turnover, and the potential for services to families to be less effective. The direct-delivery hiring model implemented during FY 2016 has proven to be effective in maintaining and in some cases, improving caseworker fill-rates by reducing the time it takes to fill a vacated position.

**Table 3: Q2 of FY 2023 Fill Rates**

Program	Fill Rate
SWI	~92%
CPI	~89%
CPS	~91%
APS	~90%

TAG staff have and will continue to aggressively recruit and fill positions with the most qualified applicants as quickly as possible to address increased vacancies.

## **STATE AUDITOR’S OFFICE (SAO) EXIT SURVEY**

At the time of an employee’s voluntary separation from the agency, the SAO sends an invitation to the former employee’s mailing address that contains details on completing the online exit survey. This voluntary survey allows recently separated employees to provide feedback that may be used by state agencies to understand the reasons staff separate and to use those insights to improve employee retention. The FY 2022 SAO survey response rate was 17.6 percent. Data on which program participants belong to must be self-reported and is inconsistent; therefore, the available data are reported for DFPS as a whole.

### **Findings and Analysis**

According to the SAO’s findings, better pay/benefits, retirement, and poor working conditions/environment are among the top reasons former employees report for leaving DFPS. The broad nature of the reason types provided in the SAO survey make it difficult to pinpoint the real issue being pointed out by those that participate. DFPS continues to enhance the selection of supervisors and managers through the introduction of supervisor assessments and cross-program supervisory hiring boards. In addition, the agency launched a “360 Degree Assessment”, with a focus on helping managers and supervisors identify both strengths and weaknesses while working towards increased competence and effectiveness.

## **DFPS EXIT SURVEY**

To build on the foundation of the SAO exit survey and to gain additional insights into the reasons staff leave the agency, DFPS entered into a partnership with the Institute for Organizational Excellence at The University of Texas at Austin to survey both voluntary and involuntary separations from the agency. The resulting survey is a custom instrument that collects responses online, over the phone, and by mail to maximize response rates. The tool includes more specific questions about the reasons for leaving the agency in order to provide more actionable feedback from former employees.

DFPS Human Resources Division receives quarterly reports that contain a summary of responses and comments to help management make needed changes and assist DFPS in identifying ways to reduce employee turnover and improve the work environment.

**Table 4: Exit Survey Comparison**

Criteria	SAO Exit Survey FY 2022	DFPS Exit Survey Q1 FY 2023 Voluntary	DFPS Exit Survey Q1 FY 2023 Involuntary
Response Rate	17.6%	32.8%	4.9%
Outreach	At the time of a voluntary separation, the SAO sends an invitation to the former employee’s mailing address that contains details on completing the online exit survey.	Former employees that separate voluntarily receive the DFPS survey questionnaire via email, telephone call, and letter.	Former employees that separate involuntarily receive the DFPS survey questionnaire via email and letter.
Top Reasons for Leaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better pay/benefits</li> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• Poor working conditions/environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work related stress</li> <li>• Lack of communication</li> <li>• Accepted another job</li> <li>• Issues with supervisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFPS did not help fulfill their career goals</li> <li>• Management didn’t encourage their feedback and suggestions</li> <li>• Staff didn’t feel supported by their supervisor</li> <li>• Staff didn’t feel valued as a member of the team</li> </ul>

Separation of Voluntary vs. Involuntary responses is not available for SAO Exit Surveys

## **SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (SEE)**

The Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) is a biannual survey required by the Texas Legislature for Texas state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to help leaders and managers understand how their employees feel about their work, their workplace, and their employers. The FY 2022 SEE was open to staff from February 28 – April 29. SEE results were sent to DFPS divisions in June 2022.

- Of the 12,368 employees invited to take the survey, 5,787 responded for a response rate of 46.8 percent.
- The overall agency score is 371. Scores above 350 are desirable and when scores dip below 300, there should be cause for concern. Scores above 400 are the product of a highly engaged workforce.

### **Levels of Engagement:**

The 2022 DFPS Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE), which had a 46.8 percent response rate, indicated the following employee engagement levels:

- 24 percent of employees are highly engaged.
- 25 percent are engaged.
- 38 percent are moderately engaged.
- 14 percent are disengaged.

Highly engaged employees are willing to go above and beyond in their employment. Engaged employees are more present in the workplace and show an effort to help. Moderately engaged employees are physically present but put minimal effort towards accomplishing the job. Disengaged employees are disinterested in their jobs and may be actively working against their coworkers. For comparison purposes, according to nationwide polling data, about 30 percent of employees are highly engaged or engaged, 50 percent are moderately engaged, and 20 percent are disengaged.

The SEE results include descriptions of the agency's strengths and areas of concern. The scoring is based on a scale of 100 to 500. Scores typically range from 300 to 400 with a score of 350 serving as a "tipping point" between positive and negative perceptions. For FY 2022 the DFPS SEE results reported the following strengths and weaknesses:

### Areas of Strength

- **Supervision Score: 409** - The supervision construct captures employees' perceptions of the nature of supervisory relationships within the organization. Higher scores suggest that employees view their supervisors as fair, helpful, and critical to the flow of work.
- **Information Systems Score: 404** - The information systems construct captures employees' perceptions of whether computer and communication systems provide accessible, accurate, and clear information. The higher the score, the more likely it is that employees view the availability and utility of information very positively.
- **Workgroup Score: 397** - The workgroup construct captures employees' perceptions of the people they work with daily and their effectiveness. Higher scores suggest that employees view their workgroup as effective, cohesive, and open to the opinions of all members.

### Areas of Concern

- **Pay Score: 222** - The pay construct captures employees' perceptions about how well the compensation package offered by the organization holds up when compared to similar jobs in other organizations. Lower scores suggest that pay is a central concern or reason for discontent and is not comparable to similar organizations.
- **Job Satisfaction Score: 337** - The job satisfaction construct captures employees' perceptions about the overall work situation and ability to maintain work-life balance. Lower scores suggest that employees feel overworked, unable to perform at their best and unhappy with their work.
- **Internal Communication Score: 370** - The internal communication construct captures employees' perceptions of whether communication in the organization is reasonable, candid, and helpful. Lower scores suggest that employees feel information does not arrive in a timely fashion and is difficult to find.

DFPS has participated in the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) for many years. Accordingly, we have the benefit of trend data from these many past surveys. Based on the survey data, we have identified issues that justify intervention. For example, we have seen that participation rates and DFPS's response rates have fallen over the past several iterations of the survey. Survey research teaches that this is a strong indicator of poor employee engagement. From the survey responses, one third of the employees who have participated expressed

concern that leadership would not do anything with their input. Additionally, 23.3 percent feel that upper management should communicate better.

To address the concerning data, the agency began working with the Institute for Organizational Excellence (IOE). This group within UT Austin conducts the SEE and is experienced in serving as an external, objective, and knowledgeable consultant for employee engagement strategies and has proposed an engagement process for DFPS. In summary, the goal of the proposed work is to increase employee engagement by implementing various strategies to improve employee retention, increase leadership accountability at the local level, promote a positive overall organizational culture, and sustain the agency by it being viewed as an employer of choice.

These top five retention strategies were derived from SEE data and tailored to our organization's needs.

1. Promote employee work-life balance: A well-balanced employee is a productive employee. Start by asking workers what they need – flextime, telecommuting, health initiatives – and brainstorm ways to incorporate them. Foster creativity by encouraging employees to express their outside interests through side projects. Considering offering more personal development opportunities and incentives for participation.
2. Allow opportunities for feedback on supervisor performance: Great leaders are open to feedback, and opportunities should be made for employees to assess their supervisor's performance. Create avenues for open and honest communication, where employees feel comfortable giving feedback to help increase their supervisor's effectiveness and identify areas that need development. Consider a 360 Degree evaluation approach to cover all perspectives.
3. Give employees room to do their best work: Empower employees by granting sufficient authority to allow them to solve problems with their unique skill sets and provide positive feedback and encouragement. Boost employee confidence with challenging tasks and promote cross-learning so employees benefit from each other's knowledge. Assess skills and assign training if necessary to bridge skill gaps.
4. Encourage open and honest communication: An effective work environment has open communication up, down, and across the organization. Start by establishing an open-door policy so employees feel comfortable and safe expressing their ideas. Critiques of work should be constructive, and mistakes should be viewed as learning opportunities when applicable. Bridge communication gaps through team-building exercises.
5. Assign reasonable workloads: Establishing a reasonable workload is key to setting your team up for success. Encourage employees to set priorities and tasks according to their importance and urgency. Ensure communication is direct and concise so it doesn't interfere with deadlines and targets being met. Allow room and flexibility for different work styles and be ready to offer guidance as needed.

While the IOE advanced the use of the SEE with all participating local areas through facilitating communication regarding the survey, providing a pathway for action, gathering focus group data, and assisting in generating next step plans, the enacting of proposed action steps needs to come from the local area leadership. Employees expressed a desire to know that they are being heard and that leadership truly cares about their well-being. In turn, employees need to actively participate in the process of organizational improvement. Therefore, local engagement actions must continue even when it is difficult to find the “bandwidth” to build the organization's capacity in this fashion.

Finally, the next iteration and the data collected from the SEE should continue to provide direction as to areas in need of additional support. A multifaceted communication plan to roll out the survey and promote participation is needed. Employees need to understand that their responses from the last iteration of the SEE were heard by leadership and were the focus in decision making and organizational actions. Executive communication as to the importance of the workforce and an understanding of the level of stress placed on the agency—especially in children without placement and the societal stresses of working during a pandemic—need to be sincerely and frequently communicated.

## HUMAN RESOURCE DIVISION

House Bill 5, 85<sup>th</sup> Regular Session, 2017, required DFPS to consolidate workforce management functions and adopted additional critical functions to better support the agency's employees. In 2017, DFPS created the Human Resources Division, which consists of the Human Resources Administration Office, Talent Acquisition Group, Employee Relations Group, Employee Wellness, Human Resource Records and Reporting, Position Classification, Workers Compensation, Employee and Applicant Criminal Background Checks, Organizational and Leadership Development, and Veteran's Liaison functions under one division. In 2019 the Human Resources Division added a pilot FMLA Group to help support regional leadership manage and process the workload associated with implementing FMLA regulations. The Human Resources Division uses a "store front" model by emphasizing accountability through consistency, communication, outreach, and coordination with staff at all levels of the agency. In keeping with the intent of Rider 8, the Human Resources Division coordinates multiple targeted HR initiatives which support reducing turnover and aiding in retention including:

- Organizational and Leadership Development - the Human Resources Division provides ad-hoc training for supervisors related to HR and leadership topics upon request, and publishes communications targeted toward all DFPS supervisors related to leadership and other HR topics.
  - "HR Matters" Newsletter – provides supervisors and leadership in DFPS with a regular Human Resources (HR) communication containing relevant and timely information intended to bring consistency to HR operation within each level of the organization.
  - "HR Bulletin" – provides supervisors and leadership with critical and time sensitive information related to HR policies and procedures.
- HR Employee Relations Group – Provides guidance & consultation regarding HR policy on all HR-related inquiries, engages with management on all employee disciplinary and personnel actions, and processes moonlighting requests, employee/dependent death claims, and guidance on payroll actions
  - "HR After-Hours" Program - provides all employees with direct HR support one evening per week to assist in addressing the needs of our 24-hour workforce.
- Independent Human Resources Manual – HR coordinates with representatives from all DFPS departments and programs to continuously improve the Human Resources Policy Manual in order to address DFPS's unique needs.
- Management Reviews - When HR or Program Management identifies employee-related concerns, HR staff may travel to the location and interview staff to assess any underlying or ongoing concerns. A report of findings and recommendations is submitted to the appropriate executive management for consideration and appropriate action.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) – When HR or Program Management identifies concerns HR staff, trained in alternative dispute resolution, are available to conduct employment mediation, or a

facilitated conversation intended to settle disputes outside of the formal complaint process with the help of an impartial third party.

- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Group - In order to help employees and supervisors focus on the agencies mission in 2019, the HR office partnered with the CPI Division to develop a pilot FMLA group. This group shifts the burden of monitoring and tracking the federal FMLA requirements to the Human Resources Division and frees first level supervisors of the burdens of FMLA allowing them to focus on protecting Texans. In 2021 the initiative grew to include the majority of CPS regional staff. In 2023 the initiative grew to include all the Statewide Intake program's staff.
- Employee Wellness, Benefits, and Activities - The DFPS wellness program coordinates wellness activities and events to promote a healthy workforce. The wellness program manages the agency EAP contract and partners with wellness vendors under the Employees Retirement System to provide other health and wellness.
- Veteran's Liaison - The veteran's liaison is focused on the recruitment and retention of veterans to meet the Governor's benchmarks related to veteran's employment. DFPS partners with multiple transition services to implement the "Service Member Recruiting, Retention, and Training" (SMRRT) internship program. The Veteran's Liaison also assists with veteran direct hires. DFPS was a national finalist for the Office of the Secretary of Defense's, Employers of State Guard and Reserve Freedom Award for going beyond workplace requirements to encourage a culture of support of Guard and Reserve members. Additionally, The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of Texas selected DFPS as the Large Employer of the Year for calendar year 2021.
- Workers Compensation Program – Workers' compensation specialist is the link between DFPS employees and the State office of Risk Management's workers' compensation program. Additionally, when employees are released with temporary restrictions, the Return-to-Work program provides a way for employees to return to work with modified duties, which provides Programs with already-trained employees that can perform their duties. This functional area also manages the Hired Non-Owned Automobile Insurance program that provides protection for employees (and the agency) who have had an automobile accident while furthering agency business and are deemed at fault. These three programs provide support to our employees by adding protections for work related injuries or illness which in turn assists to improve employee morale and retention.
- Employee Classification and Compensation Management – HR Classification Specialist coordinate with management to evaluate and ensure compliance with the State Position Classification Act. This ensures that staff are properly classified and compensated for the critical work that they perform to promote safe and healthy families and protect children and vulnerable adults. In addition, HR Classifications provides support to leadership to establish new positions in accordance with the State Position Classification Act in response to the M.D. v Abbott Expert Panel recommendations. Furthermore, HR Classifications has provided HR related support and guidance to region 1 leadership to assist with the transition to the Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) as part of the Community-Based Care model directed by Senate Bill 11, 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.
- Hiring and Promotion Support - This functional area supports program management by centralizing the processing of Career Track Promotions, Management Directed Transfers, Hire Ahead, and Employee Initiated Transfers. This is an exception to the traditional method of filling vacancies and gives DFPS programs flexibility for staffing needs. This program helps to reduce gaps in services when a vacancy occurs, and ensures critical positions are filled quickly. Children and vulnerable adults are better protected as caseworkers are trained and ready to assume a caseload. This also ensures coverage and balances the supervisor/worker ratio and helps avoid high caseloads which can lead to negative impact

on casework equality. The goal of the program is to have a positive impact to field supervisors by allowing them to focus on program specific needs.

- Employee and Applicant Criminal Background Checks - This functional area supports Criminal Background Checks (CBC) for all current DFPS employees and applicants; and assists with technical questions relating to interns, contractors, volunteers. HR assess the potential risks and liabilities related to the job's requirements and determines if any criminal offense is in substantial conflict with the agency's mission, vision, and values in accordance with US-EEOC and FBI regulations. An unsatisfactory hire can negatively impact the agency in wasted resources, damage agency's reputation, and lower morale. By conducting an individualized assessment as part of the screening process, it not only ensures a safe and secure work environment for employees by reducing legal liability for negligent hiring, but also helps to protect the clients we serve.
- Employee Records Management – The HR Records' functional area ensures proper documentation and record keeping for all employee's HR records. This centralized function retains the official record of an employee's information from hire to separation. These records are kept on file to support actions such as promotions, demotions, and disciplinary actions. The Records function is a vital part of the agency, as it allows the agency to gather precise data in respect to employees' individual transfers and assesses the rate of turnover. HR records are also critical to a manager in various decision-making situations.

## **Supervisor Assessments**

The primary goal of the Agency Supervisor Assessment Process is to enhance the current CPI and CPS supervisor screening process to ensure the most qualified staff are selected to fill these critical supervisor positions in our agency. Testing staff will ensure the program selects those who are best prepared and are able to demonstrate their skills and abilities that are required to operate at the supervisor level. Below are several dates and key finding for the Supervisor Assessment process:

- Started administering for CPI and CPS supervisor candidates in May 2017.
- Proctored monthly in each of 15 locations around the state.
- As of March 2023, 2,095 employees completed the supervisor exam with a 92 percent pass rate.
  - 14 percent of CPI and CPS workers with 18-month length of service (LOS) have taken the exam.
  - Statewide, 13 percent of CPI and CPS workers with 18 months length of service passed the exam.
  - The average score of all CPI and CPS test attempts is 85.
- Minimal cost impact as administration, proctor duties, and logistics are absorbed by current HR and operations staff.
- Assessments began for SWI and APS supervisors in the summer of 2018.
  - SWI has 19 assessments completed with an average score of 72.
  - APS has 30 assessments completed with an average score of 77.

## **Cross Program Hiring Boards**

The purpose of Cross Program Hiring Boards is to increase rigor and objectivity in the interview and selection process of SWI, CPI, CPS, and APS supervisor applicants. The new process will provide more consistency in the hiring of supervisors across all programs. Since the assessment will be screening more of the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed for each position, the focus of the interview process will be around professional fit and



leadership qualities of the candidates. Below are a few dates and key findings regarding the Cross Program Hiring Boards process:

- Requirement for the revised hiring board process began November 1, 2017, for SWI, CPI, CPS, and APS.
- Hiring boards are made up of cross program representation, including hiring specialists, to ensure a diverse evaluation of the candidates.
- Monitoring of the process is ongoing and board information is collected to verify adherence to the process. As of February 28, 2023, 1,030 hiring boards have been conducted.
- The vendor that processes supervisor selections ensure that hiring managers provide the assessment results prior to approving the offer.

## APPENDIX

### Acronym List

ACL	Administration for Community Living
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
APS	Adult Protective Services
BSD	Basic Skills Development
CAPPS	Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System
CBC	Pg. 5: Community Based Care Pg. 17: Criminal Background Checks
CLOE	Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence
CPI	Child Protective Investigations
CPS	Child Protective Services
CVS	Conservatorship
DAV	Disabled American Veterans
DCI	Daycare Investigations
DFPS	Department of Family & Protective Services
EDI SME	Evidence Driven Investigation Subject Matter Expert
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
FAD	Foster/Adoption Home Development
FBSS	Family-Based Safety Services
FMLA	Family and Medical Leave Act
FTE	Full Time Employee
FY	Fiscal Year
HR	Human Resources
HRMP	Human Resource Management Plan
INV	Investigations
IOE	Institute for Organizational Excellence
KIN	Kinship Care
LAM	Leadership Advanced Management
LOS	Length of Service
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RCCI	Residential Child Care Investigations
RCI	Residential Child Investigations
SAO	State Auditor's Office
SB 1	Senate Bill 1
SEE	Survey of Employee Engagement
SI	Special Investigators
SMRRT	Service Member Recruiting, Retention, and Training
SO	State Office

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SSCC	Single Source Continuum Contractor
SWI	Statewide Intake
TAG	Talent Acquisition Group
TEA	Texas Education Agency
UT	University of Texas
YTD	Year to Date