



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Fiscal Year 2024 Capacity Building Plan Based on the Foster Care Needs Assessment

**As Required by
Senate Bill 11, 85th Legislature,
Regular Session, 2017**

Revised December 2023

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Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 264.1261, of the Texas Family Code, “appropriate management personnel from a child protective services region in which community-based care has not been implemented, in collaboration with foster care providers, faith-based entities, and child advocates in that region, shall use data collected by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) on foster care capacity needs and availability of each type of foster care and kinship placement in the region to create a plan to address the substitute care capacity needs in the region.” The [Foster Care Needs Assessment](#) assists to inform the goals and objectives outlined in this plan, which specifically addresses the needs of non-community based care regions 3A, 6, 7, 8A, 9, 10, and 11.

The following report required collaboration with stakeholders and partners in each region. While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the affected communities, the goals and strategies contained within belong to each respective community.

Region 3 West (Catchment 3A) Plan to Increase Capacity

Building capacity goes beyond recruiting more foster homes for the children in Child Protective Services (CPS) care, even though it remains an important part of the statewide effort. Decreasing the number of placement disruptions and ensuring children are in the most appropriate placements will allow the catchments to free placement capacity for the children who are in need.

Therefore, increasing capacity starts with the belief that children deserve to be part of a permanent home with a caring committed caregiver. Furthermore, children and youth must maintain a positive connection with their family and supports in the community. Positive outcomes including reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or adoption are more likely when family supports are strengthened, including supports to kinship families throughout the process of verification.

Stakeholder and provider meetings for Region 3 Metroplex West (Catchment 3A) were held throughout 2022-23. These meetings focused on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for fiscal years 2023-24. Beginning in 2021, the Regional Foster Care Consortium has held quarterly meetings to discuss capacity needs for children in foster care. DFPS also holds quarterly meetings with providers to discuss capacity needs. These meetings are typically held during August, November, February, and May. The Region 3 Collaborative (agencies in Metroplex West) meets every other month to discuss recruitment and capacity information.

DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the ongoing discussions and initial development of the regional capacity strategic plan:

- Kaufman County Emergency Shelter;
- Covenant Kids Family Services;
- Therapeutic Family Life;
- La Maisen, Cumberland Services, Residential Treatment for Teens;
- ACH Child and Family Services;
- Anchor Community Counseling;
- Open Hearts Services;
- Upbring;
- Texas Baptist Home;

- Cherished Impressions;
- Change;
- Harbor of Hope;
- Pathways; and
- Youth and Family.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Support Children and Youth Transitioning Between Settings

Positive outcomes including reunification, permanent placement with relatives, and adoption are more likely when family supports are strengthened.

Objective 1.1: Support the Transition of Youth From Paid Foster Care to Kinship or Other Placements

- Ensure earlier and adequate communication with treatment teams to include CPS, the children involved, therapists, child placing agencies (CPAs), and others as needed.
- Implement pre-placement programming to include pre-placement meetings and visits, post-placement meetings, and tele follow ups.
- Ensure staff is informed of the need for wrap around services and pre-placement visits.
- Connect kinship families with supports provided by the kinship development worker and maintain communication with kinship placement to offer support.
- Have foster parents create a “scrap book” for the child of their experiences in foster home. This should include pictures, child “likes”, what a typical day looks like for child before any placement changes, as well as for child to take to home when reunified.
- Educate the child’s support network regarding the creation of safety plans if any issues arise. This process should include the child in the planning to ensure his or her voice is heard.

Quick Wins

- Ensure CPS revisits kin options throughout the case, even though a relative may

not have been an option early in the case. Ask the question: “What can we do to make this kinship placement work?”

- Make quicker referrals to the kinship unit once a relative is identified.
- Send the caseworker a photo or video of the home, pets, and other things when a child is accepted for placement to make the child more comfortable.
- Reduce risk of child behavioral reactions due to increased child involvement in transitions.

Goal 2: Maintain Sibling Groups and Build Capacity for Sibling Groups

Children deserve to be part of a permanent home with a caring committed caregiver. Furthermore, children and youth must maintain a positive connection with their family and supports in the community.

Objective 2.1: Ensure CPU Searches Remain Active Until Siblings are Placed Together

- Communicate to providers the need for targeted recruitment and increasing sibling placements.
- Work toward licensing homes with the goal of meeting needs to full capacity.
- Emphasize to foster parents, CPAs, the Centralized Placement Unit (CPU), and caseworkers the critical importance of sibling connection.
- Discuss the importance of transition planning when working on placing siblings together and the change in role dynamics within a foster family once a separated sibling joins the family where another sibling has been living.
- Have CPAs and DFPS Foster and Adoptive Home Development ask families to be open to placement of at least two children.
- Ensure siblings are placed geographically close and get monthly visits together if all siblings cannot be placed together.

Quick Wins

- Keep siblings within the same CPA, if not in the same home.
- Conduct pre-placement visits.

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- Ensure sibling visits and willingness of caregivers to allow siblings to spend the night.
- Have CPS meet with the new placement prior to the beginning and communicate how the children can be supported.

Goal 3: Build Capacity for Older Youth to be Placed Closer to Home and in a Family-Like Setting

Children deserve to be part of a permanent home with a caring committed caregiver. Furthermore, children and youth must maintain a positive connection with their family and supports in the community.

Objective 3.1: Ensure Older Youth are Placed Close to Home or with Relatives

- Break stigmas about older youth and encourage placement by building the confidence of caregivers to parent older youth.
- Offer pre-placement visits.
- Have frank and open conversations with older youth.

Quick Wins

- Conduct pre-placement visits.
- Debunk myths with caregivers on the challenges of caring for older children.
- CPS will meet with the new placement prior to beginning and communicate how the children can be supported.

Goal 4: Identify Supports to Caregivers to Meet Children's Needs

Increase capacity by supporting caregivers and children to ensure they have the best opportunity to be in the least restrictive placements and providing appropriate transitions to placements.

Objective 4.1: Share Cross-Provider Education and Information

- Cross provider education and information sharing, including how to overcome barriers regarding transportation, therapies, doctor's appointments, day care, etc.

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- ▶ Therapy in homes.
- ▶ Youth Empowerment Services (YES) waiver..
- ▶ Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)/ECI Hopes.
- ▶ Staff nurse practitioners
- ▶ Network doctors.
- Transportation-some CPAs have hired transporters.
- Include the above in quarterly provider meetings.
- Let caregivers know what to expect (i.e., children being upset after visits, parents not showing up for visits).

Objective 4.2: Support Transition of Youth from Residential Treatment Centers (RTCs) to Less Restrictive Settings

- Encourage the foster parent to meet the children or youth before they go to the home (i.e., face-to-face, Skype, Facetime) to help reduce fear for everyone.
- Critically review the common application to ensure they still accurately depict the child's needs.
- Critically review the current local curriculum on completing common applications.
- Utilize respite services, YES waivers, therapy, and psychological evaluations.
- Utilize safety plans for any issues.
- Keep the child involved in planning.
- Begin conversations with RTC providers regarding how to prepare for the child or youth's transition needs when a child reaches moderate or basic level.
- Inform legal stakeholders of the importance of normalcy and least restrictive placements.
- Implement step-down visits prior to placement.
- Have foster parents create a "scrap book" for the child of their experiences in foster home. with pictures, child "likes", what a typical day looks like for child before any placement changes, as well as for child to take to home when reunified.

Quick Wins

- Pre-placement visits and communication.
- Talking to therapist or mentor.

Goal 5: Keep the Provider Community Informed of CPS Capacity Needs

Collaborating with providers and allowing opportunity for dialogue, discussion, and identifying trends and progress will ensure engagement, planning, and progression toward meeting objectives.

Objective 5.1: Communication between CPS and Providers on Regional and Specific Capacity Needs for Certain Children Needing Placement

- Allow providers to communicate growth plans while allowing opportunity for questions and concerns with CPS.
- Have CPS provide information at the quarterly provider meetings regarding capacity needs.
- Identify what information would be helpful to providers to review on a regular basis.
- Have regional directors request a regularly updated report on sibling placements.
- Have continuous conversations with the provider community on CPS capacity needs.
- Receive information from providers regarding plans for increasing capacity.
- Have providers to share information and strategies with each other at routine provider meetings.

Regions 6A and 6B Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder and provider meeting for all general residential operations (GROs), CPAs, and shelters occurred on August 29, 2023, and September 21, 2023. Leisha Fisher, CPS regional director, and Shanundricka Easley, CPS deputy regional director, spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment is reviewed annually and provides historical analysis, as well as forecasted capacity needs. In collaboration, all the participants committed to dedicating the necessary resources to implement the regional strategic plan.

The following are the suggested goals based on forecasted needs for fiscal year 2024:

- Increase treatment foster care bed capacity.
- Increase siblings placed all together.

The following barriers were identified in building and successfully utilizing capacity:

- Frequency and location of parental, child, and sibling visits.
- Potential underutilization of all available foster homes within the region.
- The ever-changing face of foster families.
- Increased training requirements.
- Recruitment challenges in rural areas within Region 6.
- Caregiver's inadequate preparedness to care for youth with higher levels of care.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team to address these identified barriers.

Goal 1: Increase Moderate Foster Home Capacity

The current supply of basic service foster homes meet the forecasted demand in Regions 6A and 6B. However, there are a lack of homes which can support moderate and specialized service needs for children aged 14 and older.

Objective 1.1: Improve Utilization of Existing Placements

- The region began utilizing the General Placement Search system in March 2022. Providers ensure required vacancy and preference information on capacity

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continues to be entered into the General Placement Search application. CPS will obtain feedback from providers and staff at quarterly provider meetings.

- CPS and CPAs will review the current practices of placement teams to ensure all appropriate placement options are considered within their legal county or region first.
- Region 6 CPA collaborative meetings will continue quarterly and include an update on the strategic capacity building plan.
- CPS will hold a quarterly meeting to include the CPU, program staff, and CPAs to identify existing basic and moderate foster homes for separated siblings, children placed outside of the region, and children ready to transition into a less restrictive environment.
- Providers expressed they are not familiar with the other placement options and resources in Region 6. As such, the providers will develop a plan to learn more about each other and the available resources surrounding their placements. They will use this information to better support caregivers and children.
- Providers have been able to access the monthly DFPS Data Book since February 2020. The Regional Systems Improvement team will continue to support providers and the community in their ability to access and utilize the data book by providing training webinars.

Goal 2: Increase Specialized, Intense, and TFFC Foster Home Capacity

The current supply of specialized, intense, and Treatment Family Foster Care (TFFC) homes are shared with capacity needed in other parts of the state. The following strategies are intended to utilize local capacity for this population.

Objective 2.1: Improve Transitions from Residential Treatment Centers RTCs into a Least Restrictive Placement

- Communication between CPS and RTC providers will be improved through quarterly meetings to identify gaps and formulate solutions.
- RTC providers and CPS will collaborate to increase the number of children who transition from RTCs into a least restrictive placement.
- Regional directors will identify RTC providers who are willing to discuss upcoming discharges and how to better prepare children for subsequent placements.

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- The Capacity Think Tank will be used to improve communication and partnerships between Shelters, RTCs, and CPAs.
- Providers and placements will share information prior to placement changes.
- Regional staff will share the TFFC foster home enrollment link with providers and continue to express the importance and the need for those homes.

Objective 2.2: CPAs will Identify Licensed Homes that Could Expand Their Service Provision to Include Specialized and Intense Placements

- CPAs will develop and provide specialized training to comply with minimum standards for placing treatment needs children within a family setting.
- CPS and CPAs will develop additional opportunities to provide supportive respite for families caring for children with higher needs.
- CPAs will increase recruitment efforts for children with higher needs.
- Allow existing therapeutic homes to shadow families and reach out for coaching or support to increase support for newly licensed therapeutic homes.

Goal 3: Increase Siblings Placed Together

Among sibling groups in Region 6, 56% percent were placed together at the close of fiscal year 2023. The Regions 6A and 6B are committed to evaluating all separated siblings for potential reunification and increasing the number of sibling groups with all siblings placed together.

Objective 3.1: Evaluate Each Sibling Group Currently Separated for Reunification in the Same Home

- CPS staff and providers will identify siblings who are in separate placements and need to be reunified.
- CPS will hold a monthly meeting to include the CPU, program staff, and CPAs to identify potential placement options for separated siblings to transition into the same home.

Objective 3.2: Promote the Importance of Frequent Parent, Child, and Sibling Contact

- Providers and CPS will work collaboratively to address visitation and transportation issues.
- Providers will ensure foster families are adequately informed and trained on visitation and transportation expectations.
- CPS faith-based specialists will explore utilization of faith-based partners to identify visitation locations and support for children and families.
- CPS faith-based and community initiative specialists will explore recruitment of volunteers to address the transportation needs of parents.

Region 7 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder and provider meeting for Regions 7A and 7B occurred on August 30, 2023. Regional Director Staci Love spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements.

DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the regional capacity strategic plan:

- Renaissance Family Services of Texas;
- Arrow Children’s Ministries;
- Starry, Inc.;
- Upbring;
- DePelchin Children’s Center;
- New Horizons;
- Methodist Children’s Home;
- Night Light;
- Caring Hearts for Children;
- Lifeworks of Austin; and
- Bluebonnet Haven.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase Support for Existing Caregiver and Placement Capacity

Fostering youth is hard and emotional work and families often find navigating the system difficult. Supporting foster families is critical for their success.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment forecasts an increased number of children who are in Kinship placements. As a result of increased youth needs, it is important to educate and empower caregivers to access resources to help meet the youth’s needs while maintaining a stable placement.

Objective 1.1: Education on STAR Health Services

STAR Health offers extensive services and complex case management services. However, case managers and families are often unaware of all the services available. To address this:

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- CPS will arrange for STAR Health to provide training to all CPA case managers at a regional provider meeting.
- CPS will continue to invite STAR Health representatives to all provider meetings.

Objective 1.2: Identification of LMHA and LBHA Resources

It is important for families and foster youth to understand the support and services the local mental and behavioral health authorities (LMHAs and LBHAs) can provide. To improve access to this information:

- CPS will have a Youth Empowerment Services waiver provider attend a regional provider meeting to explain their services to all CPA case managers.
- CPS will work with CPA case managers and the LMHA or LBHA to create a county specific list of resources and contact phone numbers to provide families.

Goal 2: Increase Capacity Across all Levels of Foster Care

All levels of foster care supports are needed. The forecast indicates the region will have a significant increased need for basic and specialized foster care homes. These homes are needed to keep children who have basic and moderate needs in their communities

TFFC will allow youth to remain in the community in a less restrictive placement, while receiving specialized care tailored to their needs. This will address the issue that many youth struggle to move to a less restrictive placement after their level of need decreases after receiving psychiatric care.

Objective 2.1: Targeted Recruitment

- Focus will be on recruitment of people who have history working with youth in different capacities.
- Partner with the Foster Care Coalition, to continue to discuss the needs of the agency and how we reduce the current and forecast capacity needs.
- Recruitment will be a team effort with all agency partners.
- Present information sessions to professional groups with a history of working in juvenile detention, hospitals, schools, and from the law enforcement community.
- Information sessions will be provided by multiple agency representatives.

Goal 3: Increase in Kinship Placements that Need Supports in Becoming Licensed Foster Parents

Throughout the region our kinship caregivers continue to increase. These families often struggle with the licensure requirements. The Foster Care Needs Assessment forecasts a continued increase of kinship placements. Supporting these families on how to navigate the different systems, as well as providing tools to support youth through their trauma responses will continue.

Objective 3.1: Partner with CPAs to Engage Kinship Families as Soon as Placement has Occurred

- Focus on these families immediately to engage and support them with information on selecting a CPA and through the licensure process.
- As a team and through the foster community, address any barriers to licensure and engage community partners to assist in alleviating the barrier.

Region 8A Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder and provider meeting for Region 8A occurred on September 7, 2023, where Regional Director Leticia Lozano spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements.

DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the regional capacity strategic plan:

- Divinity Family Services;
- Lighthouse Foster Care & Adoptions;
- St. PJ's Children's Home;
- Compass Connections San Antonio Shelter;
- Pathways Youth & Family Services;
- 1 Hope for Kids;
- St. Jude's Ranch for Children;
- Boysville Children's Home and Shelter; and
- DePelchin Children's Center-San Antonio.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Build Support for Foster Homes

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identified the greatest need for basic and moderate foster beds. This need is primarily necessary for ages under 14. Foster parents serving these youth need to have strong supports in place to be successful. The best recruiters for these placements are foster parents who are currently fostering this population. If the region can increase the support for current foster parents who are serving this population, it will be more likely to recruit new foster parents.

Objective 1.1: Hold Regional Disruption Meeting through a Family Group Decision Making Team

- DFPS will partner with members of the youth's support network, prior to a placement disruption, to engage in a meeting with the goal to prevent and stabilize the placement.
- Placement providers will be invited to participate in the meeting to work with

DFPS and the youth's support network, to implement purposeful strategies to mitigate placement disruptions and transition plans.

Objective 1.2: Improve Communication Between DFPS and CPAs

- Assign program directors as liaisons to each regional CPA to promote partnership.
- Promote a culture of partnership between the regional case management team and providers.
- Provide joint training opportunities for region staff and providers.

Objective 1.3: Regional CPAs will Build a Support Network for Foster Parents to Include Respite Care

- Improve communication between DFPS and CPAs during emergency or crisis situations utilizing program director liaison partnerships.
- Build opportunities for providers to share their strategies for support in foster homes through community workgroups.
- Collaborate with community partners regarding alternative respite solutions.

Review of this goal will occur routinely between DFPS leadership and community stakeholders at events such as provider meetings.

Goal 2: Build Capacity for TFFC Homes

TFFC is a program designed to provide innovative, multi-disciplinary treatment services to a child in a highly structured family home environment. The target population for TFFC is children in DFPS conservatorship with high needs and complex trauma history requiring treatment services.

Objective 2.1: Targeted Community Recruitment Efforts for TFFC Homes

The DFPS community liaison will coordinate a community informational event to provide a TFFC overview and give CPAs an opportunity to participate in collaborative recruitment.

Objective 2.2: Collaborative Meetings for Providers

- Provide quarterly TFFC informational meetings for providers.
- Hold collaborative training for foster families interested in becoming a TFFC home.
- Targeted recruitment efforts for older youth age 14 and older.

Objective 2.3: Engage Kinship Caregivers in TFFC Verification

- Encourage and educate kinship caregivers to become TFFC homes.

Review of this goal will occur routinely between DFPS leadership and community stakeholders at events such as provider meetings.

Goal 3: Increase Kinship Caregiver Placements and Verification

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identified a 7 percent decrease for Catchment 8A in kinship placements. Placing children with family members at the onset of a removal or at least within 60 days of a removal is imperative for the children's well-being and stability.

Objective 3.1: DFPS Focused Efforts

CPS will take the following steps to increase placements into kinship caregiver homes:

- Provide caseworker training for family finding and Seneca through Casey Family Program partnership.
- Foster and Adoptive Home Development and Kinship supervisors will attend Child Protective Investigation (CPI) and CPS program meetings to promote permanency from initial placement. These meetings will include discussions on minimum standards and permanency barriers to address from the onset of placement.
- During the initial coordination meeting, family group conference specialists will inquire about the child resource form completion to see if a relative has been identified.
- The Foster and Adopt unit will help identify and address barriers for kinship caregivers to become licensed.
- Regional quality reads will be completed to identify barriers to licensure early

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on to reduce the time to positive permanency.

- CPS will provide informational meetings for kinship caregivers to promote verification.
- Clinical coordinators will assist with family finding efforts.

Review of this goal will occur routinely between DFPS leadership and community stakeholders at events such as provider meetings.

Region 9 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder and provider meeting for Region 9 was held on September 25, 2023, where Tanya Berry, foster and adoptive home development program director, spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase Placement Capacity for Youth 12 and Under

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identifies the need for additional homes and placement options for youth under the age of 12.

Objective 1.1: Providers Will Seek to Increase Capacity

- Continue to identify and prepare families who are willing to accept placement of basic elementary age children and moderate level teenagers within already licensed homes and through recruitment efforts of newly licensed homes.
- Build connections with community resources such as local sports teams, colleges and universities, local business owners, and media outlets to spread foster care awareness and the need for foster and adoptive homes.
- Collaborate to create a region wide foster parent training and networking event. This event will also serve as a recruitment event by requesting that attendees bring a friend interested in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Objective 1.2: Recruitment Efforts for Respite Care

All CPAs agree that if a family is interested in fostering or adopting, once they have all their background checks, CPR certification, and training the family will be encouraged to assist with respite care. This allows for the family to get a true understanding of the age of youth they want placed in their home and the expectations of being a foster home.

Goal 2: Utilize Strategies in Place to Work CPAs and Stakeholders to Reach People Interested in Fostering and Adopting

Objective 2.1: Increase Regional Awareness

- Create a marketing campaign in partnership with West Texas Together to bring awareness to all foster agencies in the region by encouraging people to inquire for information about fostering and adopting.
- Continue joint in-person outreach efforts, events, and question and answer sessions. Sessions continue to be scheduled near the start of foster parent pre-service orientations to keep recruitment momentum going.
- Expand informational meetings to rural counties.

Goal 3: Recruit Foster Placements for Teenagers

The Foster Care Needs Assessment continues to identify the need for additional homes and placements for teens.

Objective 3.1: Utilizing Strategies Already in Place to Work to Reach People with an Interest in Fostering and Adopting Teenagers

- In conjunction with the stakeholders and CPAs, use region wide recruitment events and marketing strategies focused on the recruitment of homes specific for teenagers.
- DFPS will work with local CPAs to match legally free teenagers to adoptive homes.

Region 10 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder and provider meeting for Region 10 was held on September 26, 2023. Tanya Berry, foster and adoptive home development program director, spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase Placement Capacity for Youth 12 and Under and Large Sibling Groups

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identifies the need for additional homes and placement options for youth under the age of 12. To increase placements in the least restrictive environment for this age group, a region wide recruitment plan will be put in place.

Objective 1.1: Determine Availability of Least Restrictive Placement Options

- Continue to evaluate identified barriers within each CPA to taking placements of sibling groups and youth 12 and under through continued monthly meetings.
- Based on the information collected, the CPAs will continue to work jointly to increase capacity for placements in licensed homes with available bed space as well as recruit additional placements.

Goal 2: Develop a Marketing Strategy to Reach the Region 10 Community

Objective 2.1: Grow Capacity by Recruiting Foster Placements

- Build connections with community resources such as local sports teams, colleges and universities, local business owners, and media outlets to spread foster care awareness and the need for foster and adoptive homes.
- Seek out opportunities for businesses to sponsor a region wide marketing campaign as well as seek out sponsors for foster parent appreciation events.

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- Continue the partnership with the El Paso Child Crises Center to host county-wide recruitment events and informational meetings that will be shared via their social media platforms.
- Partner with the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo to recruit Indian Child Welfare Act preferred foster homes for the area.
- Create an event celebrating the foster care community with the theme of “Each One, Reach One” to encourage current foster and adoptive parents to bring along a friend or family member interested in fostering or adopting to a fun filled educational event.

Goal 3: Recruit Foster Placements for Teenagers

The Foster Care Needs Assessment continues to identify the need for additional homes and/or placements for teens.

Objective 3.1: Utilizing Strategies Already in Place to Reach People with an Interest in Fostering and Adopting Teenagers

- In conjunction with the stakeholders and CPAs, county wide recruitment events and marketing strategies will occur solely focusing on the recruitment of homes specific for teenagers.
- Presentation materials and recruitment materials will be provided for use at staff meetings or posted in Department areas throughout the University of El Paso, El Paso Community College, and the local high school foster care liaisons to recruit new foster and adoptive homes for teenagers.

Region 11 Plan to Increase Capacity

A provider meeting for Region 11A and 11B occurred on September 18, 2023, where the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed, and a regional/catchment data presentation was shared focusing on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for fiscal year 2024.

DFPS would like to thank the following agencies who participated in the creation of this plan:

- The Ark Assessment Center and Emergency Shelter for Youth;
- Arrow Child and Family Ministries;
- The Bair Foundation Child and Family Ministries;
- Buckner Children and Family Services;
- Upbring;
- Families Especial Foster Care and Adoption Services;
- Giocosa Foster Care and Adoption Services; and
- A World for Children.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase the Number of Basic and Specialized Foster Homes

The Foster Care Needs Assessment indicates the greatest need in Regions 11A and 11B is for Specialized Foster Homes for children ages 0 to 17.

Objective 1.1: DFPS Faith-Based and Community Engagement Unit will Assist in the Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents From Faith-Based Organizations

- CPS regional staff will provide data and demographic information to the child welfare boards to provide to prospective foster parents with information to start the fostering process. Staff will also collaborate with the community to build Welfare boards in those counties that do not have an existing one.
- CPAs will tap into their local child welfare boards for foster family support,

activities, and how the boards can assist in permanency for children.

- Faith-based and community engagement staff and CPAs will support existing families through functions, awareness events, respite care, and continue to help build existing family's capacities.
- CPS regional staff will keep CPA information in handouts updated.
- CPS regional staff and CPAs will continue to have collaborative meetings to provide information to prospective families in face-to-face and virtual settings. Collaborative meetings will allow perspective families the ability to choose which agency in which they would like to work.

Objective 1.2: CPAs will Continue Working to Increase the Number of Available Beds for Children

- Regional CPAs agree to continue working together to set up ways to recruit new foster families.
- CPAs will continue to hold and attend recruitment awareness events throughout the region.
- CPAs will make efforts to expand existing foster family's capacity and reach out to current respite care providers and inquire if they would consider taking placements of moderate or specialized service level children.
- CPAs will try to recruit foster homes that can work with children who have medical needs and are classified as primary medical needs children.

Goal 2: Increase the Likelihood a CPA and GRO will Accept a Child, Including Children Without Placement, When They Have Open Beds and can Meet the Child's Needs

Objective 2.1: CPAs and GROs will Continue Working with CPU and CPS to Provide Information and Identify Available Beds

- DFPS in collaboration with CPAs and GROs will conduct and facilitate match meetings, preplacement visits, and virtual interviews with children without placement to provide as much information about the child as possible to find a placement willing and able to meet his or her needs.
- The clinical coordinators will continue to setup interagency meetings for children

currently without placement or at risk of being without placement. These meetings will include primary staff and subject matter experts to discuss the child's unmet mental health needs, refer to daily superior health update through STAR Health, and discuss next steps to support the child.

Objective 2.2: CPAs will work to Improve Comfort Level While Interacting with Residential Child Care Licensing and Heightened Monitoring Representatives

- CPAs have expressed concern that interacting with Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) can be intimidating for foster parents and CPA employees.
- CPA employees agreed to invite RCCL and Heightened Monitoring HM staff to trainings, meetings, and other events to help foster communication, relationships and understanding.
- RCCL will be sending out information about forums throughout the fiscal year to DFPS and CPAs which will include new and upcoming licensing regulations and changes. These forums will allow for comments and questions to ensure everyone fully understands the changes taking place.
- CPAs will continue to invite CPS leadership to foster parent events and agency meetings.

Objective 2.3: CPS Staff will Place Special Emphasis on Strengthening Kinship Placements and Offering Maximum Support

- Region 11 staff will continue to focus on placing children in safe kinship placements.
- Upon learning of potential kinship placements, CPI and Family Based Safety Services staff will complete the preliminary kinship assessment in attempts to place children with appropriate relatives at the beginning of a case.
- Throughout the case, DFPS staff will continue to utilize the Collaborative Family Engagement model to identify kinship caregivers who may be considered for not only placement, but also to provide support and assistance to caregivers who are able to be the primary caregivers.
- Agape Ranch will continue to provide respite through the citywide respite program.
- Communication between DFPS Conservatorship and Foster and Adoptive Home

Fiscal Year 2024 Capacity Building Plan

Development staff will be strengthened by ensuring Foster and Adoptive Home Development staff is invited to legal meetings and informed of court decisions. Furthermore, any changes to the licensing process will be relayed to the CPA.

- Region 11 risk managers will conduct reviews of any kinship homes where placement was ordered although there was an unfavorable home study. This will provide an assessment of what additional services may be needed to ensure the children are in safe placements and overall needs are being met.

Objective 2.4: CPAs will Provide DFPS with Their New Agency Goals to Increase Foster Care Capacity at the Beginning of Their New Fiscal Year in January 2024

- Region 11 CPS staff will obtain CPAs' plans to increase capacity in the region after the start of their new fiscal year on January 1, 2024.
- Each CPA will provide DFPS with their agency's plans geared toward increasing foster care capacity within the region, monthly.
- CPS will continue to have a forum at the quarterly provider meeting to present progress on goals.
- CPAs will make all efforts to have a representative present at all informational meetings.

Goal 3: Increase the Placement of Sibling Groups Together and Build Capacity for Sibling Groups in the Foster Care System

Region 11 will explore all possibilities to keep siblings together. If siblings cannot be placed together, then every effort will be made to place siblings in homes within the same CPA and near each other to ensure visits and connections are maintained.

Objective 3.1: CPS will Work to Ensure Siblings are Placed Together and Remain Together Throughout Their Time in Foster Care

- CPAs will focus their attention on larger capacity homes and provide extra attention and support to help maintain sibling bonding and capacity.
- CPAs will remind foster parents of the importance of sibling connection, and the need for them to promote and facilitate sibling visits and interaction.
- CPAs will continue to work with DFPS to explore options to reunite siblings in foster homes.

Objective 3.2: When Siblings are Separated, CPS will Continue Working to Place Them Together or Within Close Proximity

- DFPS staff will continue to hold sibling separation meetings. CPAs will send DFPS information on siblings within their agency in separate foster homes to assist with efforts to reunify siblings who are separated.
- DFPS will utilize the new General Placement Search function to assist in placing siblings near one another.
- CPAs will ensure General Placement Search information is updated and accurate to reflect current census.

Goal 4: Increase RTC Beds for Teens and Establish Psychiatric Transition Services

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identified 28 RTC and 31 psychiatric transition beds are needed for Region 11 in fiscal year 2024. DFPS will continue to voice the need for residential treatment and psychiatric transition placements at stakeholder meetings. DFPS will be available to partner with local hospitals and psychiatric services and discuss the implementation of specialized programs to meet the needs of youth.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
CPA	Child Placing Agency
CPI	Child Protective Investigations
CPS	Child Protective Services
CPU	Centralized Placement Unit
DFPS	Department of Family and Protective Services
ECI	Early Childhood Intervention
GRO	General Residential Operations
LBHA	Local Behavioral Health Authority
LMHA	Local Mental Health Authority
RCCL	Residential Child Care Licensing
RTC	Residential Treatment Center
TFFC	Treatment Family Foster Care
YES	Youth Empowerment Services