

Child Protective Services Business Plan

Fiscal Year 2017



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Table of Contents

CPS Mission, Vision, and Values.....	2
Introduction from the Associate Commissioner	3
CPS Fiscal Year 2017 Business Plan	6
Historical Trends and FY 17 Targets.....	7
Goal 1: Maximize the Safety of Children and Youth Served by the CPS System	8
Objective 1.1: Improve Safety Decision Making Across All Stages of Service	9
Goal 1: Maximize the Safety of Children and Youth Served by the CPS System	11
Objective 1.2: Engage Families and Safety Networks to Keep Children Safe	11
Goal 2: Maximize Permanency for Children and Youth.....	12
Served by CPS.....	12
Objective 2.1: Maximize Placements with Kinship Families	14
Objective 2.2: Ensure Permanency Through Reunification, Permanent Placement with Relatives, or Adoption	16
Objective 2.3: Partner with Advocates and Communities to Help Achieve Permanency for Children and Families	17
Objective 2.4: Contract for Services and Supports to Help Achieve Permanency for Children and Families	18
Goal 3: Maximize the Well-being of Children and Youth Served by CPS.....	19
Objective 3.1: Support Children’s Physical and Behavioral Health.....	21
Objective 3.2 Support Children’s Education Outcomes.....	22
Objective 3.3: Safeguard Children’s Other Well-being Needs.....	23
Goal 4: Maximize Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development to Ensure a Professional and Stable Workforce	24
Objective 4.1: Increase Quality of Job Candidates for Frontline Hiring.....	25
Objective 4.2: Ensure Staff Are Adequately Trained and Prepared to do Their Job.....	26
Objective 4.3: Leverage Technology and Operational Supports	27
Objective 4.4: Create an Environment That Promotes Retention	28
Goal 5: Goal 5: Integrate Continuous Quality Improvement Across All Stages of Service	29
Objective 5.1: Continue Development of an Integrated Continuous Quality Improvement System that Effectively Uses Data and Information to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families.	30
Appendix A: Definitions for Key Measures of Safety, Permanency, Well-Being, and Workforce	31
Appendix B: CPS Stages of Service	33
Appendix C: Texas CPS Core Practice Competencies.....	35
Appendix D: Organizational Charts.....	36

CPS Mission, Vision, and Values

Child Protective Services (CPS) responds to reports of child abuse or neglect to assess whether any child in the reported family is in danger. If danger is present, CPS determines whether parents are willing and able to keep children safe. If CPS concludes that children are not safe, the caseworker opens the case for services.

CPS Mission

We partner with families and communities to address child abuse and neglect by practicing in a way that ensures safety, permanency, and well-being for the children and youth we serve.

CPS Vision

Children First: Protected and Connected

CPS Values

Our values represent the ideals we share and serve as broad guidelines for every situation.

Respect

We show respect to the children, youth, and families we serve by demonstrating our understanding that they are more than the reason that brought them to us, and by seeking ways for them to guide the help they receive.

Commitment

We display our commitment through pursuit of the best outcome for each of the children, youth, and families we serve, knowing our interventions have important implications for them.

Integrity

We demonstrate integrity by communicating to the children, youth, and families we serve about our purpose and how we make decisions in a way that is easily understood, and when we follow through on our words and obligations to them.

Equity

We achieve equity in outcomes by applying our methods fairly and consistently, and customizing our interventions to the unique cultural and community context of the children, youth, and families we serve.

Urgency

We work with a sense of urgency to reach safety, permanency, and well-being concurrently for every child and youth we serve, and this is reflected in each of our interventions.

Introduction from the Associate Commissioner

Guided by two internal and external reviews which drew heavily from input of staff across Texas, including one by the Sunset Advisory Commission, in 2014, Child Protective Services (CPS) identified priority changes to improve the way CPS does business. Since that time, CPS has undergone a comprehensive, field-driven effort to guide the transformation of the agency and establish a culture of learning, constantly striving for improvement while remaining steady on our mission and vision for success.

In May 2016, Commissioner H.L. Whitman, Jr. and I joined the agency. We are committed to continuing and building on the Transformation efforts already underway. In July 2016, Commissioner Whitman emphasized the positive efforts underway and in his 10-point plan for the agency, highlighted the importance of continuing Transformation efforts to improve the ability of caseworkers to succeed in protecting children and free caseworkers to spend more time with families. Numerous changes have been implemented with a positive impact, but there is much work remaining to truly transform our system.

The Transformation efforts set in motion in fiscal years 2015 and 2016 had the following goals:

- Ensure child safety, permanency and well-being
- Develop a professional and stable workforce
- Establish an Effective Organization and Operations

Many of these changes are in place with indications of system improvement. However, the culture change of "Transformation" takes time to manifest into improved outcomes and much of the work over the past two years has been to help staff learn about and adapt to the changes. This annual business plan incorporates all of the Transformation metrics and sets specific targets for improvement in the upcoming year. The overall goal of CPS is sustained progress over time, which is reflected in targets for individual metrics, rather than large changes from fiscal year to fiscal year.

In fiscal year 2017, CPS has the opportunity to look back and evaluate the changes emanating from Transformation and to determine the successes, the areas taking root, and areas that may require a change in course. Transformation will continue to be field driven. Input from the field regarding the impact of initiatives is critical to our success. The agency should continue transforming in our effort to improve the most important outcomes for children and families: safety, permanency, and well-being.

Certain fundamental principles remain at the core of our efforts.

Child safety remains our first objective. The implementation of Structured Decision Making[®] (SDM) safety and risk assessment tools has helped investigative caseworkers and managers make difficult case decisions. SDM tools follow a structured series of steps that support consistent decision making based on historical data. In fiscal year 2017, we will expand the use of these tools to the FBSS and CVS stages.

Children fare better when time spent in the foster care system is minimized. The [Permanency Strategic Plan](#) defines and focuses CPS' efforts to more quickly achieve permanency for children in state custody. CPS works toward reunification with family, permanent placement with relatives, or adoption as successful permanency outcomes. Emancipation from foster care is not a positive outcome. The Permanency Strategic Plan outlines a goal to reach permanency more quickly for all children, with special focus on two specific groups of children – those under age six who have been in care for two or more years and youth aging out of the foster care system. In fiscal year 2016, CPS implemented action

plans at the state and regional level in collaboration with stakeholder partners to work toward ambitious permanency targets in these areas. For fiscal year 2017, these plans are incorporated in regional business plans.

The services we can make available to children while in our care make a difference. On September 1, 2016, CPS implemented the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment and the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment, a result of the work of Senate Bill 125 passed during the 84th legislative session which mandates a standard assessment process. These tools are designed to help us better identify services at the front end to improve outcomes. Further, we look forward to moving to the use of performance based contracts tied to outcomes for children and families.

We must always listen for the voice of the child. CPS' practice approach emphasizes the importance of engaging children to make sure they have a say both in what needs to change in their families and in shaping their foster care experience. Understanding each child's worries and needs helps us support them and their family. Making sure children in foster care have access to the same activities and opportunities as children not in foster care is part of this important responsibility. CPS will continue working with our residential partners in the year ahead to better meet normalcy expectations.

We must engage families in the process. At the heart of our work are the actions we carry out to engage with families to address danger and risk for children and create lasting safety beyond the time that our intervention has ended. Our values tell us the responsibility for creating safety for children lies primarily with the family. We use our authority to protect children while developing a relationship with caregivers based on respect and the belief that all individuals are capable of change

Collaboration with internal and external partners is essential to produce good outcomes. CPS is not alone in our work to protect children. Many internal and external partners support our efforts. Within DFPS, we coordinate with our intake, adult protection, and prevention and early intervention programs, and rely on agency operational support. Within the child welfare community, we interact daily at the state and regional level to partner with advocates, community-based organizations, the judicial system, and contractors to serve children and families. This business plan highlights the significance of these partnerships and their vital function to our work.

Our contracted service providers are especially critical to our work. Foster Care Redesign remains a strategic long-term effort to improve the well-being of children and families in the child welfare system. The goal of redesign is to better partner with foster care and service providers to improve safety, reduce the time to permanency, increase stability in placements, and ensure the right capacity for children in foster care. In fiscal year 2017, we move forward with a demonstration on performance based contracting with a group of thirty-six residential care providers. This work will facilitate a move to performance based contracting with all providers for fiscal year 2018.

To have the best system, we must have the best staff. Our success relies on having a skilled and stable workforce. We must hire the right candidates, provide meaningful training and effective supervision and support, and give them opportunities to grow within the agency as the next generation of leaders. Developing supervisors and management at all levels of the agency is essential to providing caseworkers the guidance and support they need to be successful.

CPS will continue to evolve and identify new improvements because that is part of the vision of Transformation. The CPS operational review conducted in spring 2014, along with the Sunset review, identified the issues and solutions that led to Transformation. Moving forward, CPS has developed a

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program to help sustain positive change and drive ongoing systems improvement. Under a CQI structure, there is no point at which an agency can consider its improvement efforts done. Instead, the CQI structure helps us use data to evaluate where CPS currently stands, identify where we need to go, develop and implement key strategies to get there, and then start the process again. Our work to improve the system is an ongoing process.

The following plan lays out CPS state-level goals, objectives, and action items for fiscal year 2017 and how success will be measured.

CPS Fiscal Year 2017 Business Plan

The goal of CPS is to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for the children we serve. Metrics for measuring safety, permanency and well-being help CPS evaluate program goals, particularly those set through Transformation efforts. Appendix A provides definitions for each metric.

To achieve these goals for children, CPS needs to build and maintain a professional and stable workforce and continue the change efforts and momentum of transformation. To evaluate the strength of its workforce, CPS will track turnover by tenure and stage of service along with Survey of Employee Engagement results related to job expectations, communication practices, and feeling valued - all areas where CPS has historically scored low. Administered statewide to all government agencies every other year, the last Survey of Employee Engagement was conducted in April 2016. The results are currently being analyzed by region in order to develop meaningful plans to address areas of concern and build on our strengths.

CPS must also further develop a culture of learning by using our continuous quality improvement structure to assess progress and as the basis for ongoing change efforts. To evaluate the development of its continuous quality improvement efforts, CPS will track key milestones that need to be achieved.

For this fiscal year 2017 business plan, CPS examined historical trends for safety, permanency, well-being, and workforce metrics to identify those that have been improving and those in decline. Historical trends over time allow CPS to understand where it has been, where it currently stands, and where it is headed if trends continue. This helps CPS to proactively and more effectively identify and target strategies to build on areas of strength and improve areas of weakness.

The specific strategies CPS is implementing are discussed in detail in the sections on Safety (Goal 1), Permanency (Goal 2), Well-Being (Goal 3), Developing a Professional and Stable Workforce (Goal 4) and Continuous Quality Improvement (Goal 5).

For each metric on safety, permanency, and well-being, CPS identified aggressive targets for desired achievement. While the goal is always to deliver the best outcomes for children and families, and to produce the highest quality workforce, CPS identified targets that recognize the progress required to meet these goals while at the same time setting a high bar. CPS estimated continued trends based on recent data and identified targets based on these estimates as follows:

- For metrics that are already trending close to 100 percent, the target is 100 percent.
- For metrics that are not close to 100 percent but where the trend over time shows improvement, the target is to not only maintain but improve upon the estimated trend. (10 percent improvement)
- For metrics that have been declining or have remained flat over time, the target is to improve performance by at least 5 percent from FY 16 performance.
- For time to permanency, the target for FY 17 is consistent with the progress needed to reach the overall goal of safely reducing the average time to achieve permanency by 25 percent by 2020.
- For the number of youth 18 and over in foster care, CPS initially wants to increase the number of youth who opt to stay in extended foster care beyond age 18 to support readiness for full independence. Over time, CPS will adjust the target to reflect the desired increase in the number of youth reaching permanency before they are 18.

For new measures, the target is to improve performance by 10 percent.

In its planning for each succeeding year, CPS will use the data regarding how actual performance compared to its targets to develop and adjust plans and strategies moving forward. The historical trends and fiscal year 2017 targets are detailed in the table below. Definitions for measures are in Appendix A.

Historical Trends and FY 17 Targets

	Historical Performance					FY 17 Target
	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	
Safety						
Recidivism for Alternative Response	-	-	-	-	1.6%	1.4%
Recidivism for Investigations	6.6%	7.1%	7.5%	7.7%	7.5%	7.1%
Recidivism for Family Based Safety Services	7.5%	7.2%	7.8%	7.6%	7.6%	7.2%
Recidivism for Conservatorship	11.1%	11.6%	11.9%	11.5%	11.7%	11.1%
Permanency						
Time to permanency (reunification, permanent placement with relative, adoption) in months	18.5	18.9	18.8	18.4	18.3	17.3
Exits to permanency for children in care 2 or more years	28%	31%	32%	33%	34%	37%
Visiting with parents and siblings in foster Care *	-	-	-	-	81%	89%
Children in substitute care placed with relatives	39%	40%	41%	42%	43%	47%
Average number of placements for children in foster care	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.8
Well-Being**						
Children's educational needs are met	97%	97%	96%	93%	99%	100%
Children's physical health needs are met	93%	89%	91%	87%	91%	100%
Children's mental/behavioral health needs are met	94%	92%	91%	88%	97%	100%
Youth completing PAL	75%	76%	76%	73%	76%	80%
Youth 18 and older living in foster care	602	634	615	656	648	733
Siblings in substitute care placed together	64%	66%	66%	65%	65%	68%
Workforce						
Turnover for CPS overall	26%	26%	25%	26%	25%	21%
Turnover for Investigations***	34%	32%	34%	33%	33%	28%
Turnover for Family Based Safety Services	26%	25%	23%	28%	25%	21%
Turnover for Conservatorship	24%	22%	23%	23%	23%	19%

*Although visitation in foster care is not a new permanency data measure for Round 3 of the Child and Family Services Review, the federal definition changed making past data not comparable. This will be collected through case reads.

**Fiscal Year 2015 data for educational, physical and behavioral health needs are based on Child and Family Service Case reviews through Quarter 3. For FY 16, data is through Quarter 2.

*** Turnover for Alternative Response is included in Investigations turnover.

Goal 1: Maximize the Safety of Children and Youth Served by the CPS System

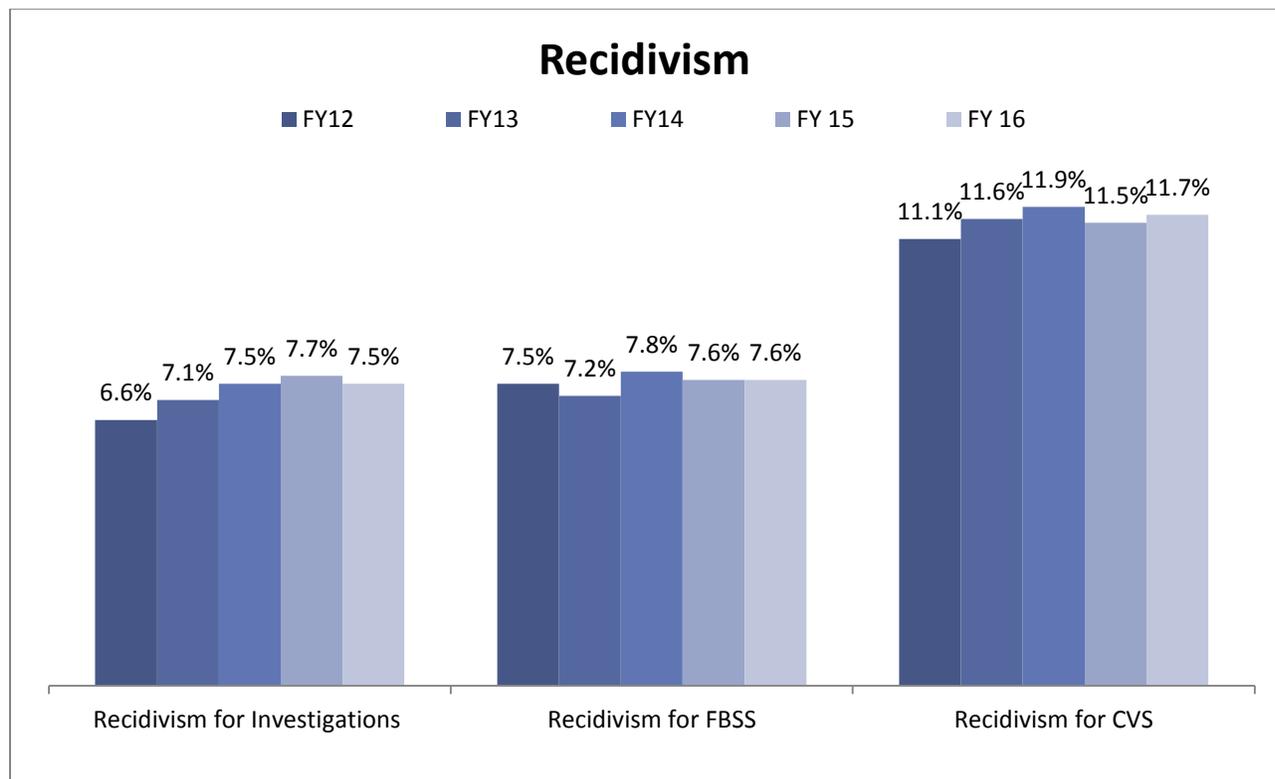
Outcome Measures

- Reduced recurrence after an investigation is closed without services.
- Reduced recurrence after termination of Family Based Safety Services.
- Reduced recurrence after exiting state custody to reunification.

At its core, CPS works to create safety for children and families. The ultimate measure of safety for children is when CPS decides that a child will be safe without ongoing CPS intervention and supervision and the child actually remains safe. CPS measures whether a child remains safe by whether a child in a case closed by CPS has a subsequent confirmed investigation or a family preservation or substitute care case, which is also referred to as recurrence.

CPS looks at recurrence for 12 months after CPS supervision ends. As a result, this is a "lagging" measure meaning it reflects past rather than current services and decisions. For example, recurrence in fiscal year 2016 is generally a reflection of services delivered in fiscal year 2015.

FIGURE 1: RECIDIVISM RATES FY 12-16



*Goal 1: Maximize the Safety of Children and Youth
Served by the CPS System*

Objective 1.1: Improve Safety Decision Making Across All Stages of Service

Leads: CPS Investigations/Alternative Response/Family Based Safety Services Division and CPS Permanency Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Systems Improvement, CPS Division of Practice Excellence, CPS Purchased Client Services, DFPS Office of Child Safety, DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence, and DFPS Information Resource Management
- Stakeholder Resources: Domestic violence stakeholders, Children’s Advocacy Centers™ of Texas, and residential child care contractors.

Action Plan

- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to review the recommendations from the annual fatality report from the Office of Child Safety and develop strategies to address critical recommendations based on identified trends and patterns.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS is working multiple strategies to improve timeliness of face to face contacts in all stages of service. Implementation of alternative shifts, teaming work, use of Special Investigators on serious physical abuse and sexual abuse cases and other initiatives are being deployed.
 - Goal for timely face to face contact in investigations is 90% for Priority 2 reports and 95% for Priority 1 reports.
 - Goal for face to face contact in Family Based Safety Services is 90%.
 - Goal in Conservatorship is 95%.
- **In September of 2016**, all Special Investigators (SIs) received a specialized training on forensic interviewing and advanced child abuse investigations. Curriculum is being developed from this training and the SIs will provide this training to all investigation staff.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, the Office of Child Safety will provide advanced physical abuse training for all investigation staff. The trainings have been held in October 2016 and will continue thru November 2016.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, Child Safety Specialists will continue to provide real-time feedback on safety issues, including the proper use of Structured Decision Making® concepts and assessments into practice, using a structured investigations case reading guide to further deepen caseworker skills.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, Texas Children’s Advocacy Centers™ will continue the statewide roll-out of the Multi-disciplinary Enhancement Program (MEP) with an additional 10 Children’s Advocacy Centers™. This will bring the total number of Children’s Advocacy Centers™ participating in the MEP to 58 of the 70 centers in Texas. The additional 10 centers joining MEP began receiving SWI reports on September 1, 2016, with almost 350 law enforcement agencies participating.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS and Children’s Advocacy Centers™ of Texas will continue to explore the viability of creating a portal or some other form of access into the IMPACT system for the Children’s Advocacy Centers™ across the state.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, Parental Child Safety Placements (PCSP) will continue to be reviewed by both State Office and R3 PCSP staff. Targeted reviews of new placements will continue. Follow up

contact with PCSP caregivers to address potential service needs will continue to occur.

- **On September 1, 2016**, CPS implemented the SDM Family Strengths and Needs Assessment for all cases new to FBSS and CVS. This assessment will aid caseworkers in identifying and prioritizing interventions for caregivers.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to conduct FBSS real-time case reads statewide. The case reads target limited resources to cases that data show are at a higher risk of serious recurrence while the stage is open to identify critical safety issues, and communicate and address concerns.
- **In October 2016**, CPS will post an RFP for a pilot in Region 10, which covers El Paso and the upper Rio Grande Valley, with services beginning in April 2017. The plan is to contract with a single external entity to purchase full array of needed services for children and families in the FBSS stage. The model will use a performance-based contract, and will include a comprehensive evaluation to assess effectiveness of service provision.

*Goal 1: Maximize the Safety of Children and Youth
Served by the CPS System*

Objective 1.2: Engage Families and Safety Networks to Keep Children Safe

Leads: CPS Investigations/Alternative Response/Family Based Safety Services Division and CPS Permanency Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Investigation/Family Based Safety Services Transformation Team, CPS Division of Practice Excellence, CPS Systems Improvement, CPS Disproportionality Team, DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics, and DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence.
- Stakeholder Resources: Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Council on Family Violence, Kempe Foundation, and Casey Family Programs, and purchased client services contractors.

Action Plan

- **During fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to evaluate the roll-out and use of the Structured Decision Making Safety and Risk Assessments to ensure the tools are successful in assisting caseworkers as they make decisions about the safety and risk of children..
- **In December 2016**, CPS will complete statewide rollout of a new case transfer process from Investigations to Family Based Safety Services that seeks to initiate family preservation services early on in an investigation to more urgently serve families while they are in crisis. To further support this process CPS has requested the ability to open the FBSS stage in IMPACT while the Investigation is still open. This is part of IMPACT modernization.
- **By March 2017**, CPS will make available new subject matter guides on Domestic Violence, Mental Health and Substance Abuse.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to implement Alternative Response in three additional regions for a total of eight regions. Regions 1 and 11 rolled out in fiscal year 2015, and Regions 3, 7, and 9 rolled out in fiscal year 2016. Alternative Response is a family engagement approach used to respond to certain lower risk cases. CPS does not identify alleged perpetrators or give case disposition (finding of abuse/neglect). Work continues to embed the AR practice in the regions that have already implemented.

Goal 2: Maximize Permanency for Children and Youth Served by CPS

Outcome Measures

- Reduced time to permanency (placement with relatives, reunification, and adoption).
- Increased exits to permanency for African American children
- Increased placement stability.
- Increased visitation with parents and siblings for children in foster care.
- Increased placement of children in substitute care with relatives.
- Reduced average number of placements in foster care.
- Expand faith-based supports. Number of counties with care portals: short term goal of 100 and long term goal of 254.

Once CPS removes a child from their home and takes legal custody, the agency has a responsibility to keep the child in a safe and stable placement close to home and with their family, whenever possible. But a safe, stable placement, even if it is close to home and with family, might only be a temporary solution. CPS must ensure the child finds a safe, forever family as soon as possible.

The stability of children in substitute care continues to improve, meaning fewer placement moves for children in foster care and more children living with their relatives.

PLACEMENT STABILITY

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
Average number of placements in foster care ¹	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1
Children in substitute care placed with relatives ²	39%	40%	41%	42%	43%

DFPS defines permanency as reunification, permanent placement with relatives or adoption. While aging out of care is a Federal permanency goal, for the state of Texas, real permanency is leaving the CPS system with a family.

With respect to quickly moving children out of CPS custody, time to permanency has remained relatively unchanged. CPS has improved finding permanency for children in care two or more years, although there is still much work to be done. In fiscal year 2016, more than one out of three children who had been in care two or more years at the start of the fiscal year exited CPS custody to a permanent home.

PERMANENCY

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
Time to permanency (reunification, permanent placement with relative, adoption) in months	18.5	18.9	18.8	18.4	18.3
Exits to permanency for children in care 2 or more years	28%	31%	32%	33%	34%

CPS remains committed to examining race and ethnicity data to determine outcome disparities for children of color. CPS data continues to show that African American children are less likely to reunify than Anglo and Hispanic children; but the gap narrowed in fiscal year 2016. Children of color, however, are more likely to be placed with relatives. Even with the higher rate of relative placement, children of color are less likely to be adopted within 12 months of termination of parental rights; the disparity is especially apparent for African Americans. CPS acknowledges that an examination of data related to these outcomes is essential to develop and implement strategies. As CPS seeks to identify barriers to permanency, disparity for children of color will continue to be analyzed.

EXITS FROM FOSTER CARE BY TYPE AND RACE AND ETHNICITY

	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Exits to reunification³					
African American	27%	27%	26%	27%	29%
Anglo	33%	31%	31%	31%	31%
Hispanic	36%	36%	33%	32%	31%
Native American*	33%	5%	23%	20%	14%
Other	34%	33%	28%	33%	32%
Exits to Relatives⁴					
African American	62%	64%	64%	65%	66%
Anglo	63%	63%	62%	66%	64%
Hispanic	65%	66%	68%	68%	67%
Native American*	64%	30%	50%	50%	83%
Other	62%	59%	65%	65%	68%
Adopted w/in 12 months of termination of parental rights⁵					
African American	39%	41%	40%	44%	45%
Anglo	54%	57%	55%	55%	58%
Hispanic	49%	51%	53%	53%	54%
Native American*	0%	25%	50%	33%	17%
Other	60%	54%	52%	52%	59%

*The number of Native American children in CPS is relatively small and, as a result, the percentages may fluctuate significantly making it difficult to draw conclusions about trends over time.

*Goal 2: Maximize Permanency for Children and Youth
Served by CPS*

Objective 2.1: Maximize Placements with Kinship Families

Lead: CPS Permanency Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Reunification and Permanency Transformation Team, CPS Investigations/Alternative Response/Family Based Safety Services Division, CPS Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) Division, CPS Disproportionality Team.
- Stakeholder Resources: Court Appointed Special Advocates, Star Health, Superior, Cenpatico, Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families, and the Texas judicial system.

Action Plan

- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will continue to partner with Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates to expand Collaborative Family Engagement. The goal of Collaborative Family Engagement is to create better outcomes for children in the Texas child protection system by identifying, locating and engaging family members and other committed adults so they may be involved in the child's care and permanency planning.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will use annual adoption savings to implement a program to provide support to relatives who assume permanent custody of children through permanent managing conservatorship. The new "post permanency support" program (similar to the current post adoption support program for non-relatives) would provide monetary support for items such as case management and therapy as a strategy to support relatives and prevent placement breakdowns. The program will be implemented and evaluated on a small scale prior to statewide rollout. The Request for Proposals has been posted and is now closed. It is anticipated that a contract will be awarded and executed by November 2016 and operational by January 2017. Services will initially be available in regions 6A, 6B and 11.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to devote resources to support timely out of state relative/kinship homes studies and placements to keep children with families and support permanency.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will begin a Kinship Collaboration Group comprised of adults serving in the role of kinship caregiver. This group will inform CPS efforts to improve the kinship program by identifying ways to better support kinship caregivers.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to analyze findings for the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption & Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG) Project. The findings will help guide kinship program development. The QIC-AG Project is targeting children in Texas Permanent Managing Conservatorship in Region 7 and is designed to evaluate models of support and intervention to guardianship caregivers with the ultimate goal of achieving long-term, stable permanency in guardianship homes. The QIC -AG grant is being evaluated by the University of Texas at Austin through the National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG). The QIC-AG is funded through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. This is a 5-year initiative. At the conclusion of the initiative, the QIC-AG will have rigorously evaluated evidence-based models of support and intervention so that the most effective programs

and methods can be replicated in child welfare systems across the country.

- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will increase the use of Star Health services to support and stabilize placements of children and youth in kinship placement.

Goal 2: Maximize permanency for children/youth served by CPS

Objective 2.2: Ensure Permanency Through Reunification, Permanent Placement with Relatives, or Adoption

Lead: CPS Permanency Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Regional leadership teams, CPS Reunification and Permanency Transformation Team, CPS Systems Improvement, CPS Division of Practice Excellence, CPS Foster and Adoption Development Division, and CPS Disproportionality Team.
- Stakeholder Resources: Children's Commission, Harris County Child Protective Services, Casey Family Programs, Chapin Hall, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Harris County Stakeholder Workgroup, parent advocates, and youth alumnae.

Action Plan

- **On September 1, 2016**, CPS implemented the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA). This tool acts as a guide to prioritize services on the family plan of service allowing for the most critical needs to be identified and addressed. The tool will assess changes in family functioning over time.
- **By December 2016**, DFPS will finalize the analysis of the permanency data from 2016. CPS will convene a team of state office and regional leadership to review permanency targets, readjust targets if necessary and enhance regional business plans to address identified targets.
- **By March 2017**, CPS will work with field staff and regional management to improve the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE) data warehouse reports in the system to more accurately reflect children who need to be updated and will assist the field in monitoring and ensuring reports are updated regularly. DFPS will also provide clarification to field staff and regional management regarding policy and seek input on methods to help increase policy compliance.
- **By March 2017**, CPS will initiate a statewide cleanup of the TARE system using existing data warehouse reports. This will include ensuring children who should be registered on TARE have profiles published within the established timeframe as well as ensuring outdated profiles and pictures are updated according to policy. DFPS will direct appropriate field staff to examine the report specific to their region and complete within the established timeframe. Once the initial cleanup is completed, field management will review data warehouse reports at least once monthly to ensure staff is in compliance with TARE policy. State Office will continue to help notify regions when profiles are outdated and follow up with regional management if not addressed timely.
- **In March 2017**, DFPS will finalize analysis of data generated by permanency roundtables, including data on race and ethnicity, in IMPACT. Permanency Roundtables are internal case consultations to develop permanency action plans for children not in their intended permanency placements. Analysis of the data will allow CPS to identify trends and barriers to permanency regionally and statewide to inform practice efforts.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue implementation of the suite of Structured Decision Making tools for conservatorship which will lead to better identification of reunification readiness.

Goal 2: Maximize Permanency for Children and Youth Served by CPS

Objective 2.3: Partner with Advocates and Communities to Help Achieve Permanency for Children and Families

Lead: CPS Permanency Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Systems Improvement, CPS Foster and Adoption Development Division.
- Stakeholder Resources: Advisory Council for Promoting the Adoption of Minority Children; Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families; Faith Communities; and Court Appointed Special Advocates; CPS Parent Collaboration Groups.

Action Plan

- **In November 2017**, CPS will collaborate with the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families and child welfare judges to present a session at the annual child welfare judicial conference designed to discuss ways the judiciary can improve and support regional permanency efforts. The conference is scheduled for November 14 and 15, 2017.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to expand Texas faith-based initiatives by supporting congregations developing "orphan care ministries" to respond to the needs of children, youth and families.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will partner with Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates to improve the CASA Case Connection portal, making it more user-friendly and allowing for the upload of CASA reports into Case Connection.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to seek engagement of statewide and regional Parent Collaboration Groups on improvements to practice, policy and service provision.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to collaborate with private providers to expand placement capacity for the children served by CPS.

Goal 2: Maximize Permanency for Children and Youth served by CPS

Objective 2.4: Contract for Services and Supports to Help Achieve Permanency for Children and Families

Leads: CPS Permanency Division, CPS Purchased Client Services Division

- Internal Resources: CPS Placement Division, CPS Foster Care Redesign Division, CPS Systems Improvement, CPS Reunification and Permanency Transformation Team, DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention, DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics.
- Stakeholders Resources: HHSC Forecasting, CPS Public Private Partnership, Single Source Continuum Contractors, Purchased Client Services Performance Measures Workgroup, Committee for Advancing Residential Practices, and residential child care contractors.

Action Plan

- **In December 2017**, a statewide foster care Needs Assessment will be finalized. The Occupancy Analysis has been completed and shared with external providers. HHSC is providing forecasting data which, in conjunction with the Occupancy Analysis, will produce the statewide Needs Assessment. This will be used to project the locations and types of foster care services needed. DFPS will use this information to determine its annual procurement schedule.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, with the above-mentioned Needs Assessment available, CPS will continue to implement a plan for building residential child care quality and capacity in key areas of need across the state, including seeking evidence-based treatment programs that serve children in the least restrictive settings.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to implement Foster Care Redesign to promote a community-based approach to service coordination and delivery, increase capacity, ensure quality, and improve outcomes for children and families. CPS will procure for a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) in Region 2 with contract execution estimated for January 2017. CPS will also expand to stage 2 in Region 3 counties served by the SSCC. In stage 2, the SSCC provides the full continuum of contracted client services including treatment services for parents.
- **By February 2017**, CPS will implement a single Child Plan of Service to reduce duplication and improve service provision. Region 2 is piloting the form and the meeting model currently. The use of a uniform single child plan document that will be required of contracted providers in February 2017.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will conduct a thorough data analysis based on data gathered on adoption dissolutions to identify factors contributing to dissolutions which will inform policy and practice related to adoption services, including purchased services. The CPS Systems Improvement Division will provide technical assistance.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will post a new procurement for evaluation and treatment services and establish new contract monitoring processes that focus on quality outcomes for families for implementation during fiscal year 2018.
- **In January 2017**, CPS will expand the demonstration program, which is an effort to improve the quality of residential foster care through the use of new performance measures. The demonstration uses predictive modeling to detect, mitigate and address potential risk of abuse

and neglect of a child while in care.

Goal 3: Maximize the Well-being of Children and Youth Served by CPS

Outcome Measures

- Children receive adequate services to meet their behavioral health needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical health needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their educational needs.
- More youth complete Preparation for Adult Living services.

Ensuring a child is safe and finds a forever home is essential to children’s well-being. For children receiving CPS services, CPS must also ensure that their education, health and other needs are being met. To truly understand well-being, we need to comprehend the quality of the services we provide to children. As part of our federal Child and Family Services Review, CPS reads hundreds of cases every year with a structured case review tool to examine if we are meeting the needs of the children we serve. CPS reviews cases to see if the child was adequately assessed for needs in the areas of education, and physical and mental health. If needs are present, the reviewer checks to see if the child was then provided with appropriately matched services. The process includes a review of the case file in IMPACT, the hard copy of the case file, and interviews with case-specific stakeholders. The CPS Division of Accountability reviews 180 cases per quarter.

Looking at trends in the past few years, although CPS continues to do a good job meeting children's basic educational needs, we have work to do on meeting children's physical and behavioral health needs.

WELLBEING STANDARDS: EDUCATIONAL, HEALTH, AND MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Outcome/Item/Data Indicator	Standard	FY 15a (Round 2 Guide)	FY 15b (Round 3 Guide)	FY 16a (Round 3 Guide)
Educational Needs of the Child (CFSR Round 2 Item 21) -	95%	97%	97%	99%
Physical Health of the Child (CFSR Round 2 Item 17)	90%	87%	88%	91%
Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child (CFSR Round 2 Item 18)	90%	90%	92%	97%

*FY15a: 1st & 2nd Quarters using the Round 2 Guide
 FY15b: 3rd & 4th Quarters using the Round 3 Guide
 FY16a: 1st & 2nd Quarters using the Round 3 Guide
 Child and Family Service Review quarter 4 data not available at the date of this report.*

While finding a forever family for every child we serve and reducing the number of children who “age out” is our goal, permanency through family reunification, permanent placement with relatives or adoption is not always possible or appropriate. For youth who emancipate from foster care, CPS works to provide them with the skills and support to successfully transition to living on their own.

One way CPS provides support is through its Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) classes. Through PAL, youth not only learn how to successfully live on their own, they can complete certain required components and receive financial support after they age out. The rate of children who leave substitute care at age 18 or older having completed the PAL classes required to receive financial support, has remained relatively unchanged at about 75 percent.

Youth now have the option to stay in care beyond the age of 18 to receive additional supports as they prepare for independence. As a result, the number of youth remaining in foster care after age 18 has grown, which is a positive. By staying in foster care even after becoming a legal adult, these youth have a stable place to stay and a caseworker to arrange for needed services and provide ongoing support.

PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIVING AND EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY16
Youth completing Preparation for Adult Living	75%	76%	76%	73%	74%
Youth 18 and older living in foster care	602	634	615	656	648

*Goal 3: Maximize the Well-being of Children and Youth
Served by CPS*

Objective 3.1: Support Children's Physical and Behavioral Health

Lead: CPS Medical Services Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Trauma Informed Care Secondary Traumatic Stress Workgroup, CPS Purchased Client Services, CPS Disproportionality Team, DFPS Medical Director, and DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence.
- Stakeholder Resources: Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Department of State Health Services, STAR Health / Superior Health Plan / Cenpatico, Children's Hospital Association of Texas, Dr. David Cross and staff from Texas Christian University (trauma-informed care), Dr. John Lyons, Chapin Hall (CANS), Senate Bill 125 committee of internal and external stakeholders, contracted residential child care and contracted residential care providers.

Action Plan

- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will monitor the implementation of the CANS assessment to ensure that every child ages 3-17 entering the conservatorship of CPS is receiving this assessment; that it is being completed timely; that the recommendations from CANS are being incorporated into the Child Plan of service; and that the Texas-specific CANS tool and Algorithm continue to be valid and reliable assessment tools. CPS in coordination with HHSC will work with STAR Health to build capacity within their provider network of clinicians to also serve the 0-2 population.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to focus on Trauma Informed Care knowledge and practices so CPS leadership, caseworkers, and stakeholders act with an understanding of the influence of trauma, both from the child's family history as well as from removal. CPS will review the current Trauma Informed Care training and determine the need to update the current curriculum. CPS will begin rollout of a curriculum created specifically for DFPS related to secondary trauma for CPS field staff including mentors and supervisors.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to oversee the Psychotropic Medication Utilization Review process to carefully monitor use of psychotropic medications to ensure that a psychotropic medication prescription is in the best interest of the child. CPS will continue to convene and participate in a collaborative Psychotropic Medication Monitoring Workgroup that meets quarterly to review the prior quarter's data and review trends. Participation includes CPS Director of Services, CPS Medical Services staff, HHSC Doctors and data staff, Superior Doctors, and Pharmacists.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will partner with STAR Health and Medicaid/CHIP Division of HHSC to reach a goal of 90% of foster children will have timely Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment visits within the first 30 days of entering care by September 1, 2017.

*Goal 3: Maximize the Well-being of Children and Youth
Served by CPS*

Objective 3.2 Support Children's Education Outcomes

Lead: CPS Permanency Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Division of Practice Excellence
- Stakeholder Resources: Texas Education Agency; Texas Association of School Boards; School Districts, including Foster Care Liaisons and staff; Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families; Casey Family Programs; faith communities; residential child care providers; kinship caregivers; and other providers and community partners.

Action Plan

- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS Education Specialists will establish and maintain a minimum of three regional education consortiums to address the multiple education-related issues, including behavior and mental health, associated with the challenges faced by children and youth in foster care.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, Regional Education Specialists will implement and track a schema of 11th and 12th grade students in foster care to track credit progress in completing requirements for a high school diploma. Intervention letters will be sent to caseworkers and PAL staff.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS Education will continue to provide a series of best practice guides to caseworkers and staff in identifying and implementing strategies to improve education outcomes for children and youth in foster care. At this time, there are no plans to develop an electronic educational passport. With revisions being made to federal data reporting through AFCARS, DFPS will be able to capture additional information in IMPACT that will help support the educational needs of our children. This will be included in Phase II Modernization.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS Education Specialists will continue to provide training and presentations to internal and external stakeholders, and participate in local and statewide education forums, as well as participate on the committees and workgroups of the Children's Commission.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS Education Specialists will participate in meetings or strategy sessions with local school districts on how to implement the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) that addresses additional protections for students in foster care and establishes a system of joint responsibility for school districts, the state education agency, and the state child welfare agency to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS Education Specialists will be the "Point of Contact" for local school districts to ensure that any issues arising from ESSA are addressed. Transportation of children to their school of origin will continue on a child by child basis. CPS Education Specialists will elevate to State Office any issues which require additional assistance.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS Education Specialists will track and monitor those students who are impacted by the transportation and document how the transportation issue was addressed, the reasoning for best interest determination, and any resources used to overcome the transportation barriers.

*Goal 3: Maximize the Well-being of Children and Youth
Served by CPS*

Objective 3.3: Safeguard Children's Other Well-being Needs

Leads: CPS Permanency Division, CPS Investigations/Alternative Response/Family Based Safety Services Division.

- DFPS Resources: CPS Youth Specialists, CPS Disproportionality Team, CPS Purchased Client Services, CPS Special Investigators, DFPS Information Resource Management, and DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence, DFPS Internal Audit
- Stakeholder Resources: Texas Chapter of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Texas Department of Public Safety, law enforcement, Court Appointed Special Advocates, CPS residential child care Contractors, Supervised Independent Living contractors, attorneys, parents, and youth.

Action Plan

- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will procure additional Supervised Independent Living providers to expand placement options for young adults 18-21 participating in extended foster care.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will hold a statewide meeting of PAL staff to address program improvements related to: PAL completion, additional PAL activities to support youth, funding for more teen conferences, and continued efforts to support youth opportunities for normalcy.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will collaborate with colleges and trade schools to hold a post-secondary education conference showcasing opportunities for youth to use Education and Training Vouchers to develop a broad range of vocational and technical skills.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will engage youth in voicing their needs through Youth Leadership Councils and use newly received funding to hold more teen conferences.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to train on racial and ethnic identity to promote competencies around healthy racial and ethnic identity formation for children and youth
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will establish expectations for coordinated service plan meetings among residential providers, CPS, and the child to help facilitate planning around normalcy. Normalcy refers to the ability for children and youth to participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities similar to activities that children outside of foster care experience. Normalcy is not a new concept, but one CPS and providers have struggled with as they balance the need to keep children and youth safe. This effort includes tracking of service plans in IMPACT to better monitor and ensure accountability for following through on plans.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will make changes to IMPACT to meet Title IV-E requirements for identifying, reporting and providing services to victims of sex trafficking.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue the implementation of the Prevent Sex Trafficking and Strengthening families Act (HR 4980) to protect children and youth at risk of sex trafficking. CPS will continue collaboration with the Department of Public Safety, the Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and local law enforcement agencies, as well as leverage internal resources such as the Special Investigators, to find missing children.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue collaboration with state and community resources to provide human trafficking and internet safety training to youth participating in services to support a successful transition to adulthood (Preparation for Adult Living).

Goal 4: Maximize Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development to Ensure a Professional and Stable Workforce

Outcome Measures

- Decreased combined turnover rate.
- Decreased turnover for Investigators.
- Decreased turnover for Family Based Safety Services caseworkers.
- Decreased turnover for Conservatorship caseworkers.

To achieve the outcomes we want for children and families, we must have a professional and stable workforce. Doing so requires that we:

- identify and hire the right candidates;
- provide training that inspires confidence;
- ensure staff have strong supervision and support to grow and professionally develop into the next generation of leaders;
- project a long-term future with the agency by guiding staff with multiple career path opportunities; and
- mitigate the impact of turnover, which will always be present at some level, with tools: and supports for management and staff.

Turnover across all stages has remained flat, with some improvement noted in FBSS.

CPS TURNOVER

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16
Turnover for CPS overall	26%	26%	25%	26%	25%
Turnover for Investigations	34%	32%	34%	33%	33%
Turnover for Family Based Safety Services	26%	25%	23%	28%	25%
Turnover for Conservatorship	24%	22%	23%	23%	23%

Goal 4: Maximize Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development to Ensure a Professional and Stable Workforce

Objective 4.1: Increase Quality of Job Candidates for Frontline Hiring

Lead: DFPS Workforce Development Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Field, DFPS Office of External Relations, DFPS Office of Communications, DFPS Data Decision and Support.
- Stakeholder Resources: HHSC Human Resources, STARK Source Match (DFPS' hire screening vendor), and University of Texas (DFPS survey consultants), and College Collaboration Workgroup.

Action Plan

- **By November 2016**, DFPS will partner with the behavioral assessment provider to design and launch automated reference checks that will allow agency hiring managers more time to interview potential candidates.
- **By December 2016**, DFPS will incorporate stage specific questions into the interview process to ensure candidates' are hired into the type of unit that best fits their skills and behaviors.
- **By January 2017**, a behavioral assessment for CPS competencies and leadership attributes will be developed and implemented to screen candidates for supervisory positions. The behavioral assessment component will be based on the five practices of the leadership challenge.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will continue to market the unique value of CPS' mission and competitive advantages of Texas state employment in recruitment materials and job postings. This includes state of Texas employee and retiree benefits and eligibility for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program as a full time state employee.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, aspects of the leadership challenge used for supervisory screening will be incorporated into the assessments for caseworker candidates so that the next generation of leaders can be identified at the early stage of the employee lifecycle.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will seek funding to establish a DFPS Jobs Page using LinkedIn that will facilitate more active recruitment.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will expand new employee sourcing strategies to increase the quality of job candidates. Strategies include a partnering with Austin Community College and Alamo Community College to ensure their students have the required work experience when they graduate with their associate's degree. This model could be expanded based on proof of concept to establish pathways for employees and other potential candidates
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will develop an enhanced on boarding process to compliment New Employee Orientation (NEO). The on boarding process will indoctrinate new hires into the DFPS culture by providing them greater support as they transition from candidate to employee.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will use the annual validation of the HSI to ensure the newly added screening components are delivering higher quality candidates.

Goal 4: Maximize Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development to Ensure a Professional and Stable Workforce

Objective 4.2: Ensure Staff Are Adequately Trained and Prepared to do Their Job

Lead: Continuous Learning Team (CPS and DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence training coordination team)

- DFPS Resources: CPS Division for Practice Excellence, CPS Regional Operations Support Administrators, DFPS Workforce Development Division, DFPS Leads (Leadership, Excellence, Advancement, Distinction and Support), DFPS Office of Volunteer and Community Engagement.
- Stakeholder Resources: University of Texas at Austin Child and Family Research Partnership (evaluation consultant).

Action Item

- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to utilize the redesigned training model for new caseworkers and mentoring program. The new model combines traditional classroom training with field-based training and mentoring, using a competency-based model to adequately prepare new caseworkers for their duties and reduce new hire turnover rates.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will continue to strengthen the new mentor program by maintaining a stipend program (up to \$300 per month). CPS continues to develop the coaching and teaching skills of CPS mentors and field-based trainers through ongoing training.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will receive the last of three evaluation reports from the University of Texas, contracted to evaluate the new training model and its impact on producing better-trained caseworkers. The preliminary findings from the second of three evaluation reports indicate staff believe the new model better prepares caseworkers for the job and analysis of caseworker quality shows their skills are stronger. Throughout the year, the Continuous Learning Team will meet with the evaluators to respond to findings, make adjustments to the model and will continue this process through the evaluation period, which concludes with the final report in December 2017.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will continue to provide advanced leadership skills training to CPS supervisors and managers.
- **In February 2017**, CPS will roll out an overhauled 30-day training program for new supervisors. The new model reinforces classroom training with hands-on learning from a mentor.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, top level leadership development will be a priority as it is vital to overall success. 360 evaluations will be conducted for Program Director, Program Administrator and Regional Directors. CPS will be working with CASEY Family Programs to develop training and support specifically targeted to this level of field management.

Goal 4: Maximize Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development to Ensure a Professional and Stable Workforce

Objective 4.3: Leverage Technology and Operational Supports

Leads: CPS Field, DFPS Chief Operating Officer

DFPS Resources: CPS Systems Improvement, DFPS Operational Support Services, DFPS Information Resource Management, and DFPS Data and Decision Support Division.

Action Plan

- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to streamline the remaining sections of the CPS Handbook. These sections will include Conservatorship Services, Foster and Adopt, Services to Older Youth in Care, and Health Care.
 - Placement Policy due in November 2016
 - Conservatorship Policy due in January 2017
 -
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will expand the use of the SafeSignal app (zero button alert system) statewide. SafeSignal, the hands-free emergency alert system for frontline caseworkers, tested successfully in Harris, Travis, and Williamson counties with staff reporting a marked impact on their safety confidence and management reporting more peace of mind over staff safety. The tool was approved in late May 2016 for statewide distribution. SafeSignal has powerful features and requires orientation to be properly used; training materials are under production with rollout targeted for Fall 2016. Conversations with local law enforcement and Public Service Access Points are being coordinated with Councils of Government.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will upgrade the reporting and data management technology for IMPACT to improve efficiency, accountability, and decision-making. Data reports will help alert program staff in each stage of service about critical tasks (e.g., plans of service and face to face contacts), including tasks that are coming due and tasks overdue. There will also be reports with workload information that will help supervisors manage assignments. Finally, a new online, interactive data book will be available to staff and stakeholders for the first time.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will implement at least 3 casework support centers. Casework support centers pool administrative staff currently housed in individual units in an effort to create efficiencies and provide caseworkers consistent, readily accessible support. Additional center locations will be identified during the fiscal year and implementation will continue across the state based on successful implementation in the initial regions.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS state office and field staff will continue to participate in planning and design for enhancements to IMPACT. The changes will be made as part of IMPACT modernization, a multi-year effort to update the system to today's technology. The enhancements will support CPS Transformation and other key initiatives and deliver time savings to CPS caseworkers.

Goal 4: Maximize Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development to Ensure a Professional and Stable Workforce

Objective 4.4: Create an Environment That Promotes Retention

Lead: DFPS Workforce Development Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Director of Field, CPS Systems Improvement, CPS Division of Practice Excellence, CPS Regional leadership teams, DFPS Information Resource Management, DFPS Data Decision and Support, DFPS Executive Team, DFPS Office of Finance, DFPS Office of Communications, and DFPS Office of External Relations.
- Stakeholder Resources: college and university partners.

Action Plan

- **Each month during fiscal year 2017**, CPS regional leadership will continue to personally contact workers with six-24 month tenure at regular intervals to gather feedback on what is working well for staff and what type of support is needed to ensure staff success.
- **By December 1, 2016**, DFPS will complete a compensation effectiveness study. This does not include an assessment of the salaries themselves; however this study will look at other incentives such as merits, locality pay, and tuition. The study will inform DFPS of which incentives employees prefer, which incentives do employees dislike, and which incentives could potentially be effective if they were funded.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will deploy a new training strategy for supervisors to better prepare them for the demands of supervision and to improve the quality of supervision
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue to deploy Master Investigators and Master Conservatorship workers to understaffed areas of the state to support workload and build capacity.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will continue to develop and expand a succession planning strategy to prepare for impending retirements and provide opportunities to emerging leaders within the workforce. This is being incorporated into management training.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, DFPS will use a monthly tool identifying areas with concerning turnover at the supervisor and business-unit levels as actionable data to focus retention efforts and leadership intervention.

Goal 5: Integrate Continuous Quality Improvement Across All Stages of Service

Success Measures:

- Implement annual Continuous Quality Improvement report and quarterly updates
- Continue to utilize the federal Child and Family Services Review process and other structured case reviews to support the transformation and improvement process

To sustain Transformation moving forward, CPS will solidify a continuous quality improvement (CQI) culture that supports a continual and strategic transformation and improvement process.

During fiscal year 2016, CPS continuous quality improvement efforts included:

- Expanding use of predictive analytics to identify children in foster care who are at a higher risk of being reported for maltreatment and implementing a structured monitoring and follow-up process for those children as part of the demonstration project.
- Analyzing and aggregating information obtained through its various case reviews to identify areas where quality casework can be improved and strengthened.
- Evaluating all new initiatives including Alternative Response, FBSS real-time case reads, implementation of SDM, the initial roll-out of the demonstration project and the Performance Merit program for more tenured staff. Based on the evaluations, CPS has made adjustments to the initiatives and is continuing to monitor progress and outcomes.

To extend and imbed a CQI structure into the field, in fiscal year 2016 CPS created the Regional CQI or Systems Improvement Team, which is part of the CPS Systems Improvement division under the Deputy CPS Associate Commissioner. This team works with CPS regional leadership to proactively and strategically make needed changes to further build an experienced and tenured workforce and improve safety, permanency, and well-being for the children and families CPS serves. Using integrated data and reports, the team helps regional leadership identify for each stage of service what parts of the system are working well and areas to target for improvement. Working with regional staff and, when appropriate, external stakeholders, the team brainstorms solutions, helps implement plans, and tracks and reports on progress.

During fiscal year 2017, CPS will continue to complete the case review component of the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for federal Round 3. When completed, a Final Report is anticipated from the Administration for Children and Families identifying areas of improvement needed. When the Final Report is complete, DFPS and the Administration for Children and Families will negotiate a CFSR Program Improvement Plan with targets and action steps designed to achieve the required amount of improvement. The Accountability Division also maintains a quarterly schedule of structured case reviews, designed to provide information regarding outcomes for children and families associated with changes made within the Texas child welfare system.

*Goal 5: Integrate Continuous Quality Improvement
Across All Stages of Service*

Objective 5.1: Continue Development of an Integrated Continuous Quality Improvement System that Effectively Uses Data and Information to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families.

Lead: CPS Deputy Assistant Commissioner Division

- DFPS Resources: CPS Systems Improvement, CPS Accountability Division, CPS Division of Practice Excellence, CPS Organization Effectiveness Team, and DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics.

Action Plan

- **By the end of September 2016**, CPS will conclude the on-site case review process of the state-conducted Child and Family Services Review.
- **By November 2016**, CPS will develop regional annual business plans with identified and measurable goals and targets.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will review the final report of the CFSR onsite review results from the Children's Bureau, Office of the Administration for Children and Families. The final report is anticipated in January 2017.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will engage in Program Improvement Plan negotiations with the Children's Bureau, Office of the Administration for Children and Families, to address areas to improve upon from the Child and Family Services Review. The Program Improvement Plan is anticipated to be finalized and in place for the federal quarter beginning April 1, 2017.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will resume ongoing continuous quality improvement efforts through quarterly Child and Family Service Reviews in all regions.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue ongoing continuous quality improvement efforts through monthly reviews of a sample of screened intakes that were not assigned for investigations, to ensure policy is being followed in making screening decisions.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will begin a time-limited review to ensure the CANS assessment and the FSNA are completed timely and entered into the child's Health Passport and IMPACT case record. The review is scheduled to conclude in February 2017.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS will continue its continuous quality improvement efforts to sustain Transformation and proactively identify and make needed changes by continuing to use predictive analytics to target resources, aggregate information into usable formats, evaluate all new initiatives and conduct quarterly system improvement meetings with regional leadership.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS developed training on strategic planning and data analysis available to supervisors and regional management. Trainings will be conducted through the fiscal year.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, CPS conducted a comprehensive review of its current case read processes and will make needed adjustments to allocate these resources to the highest risk cases.
- **In fiscal year 2017**, the CPS Associate Commissioner and CPS Director of Field will conduct quarterly business performance reviews with each Regional Director to review key data performance indicators and address issues and concerns.

Appendix A: Definitions for Key Measures of Safety, Permanency, Well-Being, and Workforce⁶

Safety

- Recurrence for Alternative Response – percentage of children in an Alternative Response case that is closed with no ongoing services that have a subsequent confirmed allegation for abuse or neglect or a case opened for Family Based Safety Services or Conservatorship Services within 12 months of case closure. This was calculated by the CPS Analytics and Evaluation Team.
- Recurrence for Investigations – percentage of alleged victims in a traditional investigation that is closed with no ongoing services that have a subsequent confirmed allegation for abuse or neglect or a case opened for Family Based Safety Services or Conservatorship Services within 12 months of case closure.
- Recurrence for Family Based Safety Services – percentage of children in Family Based Safety Services case that is closed with no further ongoing services that have a subsequent confirmed allegation for abuse or neglect or a case opened for Family Based Safety Services or Conservatorship Services within 12 months of case closure.
- Recurrence for Conservatorship– percentage of children who exit conservatorship to reunification that have a subsequent confirmed allegation for abuse or neglect or a case opened for Family Based Safety Services or Conservatorship Services within 12 months of case closure.

Permanency

- Time to permanency for children who exit within 2 years -- average number of months from removal to exit to one of the following: reunification, relative as a permanent managing conservator, relative adoption, or non-relative adoption.
- Permanency for children in care 2 or more years - percentage of children in care 2 or more years at the beginning of the fiscal year who exit to one of the following during the year: reunification, relative as a permanent managing conservator, relative adoption, or non-relative adoption.
- Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care – percentage of children in Child and Family Services Review case read that visited with their parents and siblings.
- Children in substitute care placed with relatives – percentage of children in DFPS conservatorship on August 31 that were placed with a relative.
- Average number of placements for children in foster care – for children age 17 or younger in foster care on August 31, average number of placements.

Well-Being

- Educational needs of the child are met – percentage of children in Child and Family Services Review case read that had educational needs met.
- Physical health needs of the Child are met – percentage of children in Child and Family Services Review case read that had their physical health needs met.
- Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child – percentage of children in Child and Family Services Review case read that had mental and behavioral needs met.
- Youth completing Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) – percentage of youth age 18 or older who completed PAL classes required to receive PAL funding at time youth left substitute care.

- Number of youth age 18 or older in foster care - number of youth age 18 or older in foster care on August 31 of each fiscal year. DFPS data warehouse report SA18_04s.
- Siblings in substitute care placed together – percentage of siblings groups in substitute care on August 31 with all siblings in the same placement.

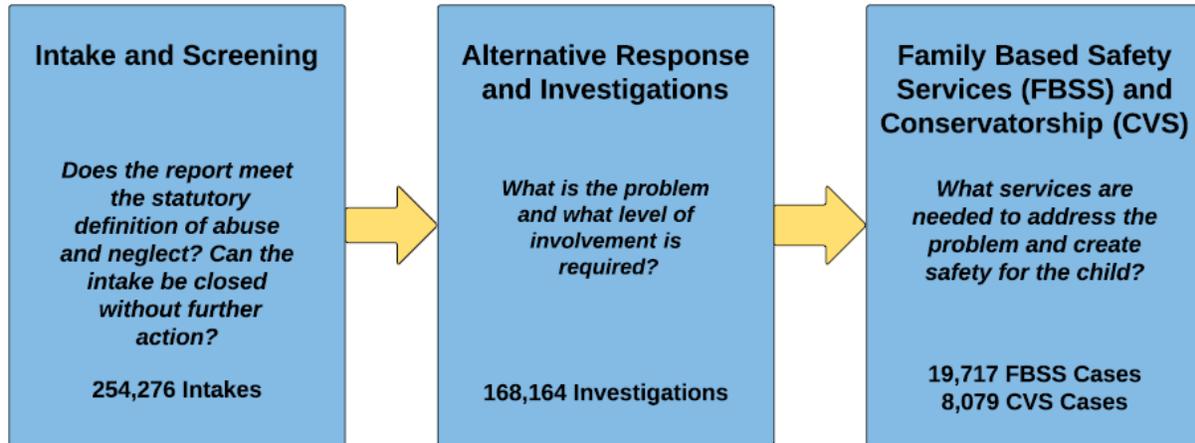
Workforce

- Turnover is calculated according to the State Auditor Office methodology.

Appendix B: CPS Stages of Service

The figure below illustrates the roles of the DFPS/CPS divisions in responding to reports of abuse and neglect. Fiscal year 2014 statistics provide context on children and families affected and staff workload.

FIGURE 2: CPS STAGES OF SERVICE



Intake / Referral

DFPS Statewide Intake receives reports of alleged abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults. Intakes are assigned to staff at CPS based on their priority level. Due to their severity, some intakes are assigned immediately for investigation. Approximately one third of all intakes received are assigned for screener review, and are considered low to moderate risk. About one third of received cases are closed before investigation if they do not meet the criteria to advance (34 percent in fiscal year 2014).

Screener Review

Screeners conduct further review of the facts and determine whether to close the intake if it fails to meet criteria for CPS involvement, assign it to an Alternative Response caseworker, or send to Investigations.

Investigations

Investigations caseworkers investigate allegations of abuse and neglect within statutorily determined timeframes. They interview the child(ren) involved, the alleged perpetrators, and other key collateral contacts, and review pertinent evidence. They use tools that follow a series of structured steps to help reach consistent decisions about safety and risk (Structured Decision Making[®]). Best practice is to submit the completed investigation to their supervisor within 45 business days, and to close the case within 60 days from the point of intake. Over 80 percent of investigations are closed without providing any additional services. When allegations of abuse or neglect are substantiated, the case may be transferred to the Family Based Safety Services or Conservatorship (CVS) stages of service, depending on whether the child can remain safely at home. When children cannot remain at home safely, CPS removes the child from the home and assumes legal custody. In both Family Based Safety Services and Conservatorship cases, children may be placed with kinship caregivers or relatives.

Alternative Response

Alternative Response is a new practice that allows Child Protective Services to utilize multiple responses to address reports of alleged child abuse and neglect that are accepted for investigation. Alternative Response is a family-engagement approach designed to keep children and families safe and together whenever possible. While CPS continues to respond to severe higher risk reports using a forensic approach (traditional investigation), less immediately severe, lower risk reports will be handled through the Alternative Response program. Alternative Response builds collaborative connections between state and local social services departments, community agencies, and the families themselves. All work together to identify issues and meet families' needs using the supports and services in each community.

Family Based Safety Services

When investigators do not remove children, but identify the need for ongoing services, cases are opened in Family Based Safety Services. Family Based Safety Services caseworkers work with families to address the reasons for referral and may arrange to provide services. Family based safety services are child-safety centered, family focused, and home-based and most often involve children who are not in the legal conservatorship of DFPS. At all times, the safety and welfare of children are of paramount concern.

Family Based Safety Services differs from Alternative Response in that families have more identified risk and services are offered for a longer period of time. Alternative Response cases are opened for a maximum of 75 days and rely more heavily on referrals for community services. Family Based Safety Services cases may be open for six months and have access to purchased services. Cases are closed when parents address the safety issues involved in the case. If at any point staff determine the safety of a child can no longer be ensured, CPS implements an immediate plan for the child's safety, including court-ordered services or, if necessary, removal. About five percent of children are removed from the home in Family Based Safety Services cases where their safety cannot be assured and the parents fail to address the underlying factors that led to abuse/neglect.

Conservatorship

When removals occur, DFPS assumes legal custody of the child(ren) and places them in paid foster care or with relatives. Conservatorship caseworkers work to achieve permanency for the child, whether it be reunification with parents when safe and possible, or permanent placement with relatives or in an adoptive home when returning home or permanent placement with relatives is not an option. Staff specializing in kinship care and adoption provide additional support to the conservatorship caseworker and relatives or adoptive caregivers to support a stable placement and achieve permanency.

As shown above, exits from the CPS system are possible throughout the life of a case. Once DFPS assumes legal custody of a child, the child exits DFPS custody through one of four primary paths: reunification, placement with relatives, adoption, and emancipation (known as "aging out"). When the permanency goal is emancipation, CPS provides Preparation for Adult Living Services.

Appendix C: Texas CPS Core Practice Competencies

CPS has established core practice competencies that cross every stage of service. These are the actions CPS carries out to achieve desired outcomes. CPS has designed training on CPS core competencies to support three levels of practice: emergent, accomplished, and distinguished. Emergent practice involves integration of skills, accomplished practice denotes consistent application, and distinguished practice is the point at which staff become practice leaders who sustain and continue to innovate on the model.

Engaging

Engaging means we develop trust-based relationships with children, youth, families, and safety networks for the purpose of driving positive change. Successful engagement is the basic building block of child safety, permanency, and well-being.

Assessing

Assessment of safety, permanency, and well-being is based on balanced, unbiased, and factually supported information. Our assessment tools are objective, reliable, and support consistency and accuracy in decision-making. Decisions are consistent across all stages of service. Although part of our work is helping families solve their problems, we must make impartial decisions about whether caregivers and families can change quickly enough to meet the child's safety and permanency needs.

Teaming

Assembling a safety network to team with the child or youth and the family is the best way to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being. Constructive relationships between people are critical to effective child protection work.

Planning

Planning involves setting goals, developing strategies, and prioritizing tasks and schedules to meet goals. Developing plans requires us to first define the problem in a way that is solvable. This means we describe our worries to families and safety networks in behavioral terms that define the danger to the child or youth. We also help families and safety networks create a vision of what safety will look like in the family so that everyone knows what needs to happen to close the case.

Intervening

Our intervention is the least intrusive required for child safety. When we take a more intrusive course of action to address danger to the child, interventions are designed to be brief. Our goal is to mobilize caregivers and safety networks to take action quickly, knowing that each intervention has an impact on the long-term outcome for the child. The best permanency happens in the earliest stage of the case.

Evaluating

Plans are routinely evaluated with children, youth, families, and the safety network. Good evaluation requires us to continually consider why we are involved with a family and be able to describe what safety will look like in the family. Continued involvement with a family means that the child is unsafe.

For more information, visit [The CPS Practice Model](#).

Appendix D: Organizational Charts

CPS includes five divisions, as shown in the following organizational chart. CPS employs approximately 9,000 full-time equivalent staff at the State Office and in the 12 regions. The Investigations/ Alternative Response / Family Based Safety Services, Permanency, and Field Operations divisions provide policy direction to and operational oversight of the frontline regional staff conducting investigations, managing services for children and families, and working to achieve permanency outcomes for children in DFPS legal custody. Two divisions support these core service areas: the Deputy Director Division, which directs the systems improvement program and practice excellence at CPS; and the Contracts Division, which oversees residential foster care contracts and regional contracts for service providers.

Other DFPS divisions provide support services for CPS, including but not limited to: budget, hiring/recruitment, training, records management, management reporting and statistics, and information technology. The organizational chart for DFPS and DFPS operations shows many of the resources that support CPS and are referred to in this plan.

FIGURE 3: DFPS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Department of Family and Protective Services

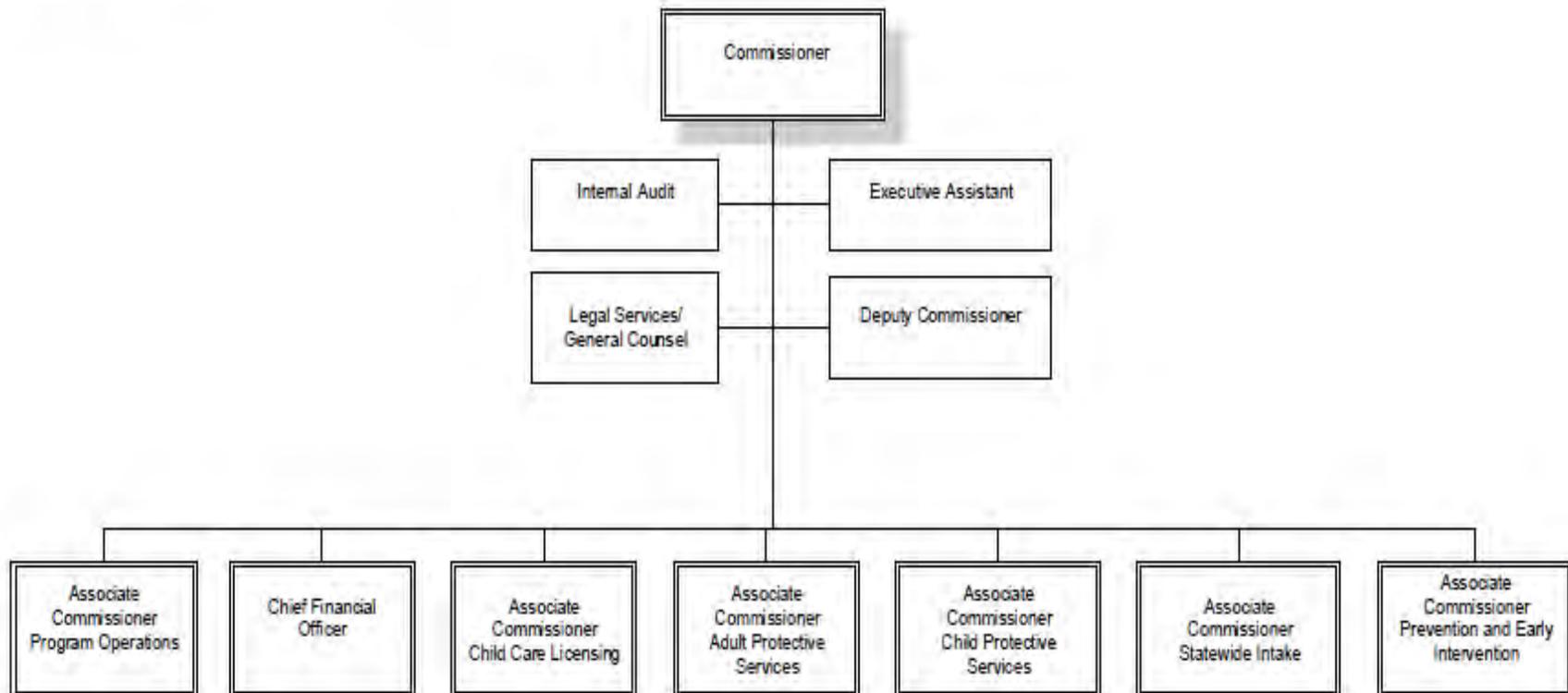


FIGURE 4: CPS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

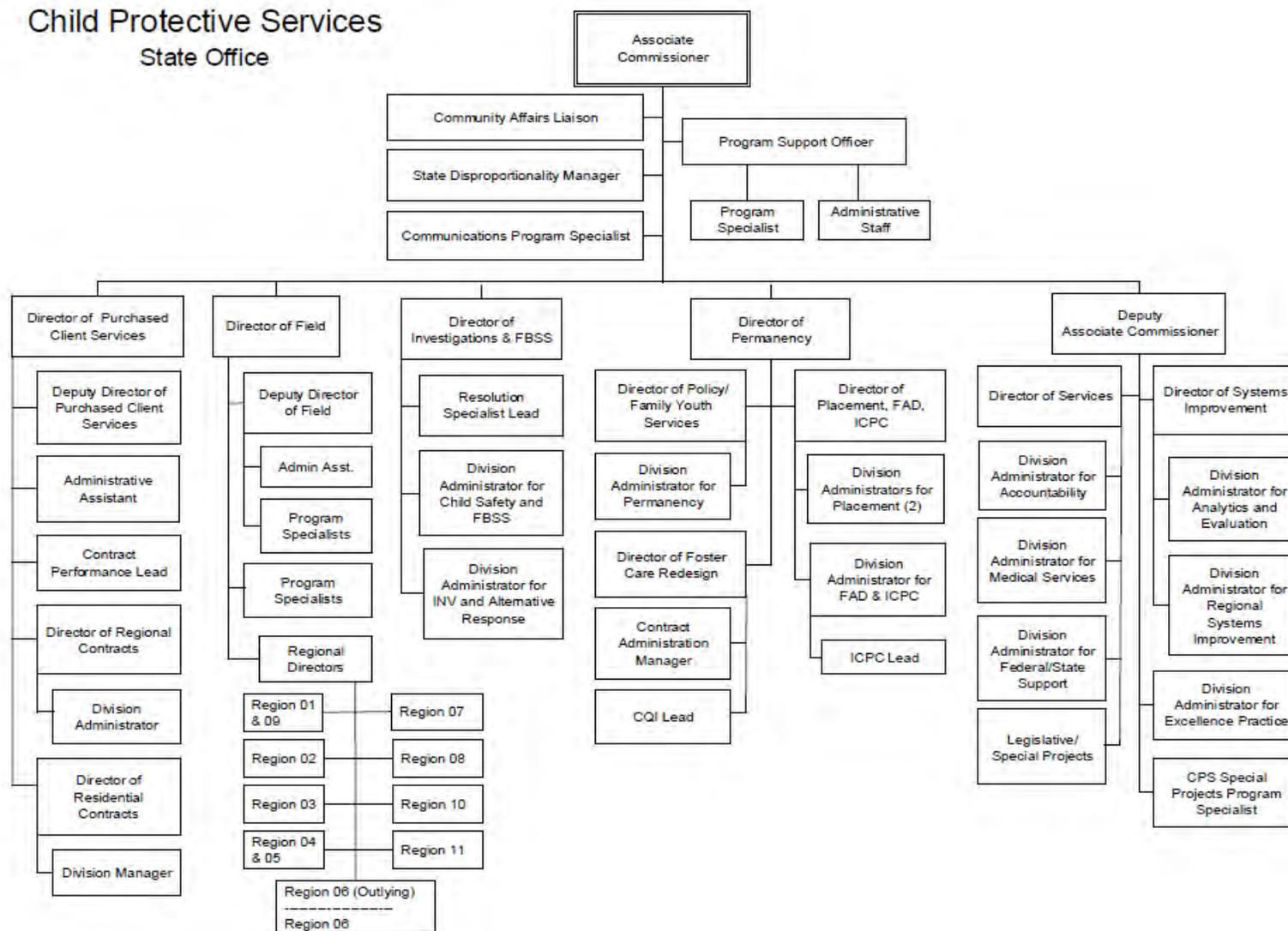
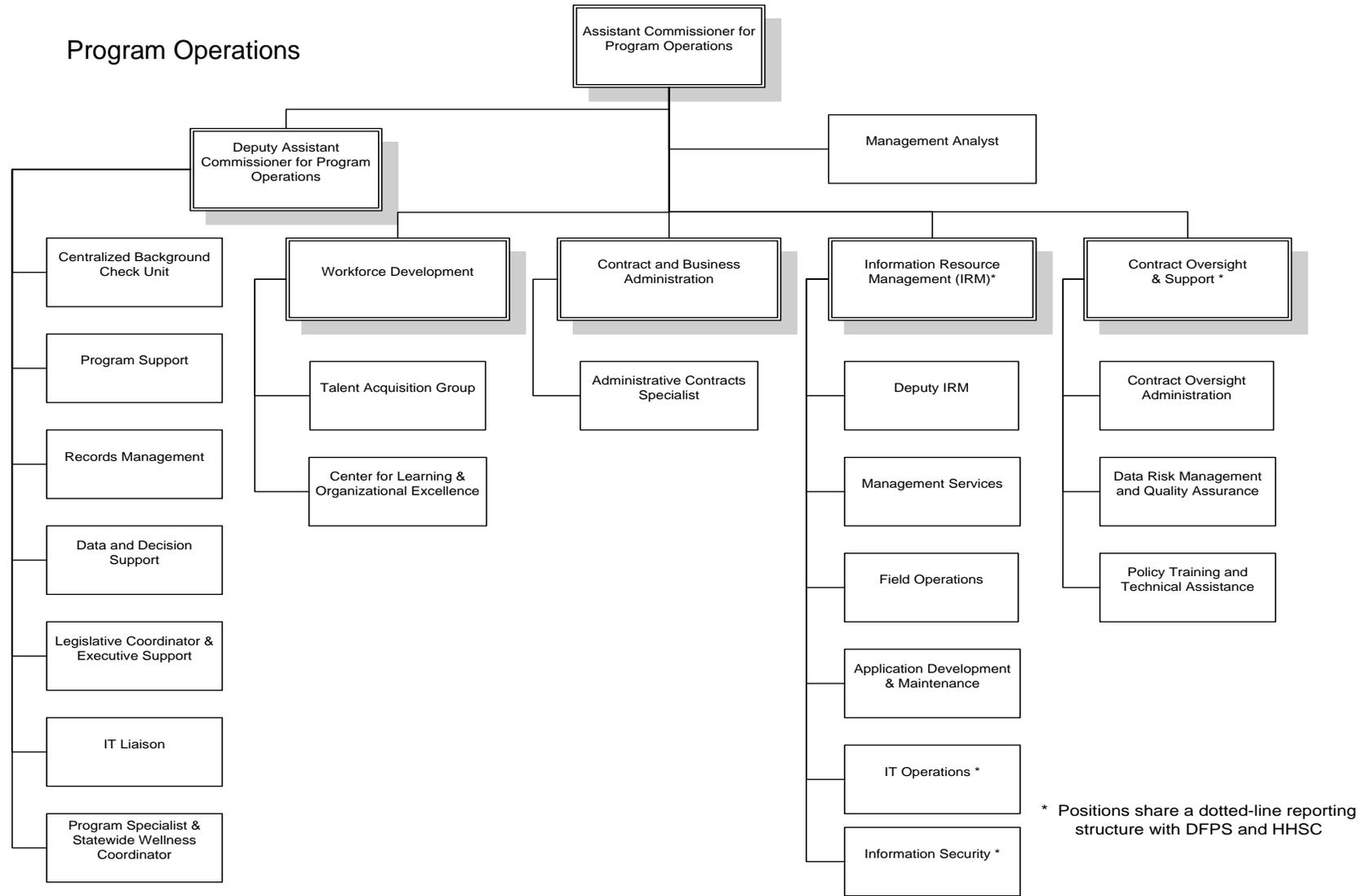


FIGURE 5: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



¹ DFPS data warehouse report pmat_01

² DFPS data warehouse report pmat_01

³ DFPS data warehouse report pmat_01

⁴ DFPS data warehouse report pmat_01

⁵ DFPS data warehouse report pmat_01

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, data is from the DFPS executive dashboard.