

VII. GUIDE TO AGENCY PROGRAMS

Narrative Descriptions

Office of the DFPS Commissioner – Judge John J. Specia, Jr.

4 FTEs

A full-time Commissioner, appointed by the Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner with the approval of the Governor, oversees operations of the Department of Family and Protective Services. The Commissioner's responsibilities include establishing goals and objectives as well as overseeing the development and implementation of strategic plans; policy development; performance monitoring; and executive level reporting. The Commissioner also assists the Executive Commissioner in policy and rule changes specific to the Department's functions.

The Commissioner's Office also houses the DFPS Medical Director and the Associate Commissioner. The DFPS Medical Director provides leadership, direction, and oversight on health issues that affect DFPS clients and services. The Medical Director integrates knowledge of the agency's mission with best healthcare practices to help shape DFPS policies and ensure comprehensive health care to the children DFPS serves. For example, one of the Medical Director's major tasks is overseeing psychotropic medication use by children in foster care.

The Associate Commissioner works with staff to implement the Commissioner's executive direction, ensuring that policy, programs, and operations of the agency are strategically focused, properly aligned with the goals and priorities of state leadership, and responsive to the needs of clients and stakeholders.

Deputy Commissioner Division – Jennifer Sims

48.5 FTEs

The Deputy Commissioner works with the Commissioner on the day-to-day operations of the agency, providing vision, leadership, and strategic direction to the Department in administration, operations, and budget decision-making processes. The Deputy Commissioner also provides leadership and oversight to the Department's Center for Consumer and External Affairs (CCEA) and the Center for Policy, Innovation, and Program Coordination (CPIPC). CCEA coordinates consumer and external affairs activities with elected officials, HHSC offices, community stakeholders, the media, clients and members of the public who have complaints. CCEA also coordinates DFPS's compliance with the customer service functions required in the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2114. CCEA consists of four offices: the Office of Consumer Affairs, Office of External Relations, Office of Communications, and Office of Media Relations. CPIPC coordinates the rule development process for the Department. CPIPC also coordinates cross-program activities, conducts management reviews, and ensures the Department's critical projects are aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the Department.

Internal Audit – Ed Pier

9 FTEs

The Internal Audit division provides an independent appraisal function within DFPS, objectively providing independent assessment on risk management, control, and governance processes for the organization and its unique clientele. Internal Audit provides management with recommendations designed to strengthen and improve internal controls and agency operations. For example during fiscal year 2013, Internal Audit conducted audits of the Development of Information Resources Projects, Budget Processes, Child Death Investigations and Reporting, Reporting of Missing Children, and Search Texas Child Care website, in addition to other reviews and consulting engagements requested by the Commissioner and DFPS management.

Legal Services – Cynthia O’Keeffe

156.5 FTEs

Legal Services provides legal counsel, training, and services to support the agency’s mission and to ensure that the agency complies with all applicable state and federal laws. Legal Services contains two units: the Office of General Counsel and Program Litigation. While the Office of General Counsel performs the legal support tasks that are typical of most state agency legal divisions, the Program Litigation unit serves a somewhat unique role within state government by providing direct in-court representation in CPS lawsuits and, to a lesser extent, APS lawsuits, under deputation by the Office of Attorney General.

Operations – Terri Ware

545.7 FTEs

The Operations division includes Information Resource Management (IRM), the Program Support unit (PS), the Management Support unit (MSD), the Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE), Contract Oversight & Support (COS), and the Centralized Background Check Unit (CBCU). The Operations division also includes Statewide Intake. Due to the size and complexity of the Statewide Intake program, it is addressed in its own Section VII report.

Information Resource Management

IRM supports the agency’s information technology (IT) needs by providing the technology and services required to enable DFPS staff to fulfill the agency’s mission around the clock, 365 days a year. The agency’s information includes case and non-case related work products that are stored and secured in databases, applications, or computing and mobile devices.

Program Support

PS is responsible for multiple functions that directly support DFPS programs, including testing and ensuring security of the agency’s automated-case management, licensing-support systems, and other core applications.

Management Support Division

MSD provides day-to-day direction, guidance, and coordination for the agency's management activities. This group works with DFPS executives and management to identify and resolve cross-agency operational issues, coordinate internal communication to the agency's mission and operational goals, and give direct support to the field through many services. MSD's major areas of responsibility include: Human Resources; Management Reporting and Statistics; Performance Management; and Records Management.

Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence

CLOE works with DFPS programs and divisions to provide staff with training and professional development opportunities. CLOE plays a key role in equipping staff with the knowledge and skills needed to protect the unprotected.

Contract Oversight and Support

COS develops and maintains the internal DFPS Contract Handbook, which is the central organizational framework for all agency policies and procedures for administrative and client services contracting. Additionally, COS coordinates with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to promote standardization and efficiencies across Enterprise agencies for both contractors and clients. In FY 2012, the Department had 2,791 contracts to assist us with achieving the agency's mission and goals.

Centralized Background Check Unit

CBCU is responsible for internal agency or requested background checks that support Child Care Licensing, client service contracts, internal and external volunteers, in-state and out-of-state requests for central registry checks and agency new hires. CBCU integrates cross-divisional and program background check policies, procedures, staff, and related resources to provide improved quality, more efficient service, and greater consistency of agency performed or requested background checks. Between June 2012 and June 2013, CBCU processed 914,147 background checks.

Finance – Cindy R. Brown

111.8 FTEs

The Office of Finance's primary objectives are to:

- Provide DFPS with support in the three areas of budget, federal funds management, and accounting.
- Ensure that DFPS complies with the oversight regulations of other state and federal agencies, including the maintenance of internal controls to safeguard DFPS's resources and assets.
- Help DFPS obtain funding and manage its resources effectively.
- Serve as the agency's fiscal liaison to external leadership offices such as the Legislative Budget Board, the Governor's Office, and the Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Activities are organized in separate divisions within the Office of Finance. An explanation of each division's primary responsibilities is described below.

Budget Division

The Budget division develops and monitors the agency's annual operating budget, prepares DFPS's biennial legislative appropriations request, prepares fiscal impact analysis on proposed legislation and agency rule changes, and provides management insight critical for agency divisions to operate within allocated resource levels.

Federal Funds Division

The Federal Funds division provides analytical support, consultation, and technical assistance to agency program areas to maintain current federal funding initiatives, and to seek out and work with programs to design new initiatives. The Federal Funds division reviews and analyzes costs, programs, and federal claims to ensure reimbursement for all eligible federal costs. The division tracks and analyzes federal legislation related to funding and participates in the design and review of cost allocation methodologies.

Accounting Division

The Accounting division manages the agency's financial transactions and ensures the integrity of all accounting records. The Accounting division processes travel claims, provides travel support, processes payments to vendors, processes requisitions, and provides cash management, cost allocation, and financial system support.