

House Bill 1, Rider 9
84th Legislature, Regular Session
Human Resources Management Plan

FY 2016 - FY 2017

October 19, 2017



TEXAS

Department of Family
and Protective Services

DFPS MISSION

The mission of The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by involving clients, families, and communities.

DFPS VISION

The Department of Family and Protective Services:

- Is recognized for innovative, effective services.
- Builds strong, effective partnerships with clients, communities, and state leaders.
- Provides effective leadership that is accountable for its actions and communicates openly with clients and stakeholders.
- Supports staff who are highly motivated, diverse, ethical, well trained, and professional.

DFPS VALUES

At The Department of Family and Protective Services:

- We protect the unprotected.
- We involve clients, families and communities in decision-making.
- We provide quality services.
- We are innovative and strive for excellence.
- We are ethical and accountable.
- We promote diversity.
- We value our staff.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

House Bill 1 (H.B. 1), Rider 9, of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015 directs the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop a Human Resources Management Plan (HRMP) detailing strategic initiatives designed to improve employee morale and retention as well as reduce employee turnover through better management. H.B. 1 also requires DFPS to report employee turnover rates by job category for the preceding 12 months to the Senate Finance Committee, the House Committee on Appropriations, the Legislative Budget Board, and the Governor on a semi-annual basis.

This report covers agency progress from Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 to FY 2017 and describes FY 2018 strategies. This will be the final update to include data on APS-PI and CCL regulatory staff due to the transfer of those programs to HHSC effective September 1st 2017 per Senate Bills 11 (85R) 200 (84R), and House Bill 5 (85R). In addition future reports will reflect structural changes to investigations and ongoing services.

While changes to the reporting window for Rider 9 limit the amount of new data available, this update provides the most recent available information on employee concerns about their jobs, feedback on improving the agency, and empirical data reflecting changes occurring within the agency's workforce. An update on the additional funding (Critical Needs) provided to DFPS to stabilize Child Protective Services (CPS) by immediately hiring additional CPS caseworkers and increasing pay for certain CPS direct delivery staff in FY 2017 is provided in [Appendix A](#).

The report begins with updated information on turnover and retention, SAO and SEE Survey data, and efforts on worker safety, recruitment, and retention. Updates continue by focusing on FY18 strategies, and are organized by status to indicate which are in progress, completed, or are ongoing. Ongoing strategies are grouped

by one of two core agency objectives to address employee concerns with the working environment or compensation. The agency's goal is to address these concerns to improve employee job satisfaction, reduce agency turnover, and increase the number of tenured workers to better serve clients and families. Going forward, DFPS will work toward restructuring the evaluation of workforce related data with an emphasis on outcomes to better assist DFPS executive leadership in focusing on activities that stabilize the workforce.

The activities and initiatives described in the report are evidence of the full commitment of the agency's executive leadership to ensuring that the workforce is capable of providing exceptional services to Texans in need. While many of the activities and initiatives are relatively new and the full benefits have yet to be realized, initial data and feedback from employees support the agency's confidence in the positive impact of these efforts. Leadership at DFPS will continue to closely examine the trends in our workforce data across the agency to ensure that we see dividends from the resources provided to us.

TURNOVER AND RETENTION FINDINGS

Details on turnover and retention findings are provided in [Appendix B](#). Details on agency and program tenure are provided in [Appendix C](#).

The Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) is one of Texas's largest governmental agencies, with nearly 12,000 employees. According to the Texas State Auditor's Office Report No. 17-704, Classified Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2016, the statewide turnover rate was 17.6 percent for all state agencies. DFPS falls generally in line with the statewide turnover rate.

DFPS Turnover and Retention Findings

- DFPS has reported a 15.9 percent decrease in turnover at the agency-level (FY 2016 19.3% to FY 2017 16.2%)

- On average for FY 2017, for all DFPS Employees, roughly 42 percent have five or more years of tenure.

CPS Turnover and Retention Findings

- FY 2017 turnover (18.4%) is exceeding the H.B.1 performance measure for worker turnover of 25.5 percent.
- FY 2017 YTD turnover for CPS workers has:
 - Decreased 24.3 percent since FY 2016 for INV caseworkers, (FY 2016 32.9% to FY 2017 24.9%).
 - Decreased 26.9 percent since FY 2016 for CVS caseworkers, (FY 2016 22.6% to FY 2017 16.5%);
 - Decreased 36 percent since FY 2016 for FBSS caseworkers, (FY 2016 25.0% to FY 2017 16.0%);
- FY 2017 turnover for CPS supervisors has decreased 31.8 percent (FY 2016 10.4% to FY 2017 7.1%), and 23.4 percent (FY 2016 20.4% to FY 2017 15.7%) for CPS program as a whole.
- On average for FY 2017, for INV, CVS, and FBSS, roughly 50 percent of the workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

APS Turnover and Retention Findings

- FY 2017 turnover (25.9%) is above the H.B.1 performance measure for fiscal year 2017 APS caseworker turnover of 20 percent.
- FY 2017 turnover for APS workers (25.9) has increased 22.1 percent since FY 2016 (21.20%).
- FY 2017 turnover for APS supervisors has decreased 62.3 percent (FY 2016 7.2% to FY 2017 2.7%) and increased 11.6 percent (FY 2016 18.7% to FY 2017 20.8%) for the APS program as a whole.
- On average for FY 2017, roughly 65 percent of APS In-Home workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

Licensing Turnover and Retention Findings

- DCL and RCCL do not have H.B. 1 caseworker turnover targets.
- FY 2017 turnover for Licensing workers has:
 - Increased 2.1 percent since FY 2016 for DCL caseworkers (FY 2016 20.2% to FY 2017 20.6%).
 - Increased 41.8 percent since FY 2016 for RCCL caseworkers (FY 2016 14.1% to FY 2017 19.9%).
- FY 2017 turnover for DCCL supervisors has decreased 49.5 percent (FY 2016 13% to FY 2017 6.6%) and 3.2 percent for RCCL supervisors (FY 2016 6.6% to FY 2017 6.3%).
- FY 2017 turnover for DCCL program has increased 2.2 percent (FY 2016 17.3 to FY 2017 17.7%) and increased 46.3 percent (FY 2016 11.4% to FY 2017 16.6%) for RCCL program.
- On average for FY 2017, roughly 66 percent of DCCL and roughly 67 percent of CCL workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

SWI Turnover and Retention Findings

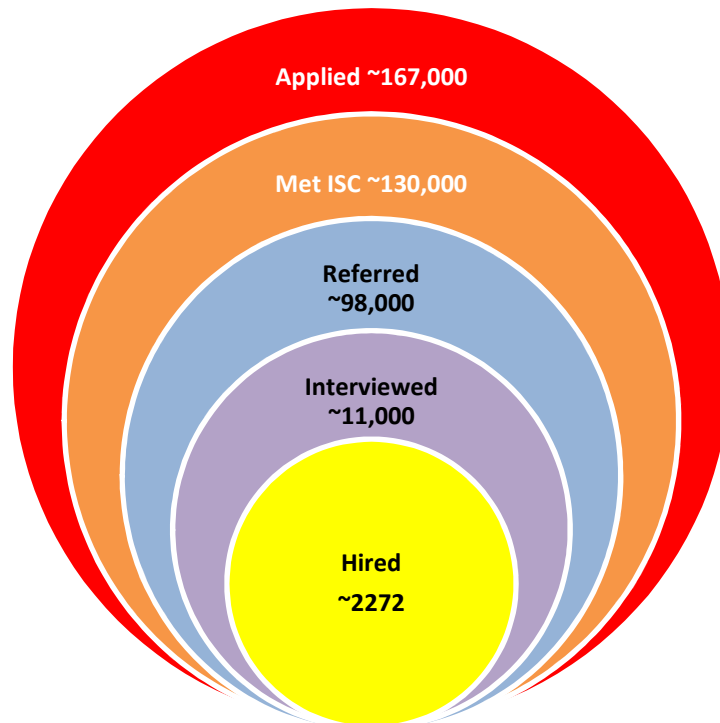
- SWI does not have H.B. 1 caseworker turnover targets.
- FY 2017 turnover for SWI workers has decreased 18 percent since FY 2016 (FY 2016 19.4% to FY 2017 15.9%).
- FY 2017 turnover for SWI supervisors has increased 4.3 percent (FY 2016 10.9% to FY 2017 11.3%) and decreased 12.9 percent (FY 2016 16.9% to FY 2017 14.7%) for SWI program as a whole.
- On average for FY 2017, roughly 73 percent of SWI workers have 2 or more years of tenure.

Hiring and Fill Rates

The Talent Acquisition Group (TAG) supports recruiting and hiring activities within the programs. In addition to participating in active and passive recruitment

activities, TAG processes applications by screening, interviewing, and hiring applicants to fill direct delivery program positions. TAG also supports quality control services related to application processing and provides technical support related to DFPS HR policy interpretation and on-boarding new employees in the Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS.)

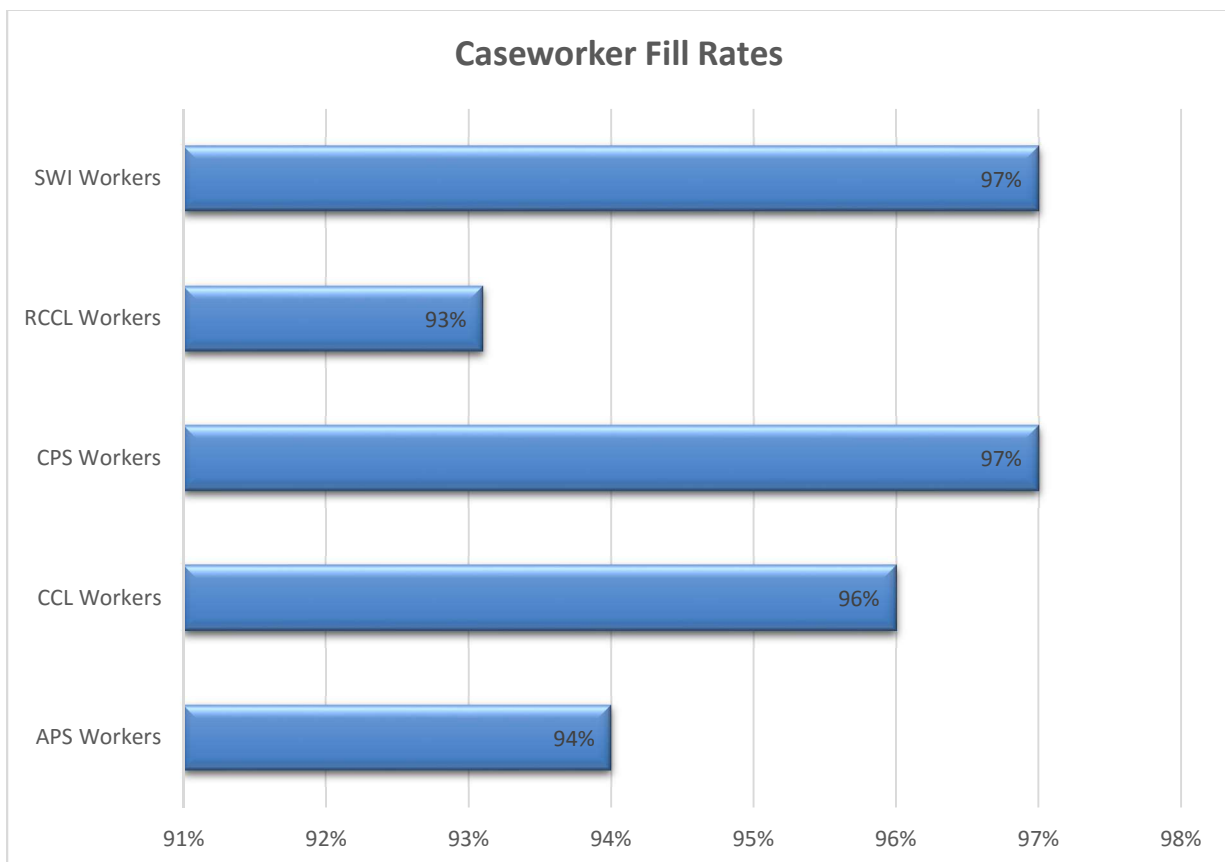
FIGURE 1: FY 2017 DFPS HIRING FUNNEL



As indicated in Figure 1 above, TAG received over 167,000 direct-delivery applications by the end of fiscal year 2017. Roughly 130,000 (78%) met the initial screening criteria (ISC). Of those, an estimated 98,000 (58.6%) also completed the required screening assessment for competency and were subsequently moved forward in the hiring consideration process. An estimated 11,000 applicants were interviewed and approximately 2,272 were hired into available vacant positions. Some applicants may have been interviewed multiple times depending on the type of position for which the candidate was being considered.

The agency monitors caseworker fill rates to evaluate the need for additional resources or a shift in hiring strategies to prevent unnecessary delays in filling positions. The number of filled FTE's is an indicator of the health of the programs because higher vacancies can lead to higher caseloads which can in turn degrade services to families. 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 required to complete the candidate assessment process.

FIGURE 2: FY 2017 Fill Rates



The fill rates at the end of fiscal year 2017 are reflected in Figure 2 above. As a result of the critical needs funding the agency received to hire additional CPS caseworkers and other staff, as well as the targeted salary increases for front line CPS staff, the fill rates in CPS have remained higher than historical averages. The other programs have been stable or made small gains in caseworker fill rates.

STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE (SAO) EXIT SURVEY

DFPS and Program SAO Employee Exit Survey Analysis

Employees voluntarily separating from DFPS employment are asked by the State Auditor's Office (SAO) to complete an exit survey of questions surrounding their decision to leave the agency. DFPS studies the results of the ongoing SAO employee exit surveys to identify and focus on the reasons employees separated from the agency. For FY 2015 and FY 2016 employees reported the same top three reasons for separating from the agency:

- Poor working conditions or environment (i.e., safety, work-related stress, and workload issues)
- Issues with my supervisor or issues with employees I supervise
- Better pay or benefits

In FY 2017 employees reported their primary reasons for separating from the agency as:

- Poor working conditions or environment (i.e., safety, work-related stress, and workload issues)
- Better pay or benefits
- Retirement

SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (SEE)

FY 2016 SEE Results

The Survey of Employee Engagement is a biannual survey required by Senate Bill 1563 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 survey is intended to help leadership in state agencies by providing information about workforce issues that affect service delivery, including performance, burnout, quality, retention, etc. The survey is an opportunity for agency leaders to garner substantive information regarding our workforce and engage in organizational improvement efforts.

Levels of Engagement:

According to FY 2016 DFPS Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) results, which had a 64.9 percent response rate, the following employee engagement levels were reported within DFPS:

- 19 percent of employees are highly engaged,
- 25 percent are engaged,
- 41 percent are moderately engaged and
- 15 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 out. 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 co-workers.

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 that typically range from 300 to 400 with a score of 350 serving as a “tipping point” between positive and negative perceptions. For FY 2016 the DFPS Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) results reported the following strengths and weaknesses:

Areas of Strength

- **Supervision Score: 398** - 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: 392** - The information systems construct captures employees' perceptions of whether computer and communication systems provide accessible, accurate, and clear information. This construct measures the degree to which employees view the availability and utility of information positively.
- **Workgroup Score: 390** - The workgroup construct captures employees' perceptions of the people they work with on a daily basis and how effective they are. This construct measures the degree to which employees view their workgroup as effective, cohesive and open to the opinions of all members.

Areas of Concern

- **Pay Score: 211** - 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: 334** - 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.

- **Benefits Score: 351** - The benefits construct captures employees' perceptions of how the benefits package compares to packages at similar organizations and how flexible it is. This construct measures the degree to which employees see health insurance and retirement benefits as competitive with similar jobs in the community.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS

Implementation of the following strategies are in progress at DFPS. Strategies are grouped by concerns with the working environment and concerns with compensation.

CONCERNS WITH WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Major themes from current and former employees included concerns with working conditions, and job satisfaction, which in combination create the working environment. Strategies to address these concerns are organized as follows: *recruiting and hiring, professional development, worker safety, and retention*. Substantial progress has been made on strategies across all areas of DFPS operations.

Recruiting and Hiring

DFPS continues to use marketing statements for direct-delivery job postings to promote the agency's unique competitive advantage by highlighting the benefits of state employment, such as qualifying for the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program, comprehensive health benefits, an employee discount program, 401(k) and 457 programs, and an actuarially sound state employee retirement system. To improve the working environment through the recruiting and hiring process, DFPS explored a number of strategies.

Develop Stage-Specific Caseworker Interview Questions

TAG hiring specialists continue to use a standardized set of generalized behavioral based caseworker interview questions. The goal of adding a subset of questions tailored to staff specializing in different stages of service is to augment existing interviewing practices and help hiring specialists and hiring managers determine candidate fit in a more practical and objective manner.

TAG and program representatives developed a proposed set of stage-specific questions near the end of the first quarter of fiscal year 2017. Implementation of the additional questions was postponed at the beginning of the second quarter due to the expedited hiring requirements related to critical needs positions. TAG was responsible to hire an additional 450 new caseworker positions from December 2016 to May 2017. The revised implementation date for integrating stage-specific interview questions is by the second quarter of fiscal year 2018.

Supervisor Selection Process

Supervisor Assessments

The agency implemented a competency assessment for prospective CPS Supervisors. The assessment tests a candidate's competency in areas such as casework, leadership, and human resources. A passing score will be required in order to be selected for a CPS Supervisor position. As of September 2017, 292 CPS supervisor assessment exams have been conducted and 206 have passed (~70% pass rate). DFPS is in the process of developing competency assessments for supervisors in Statewide Intake and Adult Protective Services. Implementation for these additional assessments is targeted for January 2018.

Cross-Program Hiring Boards

The purpose of cross-program hiring boards is to increase rigor and objectivity in the interview and selection process of CPS, APS, SWI and Investigations supervisor applicants. The new process provides more consistency in the hiring of supervisors across all programs.

Starting in November hiring managers will be required to convene a cross-program board of at least three individuals to interview supervisor candidates in CPS, APS, SWI & Investigations. Supervisor candidates will also be required to complete a writing sample to be considered for the job that will be de-identified before it is scored by members of the board.

Several resource materials will be available on the DFPS HR website. This includes an Interview Guide that will take hiring managers through the new process step-by-step and an Interview Evaluation Tool that board members will utilize to rank candidates. Moreover, some tip sheets were created to help hiring managers avoid common mistakes when interviewing and selecting candidates.

Professional Development

The DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE) provides professional development and training to all DFPS staff. CLOE ensures that agency workers and staff are prepared to perform their assigned tasks with ease and in such a way as to ensure their own safety as well as the safety and satisfaction of our clients and families. To improve the working environment through professional development, DFPS explored a number of strategies.

360 Leadership Assessments for Agency Leaders

The 360 Leadership Assessments provide information to participants allowing them to focus on job and leadership related skills. These skills are necessary to strengthen and enhance the professional development of managers and supervisors across the agency. DFPS piloted an evaluation of 64 Program Directors / Administrators using the 360 Leadership Assessments from October through December 2016. The assessments provided timely feedback of leadership influence on employee job satisfaction and working environment.

The 360 Leadership Assessments identify existing leadership strengths as well as opportunities to improve leadership gaps. DFPS will implement an agency wide 360 Leadership Assessment of approximately 1,600 agency leaders, currently scheduled to begin October 30, 2017 starting with Regions 1, 2, 9 & 10. 360° assessments will be deployed statewide by May 2018 and the second assessment should be received in 12-15 months, no later than August 2019.

Partner with Schools of Social Work to Improve Caseworker Training

DFPS initiated the creation of a Training Advisory Committee comprised of members from Universities that grant social work degrees. The goal was to establish a Committee that could make recommendations regarding emerging practices in the social work field that could be incorporated into CPS caseworker training curriculum. Additional benefits of the committee would be the establishment of a systems control measure to ensure the agency reviews and updates direct-delivery training as well as providing a quality control measure for direct-delivery training by leveraging social work subject matter experts in the review and development of state employee training.

A number of schools of Social Work participants were invited to sit on an advisory committee charged with reviewing CPS curriculum. DFPS shared the plan to gather the names of interested participants and have the first organizational meeting in February 2017. The project was put on hold in January 2017 due to agency issues with resource availability to lead the committee. DFPS still considers this activity valuable and will reengage stakeholders and partners when appropriate resources are identified.

Worker Safety

DFPS is committed to ensuring that our staff are able to effectively execute their assigned duties in an environment with the least amount of risk to their personal wellbeing as possible. Data obtained from exit surveys and anecdotal information received by executive staff indicate that safety is a staff concern. Updates on complete and ongoing worker safety strategies can be found later in this report.

Retention

To meet the needs of the clients and families served by DFPS the agency must retain the employees we recruit and train. Most DFPS employees work closely with the public and often the work can occur under a sense of urgency and in an emotionally charged environment. It is our goal to retain staff who have the necessary skills, experience, training, and resilience to succeed in this work environment. In order to be successful, staff must have access to high quality resources, tools, and training. It is paramount they have the support they need to effectively do their jobs in supporting children and vulnerable adults, while at the same time supporting their own well-being and safety.

C.A.R.E. Support Program

DFPS is committed to providing a peer support resource known as the Compassion, Assistance, Recovery and Encouragement, or C.A.R.E. Support Program. The goal of the support program is to ensure that agency staff knows that DFPS cares about their well-being and recovery and supports their family when a tragedy or crisis occurs, such as the death of a loved one, loss of their home due to a natural disaster, or health issues.

Peer support refers to a form of emotional, social, and practical support provided by a person who has knowledge from their own similar experience, or previous experience supporting others in a similar situation. The support could include activities such as phone calls, home visits, running errands, or coordinating communication to alleviate stress during the crisis. This program will be implemented in FY 2018 once processes, roles, and responsibilities have been fully established.

PEI Restructure

PEI merged with Texas Home Visiting, effective May 1, 2016. Based on observations and feedback regarding staff concerns for needed support, PEI has developed a plan for program reorganization to address employee workload concerns, strengthen the availability of staff support resources, increase accountability for managers, and improve the overall work environment in an effort to address high turnover in the division. PEI expects this re-organization to provide better supervision, development and support opportunities for the staff and a more reasonable division of workloads. PEI's goal is to decrease disruptions and frustrations with work assignments and increase job satisfaction, employee morale, and retention. PEI will implement this request upon approval of a pending grant in early FY 2018.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is a process that allows an organization to ensure employees are trained and developed to potentially replace staff in higher positions. Its goal is to build internal resources throughout the agency to ensure the agency retains critical or important knowledge when current tenured staff resign or retire.

Succession planning is not to be confused with replacement planning, which is more closely aligned to having a “back-up” when employees are out sick or on annual leave.

Sunset recommendation 2.10 proposed DFPS develop a Succession Plan to prepare for anticipated and unanticipated departures of key management staff, beginning with State Office leadership positions. Agency leadership was instructed to identify positions critical to DFPS operations and establish a comprehensive strategy for effectively preparing staff with the skills or knowledge to assume these roles and responsibilities. Critical vacant positions and positions at risk of becoming vacant in the near future have been identified, and DFPS is developing a process to provide training and development opportunities to employees suited to possibly compete for these positions in the future. Succession Planning will remain ongoing through FY 2017 and FY 2018.

CONCERNS WITH COMPENSATION

For many years DFPS staff have anecdotally identified salary as an area of significant concern. The evidence of their concerns is corroborated through data from the Survey of Employee Engagement and the State Auditor’s Office Exit Survey. In response to staff’s concerns the agency continues examine salary options. DFPS was directed by H.B. 1, Rider 41 of the 84th Legislature to evaluate the compensation effectiveness of merit salary increases, paying down overtime hours to 140 and mentoring stipends on improving recruitment and retention rates by region. The

study has been completed and results of that study are discussed in the completed strategies section. Additional strategies that focus on staff concerns with compensation are included in the completed and ongoing strategies sections of this report.

COMPLETED STRATEGIES

DFPS has completed, operationalized, or fully implemented the following agency strategies in FY 2016 or FY2017. Completed strategies are grouped by concerns with the working environment and concerns with compensation.

CONCERNS WITH WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Consolidate Workforce Management Functions

Sunset recommendation 1.1 advised DFPS should consolidate its existing workforce management functions under one operational unit and added additional critical functions to better support employees and systematically identify root causes of turnover. Completed in November 2015.

Hiring applicants holding less than a four-year degree as CPS caseworkers

CPS maintains a recruiting strategy that authorizes a combination of two years education with two years relevant work experience, or three years education combined with one year of relevant work experience to meet the four-year degree requirement in the initial selection criteria for entry-level caseworkers. As of the end of FY17, CPS hired 223 caseworkers who possessed less than a four-year degree. Twenty-three (23) of those hired over the past year have separated, indicating a retention rate of approximately 90%.

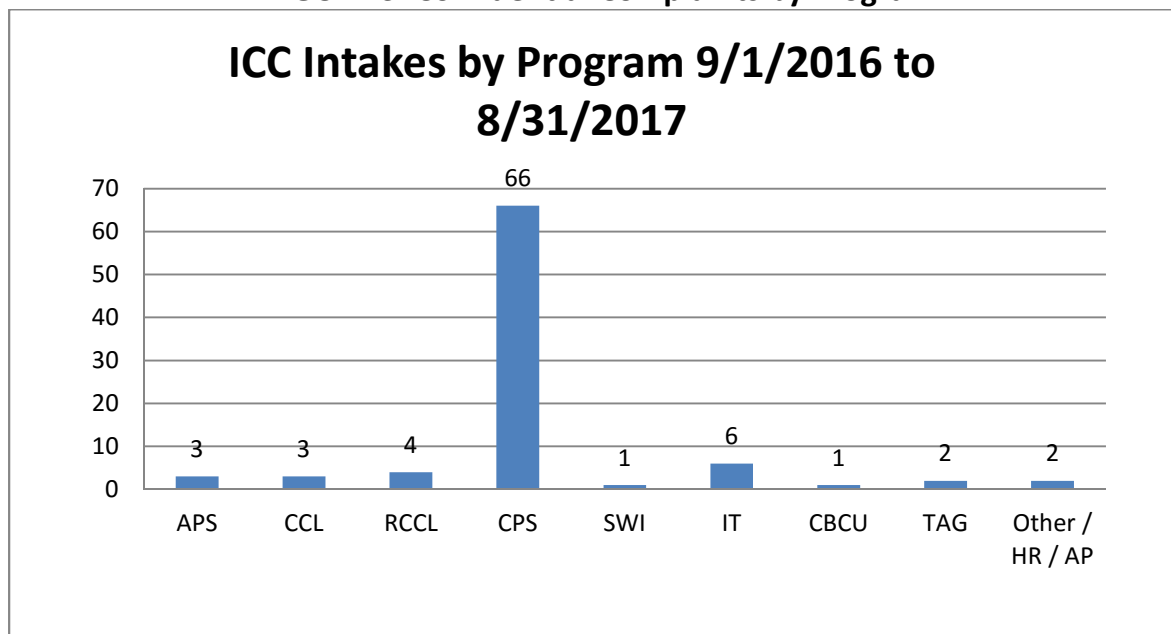
Create an Educational Pathway for non-Title IV-E Employees

DFPS worked to partner with Texas universities to develop an agency-specific degree plan for DFPS employees interested in continuing their education. DFPS implemented a partnership with Texas State University that created a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Science (BAAS) and a Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS) that are delivered online and offer course credit towards the degree plan for student job, life, and training experiences. Benefits include education designed to meet the needs of agency operations, expedited courses of study to reduce financial burdens for students, and learning delivery methods that meet the needs of DFPS' large mobile workforce.

Collecting Confidential Internal Complaints

Sunset recommendation 1.7 advised DFPS to implement a system for collecting confidential internal complaints from all staff and required that these complaints be reviewed by the Workforce Division under Sunset Recommendation 1.1. Complaints are kept confidential. The system was implemented in April 2016 and recent intake data is provided in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3: Confidential Complaints by Program



Develop Policy on Level Reminders

Within the agency, *Level Reminders* are a documentation process for developing and improving employee job performance or correcting employee work rule violations. Per Sunset recommendation 1.3, DFPS developed an agency-specific policy raising awareness on the proper use of level reminders to increase consistency in the application and monitoring. DFPS collaborated with HHSC HR to refine corrective action policies and training that guides managers on appropriate use of, and reporting responsibilities for positive performance levels. Training was developed and operationalized in January 2016. All agency levels (I-III) are tracked by DFPS HR.

Enhance Worker Safety Caution features in IMPACT

Worker safety cautions in IMPACT received enhancements that cause safety hazards (known or suspected) at intake to be highly visible on Intake Reports. These safety hazards generate a yellow caution symbol on staff worklists, prompting better assignment and advance planning for staff safety.

Automate Reference Checks for Vendor-Screened Positions

A process was developed and implemented that allowed the vendor to conduct reference checks using an automated system that solicits the candidate's references during the screening process through an online resource.

The new process didn't prove to be effective and was discontinued in the third quarter of fiscal year 2017. Applicants were reluctant to provide supervisor contact information while they were in the screening stage because they didn't know at that point if they were competitive. The candidates perceived this as an unnecessary risk with their current employer.

The Talent Acquisition Group (TAG) also found little value in the new process. The contact information provided up front didn't yield useful results and staff ended up making follow up calls to have a conversation with current or former supervisors after high value candidates had been identified.

CPS Professional Development Training Model (CPD)

In January 2015, the agency gradually began to implement a restructured training, learning, and development model for new CPS caseworkers. This new Child Protective Services Professional Development Training Model (CPD) focuses on building caseworker competencies and includes classroom training, field based training (experiential learning), and mentoring. There is a customizable training plan for each new worker in their first nine months on the job and case assignability is based on their demonstration of competencies.

CPD's early exposure to field based training has proven effective with staff reporting they feel better prepared for their job and supervisors reporting staff are better prepared to manage their workload. With CPD, new caseworkers get a realistic understanding of their job responsibilities early in their tenure to ensure they are a good match for the job. CPD also helps to create a culture of continuous learning that facilitates faster integration of new caseworkers into their unit, and allows supervisors to better assess and support new caseworkers which appears to be supporting improvements in retention.

Update CPS Supervisor Basic Skills Development (BSD)

DFPS worked to update CPS Supervisor BSD to better address the skills needed to face the challenges of the position. The new model builds on the supervisor candidate assessment process to ensure the appropriate training is received. In

addition, system controls have been established to ensure consistent practices are implemented statewide. Most significantly, the new CPS Supervisor BSD expands the curriculum to deepen supervisor knowledge of key skills such as team and time management, program administration and team-level retention. The new training program was implemented in January 2017.

Revised training is one component of the new CPS two-year training program. The new model also includes a combination of online, classroom, and on-the-job (provided by a Field Advisor) training. Anecdotal feedback on the program has been positive, with the first group to complete the new training now in their sixth month in a supervisory role.

APS Professional Development Training Model (Basic Skills Development)

Core competencies were developed by APS program and Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE) to describe the high level skills workers and investigators need in order to perform the core functions of their jobs. APS Provider Investigations and In-Home program areas completed updating all of the basic skills (BSD) training program assessments to the continuous development of APS staff by including skilled workers, and management and supervisors with the information, tools, and resources needed to provide high quality support to trainees throughout BSD.

During field training the trainee shadows and then actively performs core skills with a skilled APS investigator or specialist while conducting investigations and service delivery. The BSD program provides individual training plans and consists of five to nine weeks of field training, two weeks of classroom training, at least four weeks of closely supervised casework which requires a minimum caseload, and an additional one week of advanced classroom training. Policies and procedures are incorporated so that actual cases are used throughout the training programs.

SWI Professional Development Training Model (Basic Skills Development)

In CY 2016 the Basic Skills Development Core competencies were re-evaluated and re-designed by the SWI program to ensure program readiness and effectiveness. A thorough task skills analysis was conducted on major functions for Intake Specialists to ensure course relevancy and accuracy. Redundancies in the program were identified and remedied, and the training process and delivery was improved through the infusion of technology. As a result, the total classroom training time for BSD was reduced by 8 hours while simultaneously strengthening the on-the-job training component.

Other SWI Trainings

SWI operates 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year which makes certain training formats difficult to implement on a large scale. In the past year, SWI managed this challenge by conducting over 200 various training events as presentations, facilitations, webinars, and computer based training (CBT) sessions serving over 2,000 attendees and providing more than 31,000 training hours. SWI includes trainings on general topics such as developing critical thinking skills, improving listening and documentation skills, and creating awareness of mental health first-aid, suicide intervention resources, and generational differences in the workplace.

The SWI training also includes specialized topics to educate Intake Specialists on effective interviewing techniques, Child Safety, School Reports, Baby Moses Reports, Family Violence, Concerns in Foster Homes, and Assessing for Human Trafficking. In addition to specific trainings, SWI created a digital library which includes internal and external training resources and over 150 free learning opportunities.

Expand SafeSignal Statewide

DFPS launched the statewide use of SafeSignal caseworker safety instant alert

system in December 2016, with distribution to 8,480 staff statewide as of August 31, 2017. The system works through a locked iPhone and allows a caseworker to send a distress signal to a monitoring center 24/7/365 days a year.

Child Care Licensing (CCL) Newsletter

CCL releases a monthly newsletter (The CCL Chronicles) to increase communication, provide targeted training through short but engaging articles, and build a strong sense of community within the CCL program statewide.

A wide range of information is shared with staff from legislative updates to policy refreshers and staff responded positively to the information sharing. Staff indicate they enjoy the articles, finding the content informative, and they feel more connected to the program and leadership. Due to the transfer of CCL to HHSC this will be the final update on this strategy.

PEI Meetings and Work Retreat

PEI held a staff retreat in the fall of 2016 where staff participated in training for leadership skills, developing effective action plans, and team building exercises. The leadership and staff held effective discussions on program changes, policy updates, and opportunities to improve program service delivery. The feedback was positive and PEI plans this as an annual event if possible.

PEI hosts a regular all-staff meeting to keep staff well-informed of important issues and what the other teams are working on. PEI rotates which team is in charge of putting the agenda together to better engage staff by sharing the responsibility of meeting coordination which encourages teams to work collaboratively.

CONCERNS WITH COMPENSATION

Awarding Merit Pay

Sunset recommendation 1.6, advised DFPS to develop a policy memo that provided guidance to managers on awarding merit pay to ensure transparency and consistent criteria for merit pay awards. The memo was shared with all DFPS employees, DFPS executive management, and HHSC HR for feedback and approval. The approved policy memo was published in April 2016.

Conduct Compensation Effectiveness Study

DFPS collaborated with the University of Houston (UH) on a compensation effectiveness study that measured the financial incentives listed in Rider 41 (e.g., salary increases, paying down of OT hours, and mentoring stipends), but also reviewed financial incentives such as locality pay, college degree pay, career ladders, and merit salary increases.

As part of the study, UH conducted an extensive review of relevant literature to examine effective workforce best practices, including staff development, supervision and staff relations, promotion and value of workforce, staff qualifications, retention strategies, and minimizing caseload and turnover rates.

The final report from UH also included 20 recommendations for improvements in retention, incentives, salary and transfer rates, work environment, and additional pilot programs. It is important to note that the number one finding and recommendation of the Compensation Study was that a salary increase would likely have a significant impact on staff retention. CPS staff actually received a salary increase in December of 2016 that was commensurate with this recommendation and therefore the agency has an increased level of confidence that the raises will

have a positive impact on retention rates. The DFPS Compensation Assessment and Employee Incentives Review reports from UH are available on the DFPS Public web site under [Agency Wide Reports and Presentations](#).

ONGOING STRATEGIES

DFPS is maintaining the following ongoing strategies. Strategies are grouped by concerns with the working environment and concerns with compensation.

CONCERNS WITH WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Other Frontline Staff and Supervisor Trainings

Effective development of caseworkers is an ongoing process that requires a broad range of training opportunities to meet the variety of challenges caseworkers encounter. Caseworker competency is strengthened by training, experience, and effective supervision. DFPS is committed to supporting the development of caseworkers with training that provides a theoretical and practical framework for delivering high quality and effective case management to clients and families.

DFPS has developed a diverse collection of ongoing trainings to support CPS caseworkers such as: *Normalcy for Children in Foster Care; Emergency Assistance Eligibility; Forensic Interviewing; Building Resilience in the Face of Secondary Trauma; Disproportionality Webinar Series; Growing Our Practice to Grow Safer Families (Practice Model); Single Case Plan; Family Based Safety Services Pilot; Integrated Care Coordination; IMPACT Modernization; Working with Impoverished Families; Poverty Simulation; Coaching Training with Dr. Mikow; Alternative Response; Risk Reassessment and Family Reunification; and Structured Decision Making.*

DFPS is also developing additional support training for APS workers, which includes additional training such as: *Person Centered Practices; Investigative Interviewing; Telephone Interviewing; Grasping and Analyzing Provider Investigative Skills; Opening the Door To Engagement*, and updates to *APS Supervisor Basic Skills Development (BSD)*.

Recognizing the importance of supporting supervisors in the development of their leadership skills, DFPS has developed dozens of new or revised trainings geared to address the unique needs and challenges supervisors face. These trainings include courses such as: *DFPS Beginning Manager-Transitioning from Peer to Manager; Developing Your Workers' Critical Thinking Skills; Building Resilience in the Face of Secondary Trauma; Strengths-Based Supervision for DFPS Leaders; Mentor Teaching and Feedback; Intermediate Strategic Data Management; Coaching Training by Dr. Mikow; Advanced Strategic Management; Cultural Change and High Performance Teams Training; Developing Work Competency; Supervising for Retention; and Understanding Generations in the Workplace*.

DFPS believes investing in our workers through ongoing training will result in improved productivity, better decision making, and a safer work environment. Long term this should improve retention and build tenure leading to better outcomes for the children and adults we serve.

Expand Worker Safety Support & Training

Support

DFPS expanded its efforts to all regions and DFPS Programs on May 1, 2017. The Worker Safety team provided intensive support to field for over 330 incidents to date in fiscal year 2017 (an additional 100 were reported before the expansion) by coordinating processes and needs between all involved parties including APS and CPS field staff and management, clients, law enforcement, and HHSC facility and risk

management staff, and other resources. The team now moves to Phase 2, Outreach and Education, to ensure staff know where and how to access support for serious aggression.

Training

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). Worker Safety Support also provides in-person, phone and webinar presentations to regional staff and management upon request.

Expand Employee Wellness Benefits and Activities

DFPS offers the Deer Oaks Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to staff and their dependents. This program offers a wide variety of counseling, referrals, and consultation services, which are all designed to assist employees and their families with resolving work/life issues in order to live happier, healthier, more balanced lives. Between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2017, there were 1,609 requests for counseling services and 260 requests for other work-life services such as referrals for daily living assistance, financial advice, legal advice, and child and elderly care assistance. Utilization of services for this time period is 14.17% which is higher compared to the previous fiscal year where utilization was 12.31%.

During this time period, wellness staff coordinated numerous regional wellness events such as wellness fairs, physical fitness and weight loss challenges, flu shot clinics and blood drives, and other healthy living related activities.

Performance Evaluations

It is imperative that staff consistently receive timely feedback on their performance. In February 2017, the DFPS performance evaluation tool was streamlined down to a

couple of pages to support managers in providing timely feedback to staff regarding their strengths and areas where improvement is needed. All DFPS supervisors were instructed to complete performance evaluations by April 2017. As of October 2017, over 99% of employees have current performance evaluations. Going forward it is Commissioner Whitman's goal that all employees receive a performance evaluation annually, to be completed between January and March.

Statewide Intake (SWI) Support

SWI initiated a support process initially geared towards retention. The process focuses on continuous improvement in the workplace that prompts effective change through collaboration and communication. Support for this effort includes staff volunteers from the day and night shifts as well as the weekend teams. All staff are surveyed twice a year, then Managers and leads meet with the volunteers often to discuss concerns, address gaps in resources or policies, and develop solutions that improve employee working conditions. There is a summer workgroup that also focuses on morale and retention. These efforts ensure staff receive the supports they need to perform effectively and efficiently in the call center environment.

DFPS Employee Recognition Ceremony

DFPS holds a monthly event to celebrate the agency's emerging leaders and to honor those who are doing extraordinary work within the agency or in partnership with it.

- Every staff member promoted to supervisor or higher—throughout the state and across all programs and divisions—is invited to be recognized for their leadership role within the agency.
- The *Commissioner's Award of Excellence* recognizes staff members and external partners who have gone to extraordinary lengths to protect the unprotected and serve our stakeholders.

Honored staff are encouraged to invite their families to attend with them. The staff also have a tour of DFPS State Office to meet the teams who support them every day. Photos from the event appear in a newsletter article shared with all staff and posted on the internal website every month.

Other Employee Recognition Awards

- The *Team Integrity Award* recognizes a program, unit, or team that has demonstrated exceptional teamwork for the agency and produced an extraordinary outcome. All staff members can nominate any DFPS team, and the Awards Review Board selects the winners. Awards are presented locally.
- The *Award of Distinction* recognizes regional staff members from each DFPS program across the state. The nominees may be field workers or support staff, but state office staff are not eligible for this award. These awards are selected monthly by the associate commissioner of each program—APS, CCL, CPS, PEI, and SWI—and presented locally.

The *Judge John J. Specia Award of Academic Excellence* carries the name of a former DFPS commissioner and recognizes the highest-scoring graduate of each divisional training academy. Currently under development, this award will be presented beginning in early 2018.

Regional and Local Staff Recognition

APS, CCL, CPS, and SWI all have a variety of staff recognition activities which are conducted at the regional or local office levels. Program Leadership in each division participate in appreciation events that range from statewide division awards to local office recognitions. These include awards for achievements in service, excellence, good deeds, dedication and commitment, core values, and tenure. These awards recognize caseworkers, frontline staff, administrative staff, and other staff support

resources and are shared through local office walls of fame, community rooms, email broadcasts, and agency newsletters. Other appreciation efforts include celebrations, volunteer activities, external engagements, and other morale boosting or team building activities.

Anniversary Notices

The DFPS Commissioner sends a short, personalized note to the staff, acknowledging the employee's anniversary date with the agency and thanking them for their service and contributions to the agency. These personalized notes create a supportive culture and improve staff morale by recognizing their commitment to their work, thanking them for their efforts, and appreciating their tenure with the agency.

Promoting CPS Communication and Input

CPS has made significant progress during the past year on creating a work culture that is positive and supportive. Maintaining and building upon these improvements requires continuous communication, including engaging staff for feedback. State Office staff will continue to be mindful about when and how communication to the field is timed and delivered. Regional leadership will continue to contact new staff frequently and encourage feedback that generates new ideas from their fresh perspective. In some areas they have also started doing regular town hall meetings and meet regularly with staff through advisory committees. Directors make regular visits to offices across their region to facilitate communication, share information, recognize positive staff contributions and become familiar with staff throughout the region including their experiences and development as CPS workers. The Regional Directors encourage advisory committee members to bring forth questions, ideas and suggestions on how to improve the work CPS does. The areas of the state that

do not currently have advisory committees will begin working to implement them. Starting early in CY18, CPS will revitalize the statewide advisory committee and have a member of the regional committees feed up to state office. CPS will promote employee recognition, including leadership recognition awards, such as the Commissioner's Award of Excellence, CPS Executive Leadership Award of Distinction, and Regional Director Award of Distinction.

APS Welcome Notices

APS has implemented a program to proactively welcome new employees at all program levels. This effort strives to provide a positive first impression for new staff by establishing a warm work environment from day one. New employees receive an email from their supervisor within the first week of employment to reinforce their value and importance to the success of the APS program.

Supervisors work with all new employees to ensure they have all the tools and support they need to carry the mission forward. The APS Director of Field Operations also visits new hires at graduation to reinforce their value and the commitment of APS to its staff. APS expects this to improve and quicken the integration of new staff into the unit by establishing rapport and building trust that leads to increased loyalty and commitment, and improved retention.

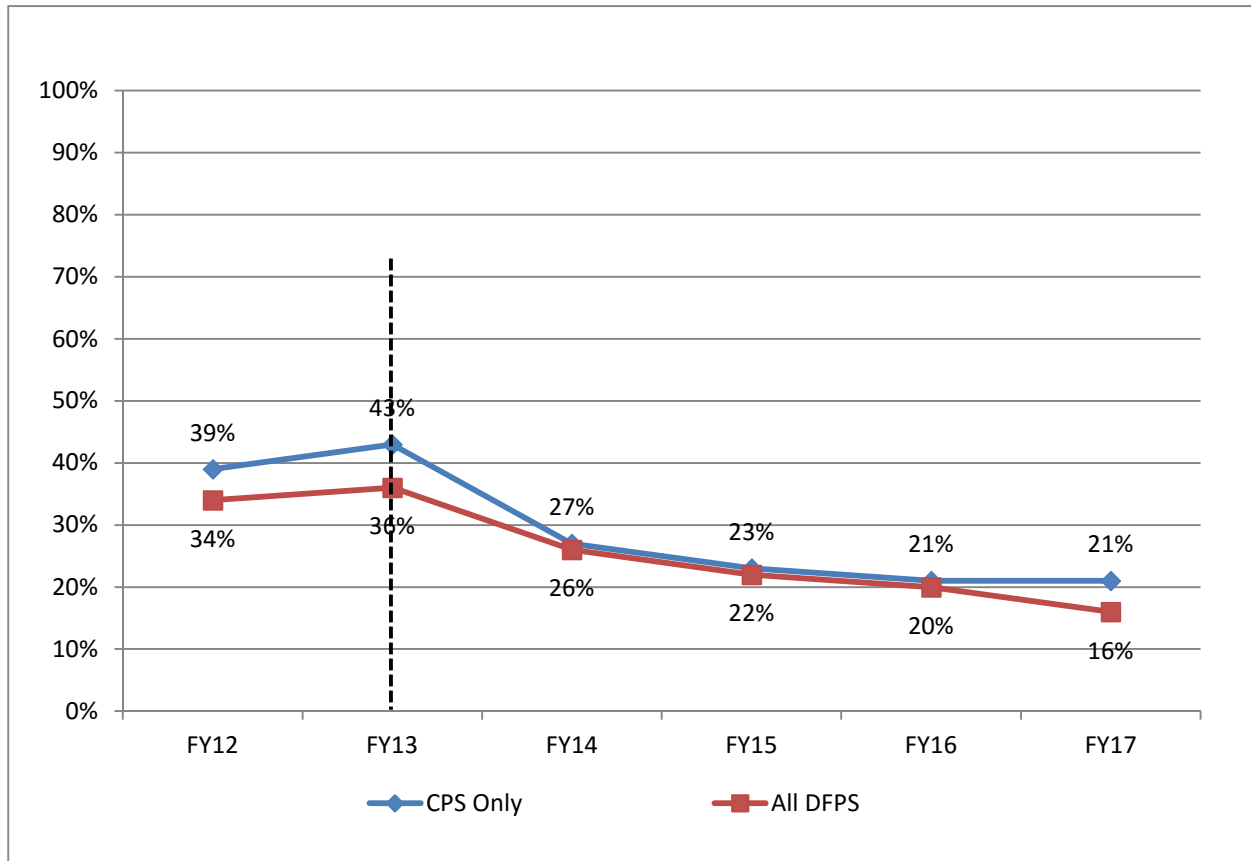
CONCERNS WITH COMPENSATION

Locality Pay

In 2013, energy exploration within Texas increased the cost of living in Region 9. In response to this challenge, the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013 authorized DFPS, with no funding requested or appropriated, to offer locality pay to employees at \$500. By fiscal year 2014, DFPS funded a \$1,000 locality pay incentive for employees living in Midland, Andrews, Ector and Ward counties and maintained it at \$1,000 in fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017. Locality pay effectiveness is one of

most quantifiable DFPS financial incentives to date, as depicted in Figure 4 on the next page. Since its inception in fiscal year 2013, CPS turnover experienced a 67 percent decrease and DFPS (all positions) experienced a 50 percent decrease in turnover through fiscal year 2017 YTD.

FIGURE 4: CHANGES IN TURNOVER OVER TIME WITHIN COUNTIES RECEIVING LOCALITY PAY



Other Incentive Pay

DFPS recognizes the benefits of other financial incentives authorized for the agency’s use to attract and retain staff. The agency offers these additional incentives to qualified staff:

- **CPS Investigative Pay**

DFPS is authorized to continue to provide the amount of \$5,000 per fiscal year established by the 79th Legislature (Rider 18) for CPS Investigation

caseworkers and supervisors. The pay is provided at the rate of \$416.67 per month, or pro-rata portion if a partial month is worked in the position.

➤ **Mentoring Stipend**

DFPS pays additional compensation through appropriated Rider 35 funds for the mentoring of new employees as a means to increase worker retention.

The additional compensation may not exceed \$300 per month to be included in the employee's monthly compensation, proportional to the hours paid during the month.

Other financial incentives are authorized to DFPS, such as college degree pay, on-call pay, high risk pay, and recruitment and retention bonuses. Unfortunately the agency has been unable to obtain sufficient funding to effectively implement or sustain these benefits.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IMPACT OF ADDITIONAL CPS APPROPRIATIONS

At the beginning of FY 2017, the agency submitted a Legislative Appropriations Request seeking an increase in the number of CPS workers in the 2018-2019 biennium. The DFPS Commissioner approached the Senate Finance Committee with a request for additional appropriations to provide staff immediate salary increases for certain CPS direct delivery staff and to be authorized to hire a portion of the new CPS workers to address critical staffing needs that he believed necessary to stabilize CPS and ensure the safety of children.

The critical needs funding was approved and the agency received funding to hire an additional 828 positions. This included 450 CPS caseworker positions, 100 Special Investigator positions and 278 positions ranging from regional unit support to regional management. The proposed timeline to fill these positions was between December and April 2017. By the end of April 2017, DFPS filled 97% of the authorized caseworker and Special Investigator positions. As of June 2017, 100% of the positions funded by the critical needs request were filled.

The salary increases, in the amount of \$1,000 per month for caseworkers, became effective in December 2016. Because of State of Texas Human Resources Code rules not all staff were able to receive the raise immediately, but by the end of May 2017 all staff eligible will have received their salary increase. The agency began hiring the new cohort of CPS caseworkers in December 2016 and hired all of the positions by the end of May 2017. The caseworker training program takes approximately five months to complete and staff receive their cases slowly over the course of the training program.

Because of the staggered nature of the rollout of the salary increase and the hiring of additional staff, the agency will need more time to determine the impact of these changes on CPS turnover rates. Initial analysis indicates turnover in CPS may be improving and the agency will closely examine the impacts to other agency programs. In addition, DFPS leadership has received positive feedback from staff regarding the additional staff resources and the salary increases. The Agency is planning for further detailed analysis of the impact of these initiatives which will be discussed in a future Rider 9 update.

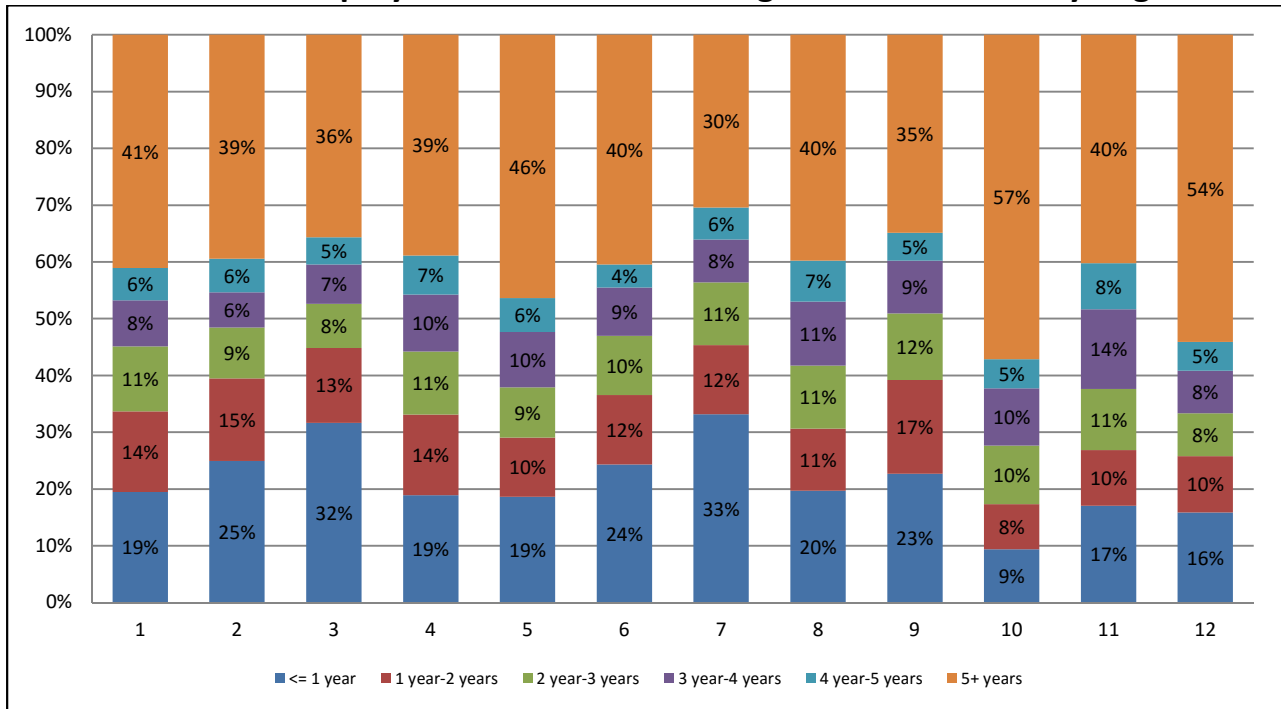
APPENDIX B: FY 2017 RIDER 11 DFPS AND PROGRAM TURNOVER COMPARISON- FY 2014 TO FY 2017

FIGURE 5: FY 2017 RIDER 11 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER COMPARISON REPORT					
Functional Title	Turnover Rate (FY14)	Turnover Rate (FY15)	Turnover Rate (FY 2016)	Turnover Rate (FY17)	% Change FY 2016 to FY17
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)					
All Employees	19.0%	19.6%	19.3%	16.2%	-15.9%
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)					
CPS Workers (CVS, FBSS, and INV)	25.2%	25.8%	25.4%	18.4%	-27.6%
CPS Supervisors	6.3%	9.5%	10.4%	7.1%	-31.8%
CPS Program	19.6%	20.5%	20.4%	15.7%	-23.4%
CPS CVS Caseworker	22.6%	22.6%	22.6%	16.5%	-26.9%
CPS FBSS Caseworker	23.0%	27.9%	25.0%	16.0%	-36.0%
CPS INV Caseworker	33.8%	32.7%	32.9%	24.9%	-24.3%
ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)					
APS Workers	24.6%	23.4%	21.2%	25.9%	22.1%
APS Supervisors	9.1%	13.4%	7.2%	2.7%	-62.3%
APS Program	20.5%	19.8%	18.7%	20.8%	11.6%
CHILD CARE LICENSING (CCL)					
DCL Workers	19.4%	25.1%	20.2%	20.6%	2.1%
DCL Supervisors	7.2%	7.1%	13.0%	6.6%	-49.5%
DCL Program	16.2%	19.6%	17.3%	17.7%	2.2%
RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE LICENSING (RCCL)					
RCCL Workers	20.4%	16.1%	14.1%	19.9%	41.8%
RCCL Supervisors	0.0%	12.9%	6.6%	6.3%	-3.2%
RCCL Program	16.3%	14.2%	11.4%	16.6%	46.3%

STATEWIDE INTAKE (SWI)					
SWI Workers	16.7%	19.1%	19.4%	15.9%	-18.0%
SWI Supervisors	11.3%	8.2%	10.9%	11.3%	4.3%
SWI Program	16.0%	16.1%	16.9%	14.7%	-12.9%

APPENDIX C: TENURE- FY 2017 YTD

FIGURE 6: DFPS All Employees FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region



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.

CPS CVS, CPS FBSS, APS, RCCL, DCCL

- 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.

CPS INV

- 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 7: CPS INV FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region

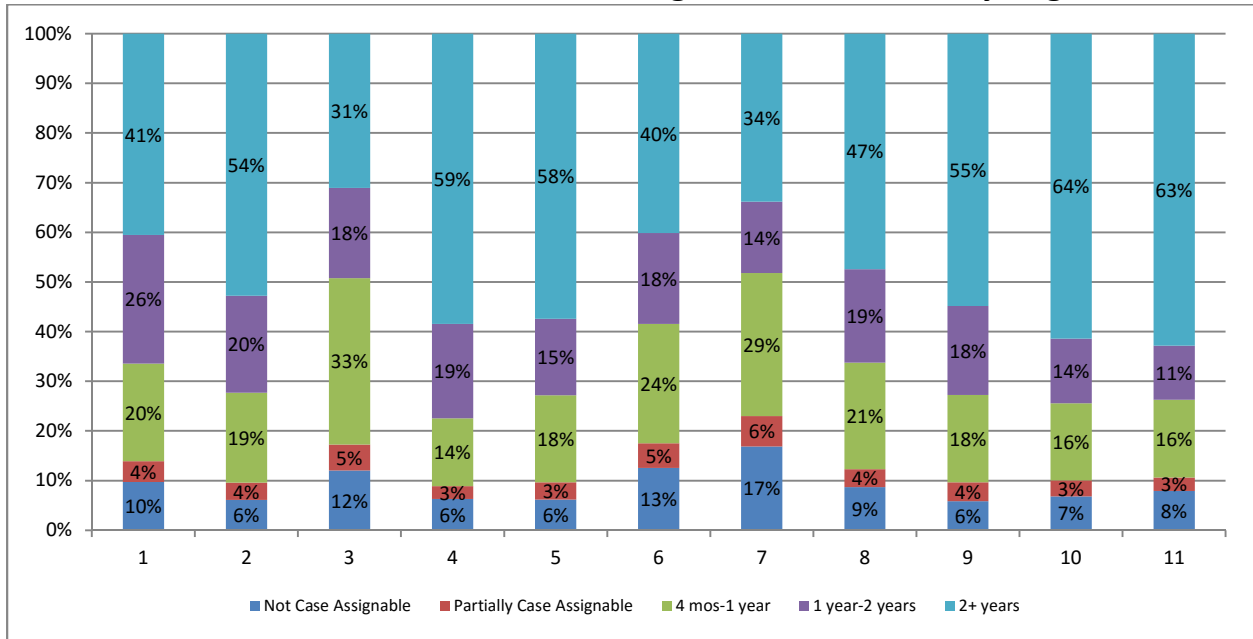


FIGURE 8: CPS CVS FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region

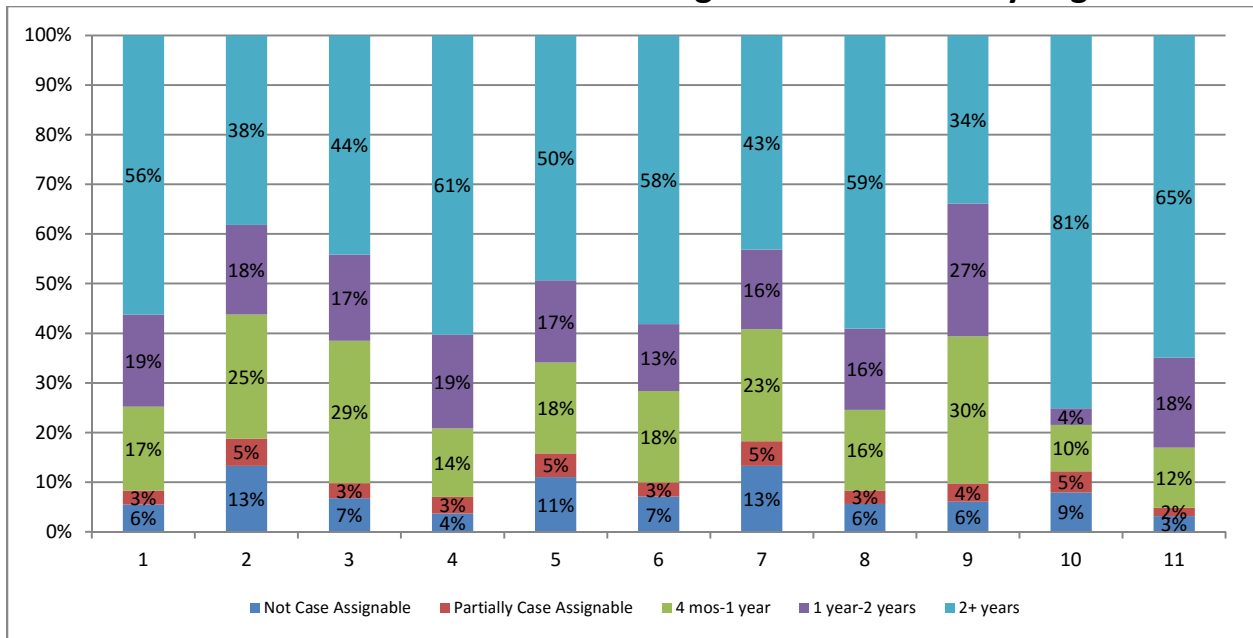


FIGURE 9: CPS FBSS FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region

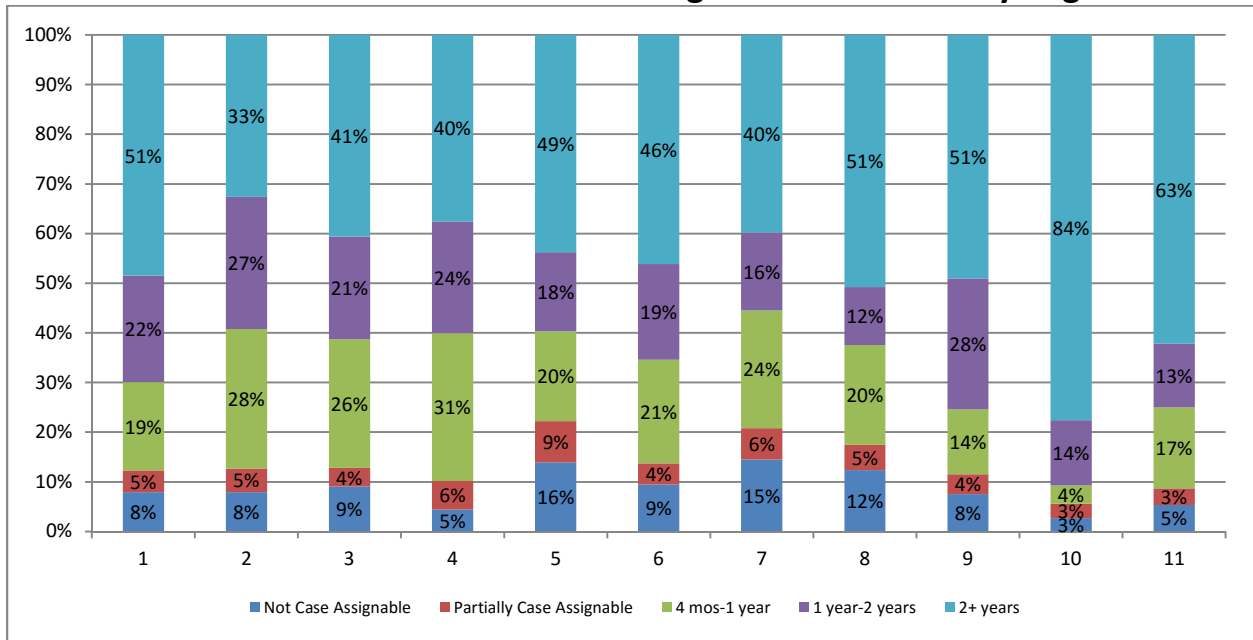


FIGURE 10: APS In-Home FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region

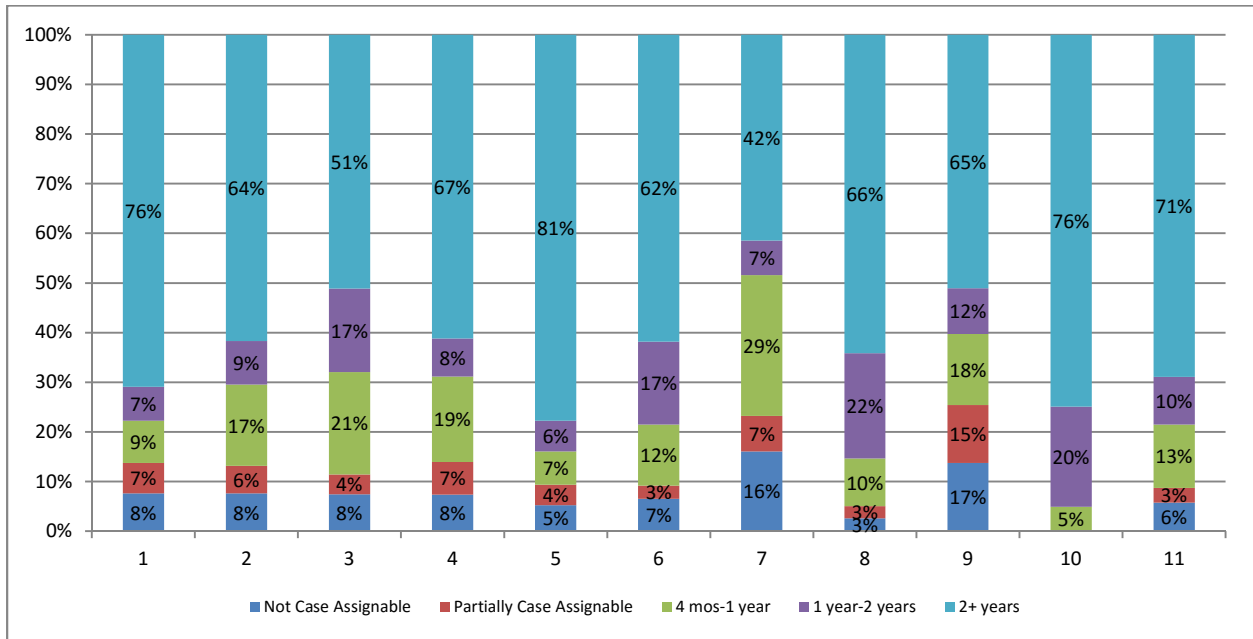


FIGURE 11: RCCL FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure

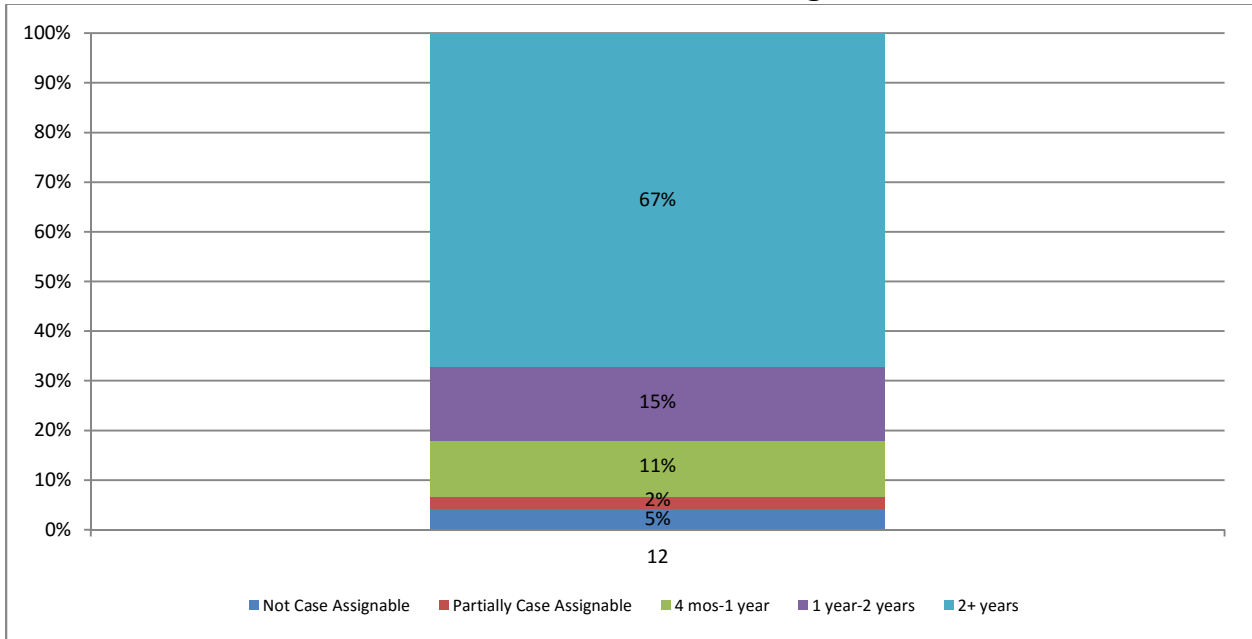


FIGURE 12: CCL FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure by Region

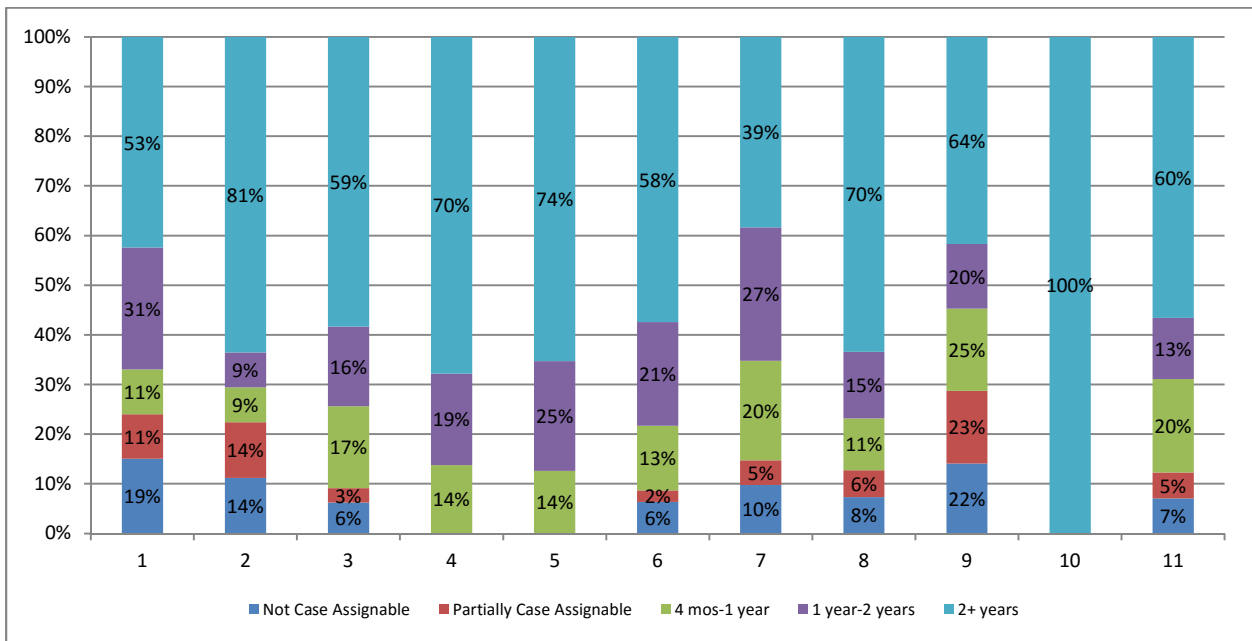


FIGURE 13: SWI FY 2017 YTD Average Percent Tenure

