



Foster Care Redesign Implementation Plan April 2015



Executive Summary

Foster Care Redesign (FCR) is a part of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Child Protection Transformation Plan and it is intended to improve safety, reduce the time to permanency, increase stability and grow capacity for children in Texas' foster care system, while improving the well-being of the children and families receiving services. This transformation is accomplished through restructuring the procurement process used by DFPS to a single contractor per catchment area. The contractor is held to rigorous accountability standards and measured against clear metrics for success, to achieve positive, quality outcomes, based on the FCR objectives.

FCR began its life-cycle from legislation passed in 2007, which sought to explore a new service delivery model to improve quality and capacity in the foster care system. After reviewing the best practices of several states, analyzing Texas specific data and meeting with numerous stakeholders, DFPS began advancing FCR. In 2009, DFPS formed the Public Private Partnership (PPP), a group of representatives from stakeholder groups with a commitment to improving outcomes for children and families. The PPP and DFPS considered and evaluated a number of factors and models and then started working towards implementation.

The result was a redesign model that is structured utilizing Single Source Continuum Contracts (SSCCs) in catchment areas to provide a full continuum of services to children in foster care. The first FCR contract started in February 2013 and the second in January 2014.

The implementation of FCR has been driven by staged implementation (as opposed to an immediate statewide rollout) to build best practices, to identify and isolate quality metrics for contract management and accountability and to ensure that capacity within the FCR model is sufficient to meet the needs of the state's children and families in need of services. Having a single vendor oversee the delivery of care for services, instead of disjointed care by numerous vendors, has required a paradigm shift for DFPS staff, providers and other stakeholders who must build new skills around the SSCC model.

The primary objectives to determine success for FCR contracts for SSCCs are Safety, Permanency and Well-being.

Safety involves ensuring there are sufficient high-quality foster care placement options that meet the needs of the child, having strong oversight capabilities over all placements, delivering strong training for all providers taking foster children, building robust risk management processes and enhancing information technology capacity to ensure that each foster care child gets the right placement. Obviously, safety is the foremost standard by which any SSCC will be measured.

Permanency involves getting each child placed in foster care into a permanent living arrangement. This could be reunification, permanent placement with a relative, or adoption. The goal of the SSCC is to shorten the time to permanency and giving children and families the services necessary to keep families together, while at the same time ensuring the child's safety and well-being.

Well-being involves protecting the quality of children and families' lives to ensure the best outcomes possible. This involves important factors like keeping children in their home communities, placing siblings together when possible and ensuring that placements are as close to normal as possible. SSCCs are judged to ensure that disruption is minimized to the greatest extent possible.

The procurement process, which is competitively bid, ensures that SSCC contractors are paid a blended foster care rate to deliver quality outcomes for Safety, Permanency and Well-being. Moreover, the vendors are paid a per diem blended foster care rate for each child within a catchment area, and not a single state-wide foster care rate, so that there is no incentive to seek more costly services. Instead, the motivation is to deliver the best possible outcomes, since that will result in a greater reimbursement rate. Poorer outcomes will result in remedies taken against the SSCC.

With this new service model comes the need to enhance the skills and abilities of DFPS staff to ensure a quality contract management function. Building out the financial, programmatic and administrative monitoring capabilities has been an essential component to verify quality and accountability of SSCC vendors.

While executing FCR, DFPS laid out an implementation plan. Each portion of the process has a timeframe and milestones that guide realization of success. All steps involve stakeholder input and rely on legislative direction. DFPS has substantially completed the work for each of the steps in a timely fashion and looks forward to working with the Legislature and stakeholders to continue building out this process and expanding to other catchment areas across the state.

After a SSCC vendor is selected in a catchment area, DFPS has designed a comprehensive, three stage implementation plan within each catchment area to rollout FCR. This is designed to ease the transformation to ensure that disruption to children and families is minimized from the internal shift, while staff and the vendor build their competences within the new model. As more catchment areas transition to the FCR model, we expect that each of these conversions will become swifter and more orderly, as DFPS uses experience and best practices.

DFPS welcomes the chance to advance the FCR structure across the state. This is an opportunity for better outcomes for Texas' children and families. This is an important element to the agency's overall effort to improve safety and well-being of those in care and advances efforts to implement new processes that deliver quality, accountability and increased capacity.

Background

Foster Care Redesign (FCR), also known as Redesign, evolved as a result of the comprehensive reform of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) authorized in 2007 by Senate Bill (SB) 758. This reform focused on enhancing partnerships, increasing foster care capacity, and improving the quality of services offered to children and youth in the foster care system.

The Public Private Partnership (PPP) was designated the guiding body for Redesign in January 2010. DFPS released a stakeholder survey and a Request for Information (RFI), and hosted meetings with over 3,000 stakeholders. The stakeholders included youth in foster care, parents who received services from the department, judges, and providers. These partners assisted in identifying barriers and developing foster care system improvements and their feedback was provided to the PPP. This information, along with research of other states' foster care models, and an analysis of Texas data, helped DFPS develop recommendations for a new foster care model in Texas.

The PPP made recommendations in December 2010, which were subsequently adopted by the Department and became the foundation for Redesign. Redesign changes the way DFPS procures, contracts, and pays for foster care and other services to children in foster care and their families. The FCR model moves the system from a statewide to a community-based foster care model in which a single contracted entity, known as the Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC), is responsible for ensuring the full continuum of foster care and other services for children in specific geographic areas (catchment areas) and is accountable for these children achieving positive outcomes while in foster care. The Redesign model allows for more flexibility, supports innovation and offers financial incentives for improving outcomes for children in foster care.

Foster Care Redesign was purposefully designed to mitigate risk and relies on a methodical and measured approach to implementation. DFPS entered into its first SSCC contract in February 2013 and a second contract began in January 2014.

Purpose of the Plan

FCR has been guided by strategic, communications and project work plans. This plan, in accordance with Sunset Review recommendations, provides a higher level, consolidated guide to the Department's Redesign efforts and combines and updates FCR plans in effect since 2010. This plan outlines the process that must occur in order to implement FCR in a single or multiple catchment area(s).

Assumptions and Constraints

Implementation of this plan depends on many factors. Factors include legislative direction, funding, and evaluation results. In addition, the following considerations are noted:

Schedule – The FCR implementation schedule may be adjusted based on lessons learned from evaluating each catchment area after they begin delivering services. The Department is committed to an ongoing quality improvement process that takes full advantage of lessons learned during each rollout. This process may involve modifying the Requests for Proposals (RFP) between procurements, as occurred between the first (Regions 2 and 9) and second (3b) catchment areas.

- FCR is just one element of the Department's intensive Child Protective Services (CPS) Transformation Project. An "overhaul" of the Child Protective Services program incorporating multiple efforts to improve CPS services is underway. Because many DFPS resources are currently dedicated to Transformation, resources needed to implement Redesign may need to be sequenced according to Department priority.
- Budget – As recommended by the PPP, in 2014 the Department contracted for an independent review of costs associated with FCR. Although FCR was initially intended to be cost neutral, the independent study performed by the Public Consulting Group found system improvements necessary to produce better outcomes for children and youth require new activities and more resources. For example, increasing capacity and improving child safety by enhancing oversight, adding risk management processes, and providing additional training to foster parents and other care givers are resource-intensive tasks PCG deemed necessary and are being performed by SSCCs.

Some activities being conducted by SSCCs, such as transporting children and other related activities, are not being funded but are important because they free up caseworkers' time to spend with families and increase their focus on child safety. The independent analysis of costs concluded that although adding these tasks was necessary to improving foster care outcomes and are advantageous to DFPS, the costs of adding these FCR improvements exceeded the costs spent in the legacy system. However, it is important to note that Foster Care Redesign is not intended to replicate the legacy system; it is intended to improve and enhance the foster care system. In the future, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) will capture costs on SSCC-specific cost reports and establish rates for SSCCs. In addition, the Department will assess, either through work measurement or other methods, the tasks conducted by each SSCC and the associated costs and benefits of those tasks to the Department.

- IT and other resources needed - Department resources for supporting systems change are being stretched by multiple, simultaneous initiatives. Many FCR systems improvements require changes to IMPACT, CPS' system of record, implementation schedules may shift as a result of competing priorities.

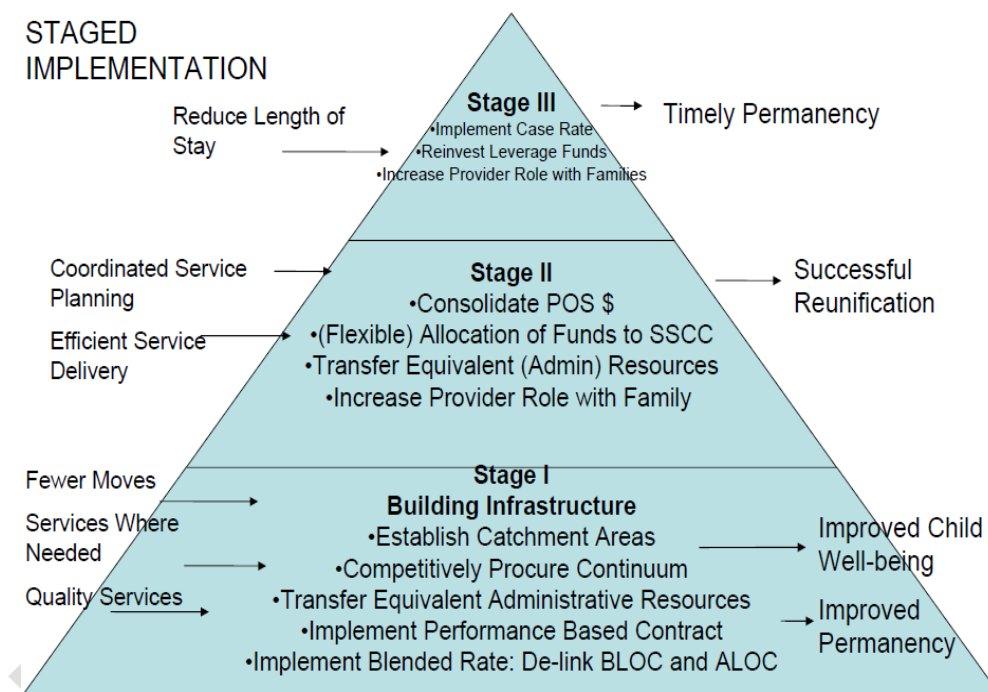
Statewide Rollout

Approach

Learning from states that have not experienced success with their Redesign and/or privatization efforts, the Department took a cautious, conservative approach to implementation, choosing a staged model that will be rolled out gradually. This strategy is intended to limit risk by allowing SSCC providers to master each set of services before adding another and providing ample opportunity for improving implementation of the model between procurements. As more catchment areas are rolled out and evaluated, and the processes for implementation refined, the schedule for rolling out to other catchment areas may accelerate.

Staged Implementation

Redesign requires a staged implementation within each catchment area to ensure steady progress occurs before the SSCC is given more responsibilities. The first stage of implementation is focused on improving foster care quality and capacity. The second adds more focus on improving services to the families of children and youth in care by increasing joint planning activities and better coordinating the delivery of purchased services. The third begins to provide more flexibility and incentives for achieving positive outcomes. Each stage of services is added according to SSCC readiness, but readiness for each subsequent stage is to be accomplished in no less than one year and no more than two. The illustration below shows the Stages of Implementation.



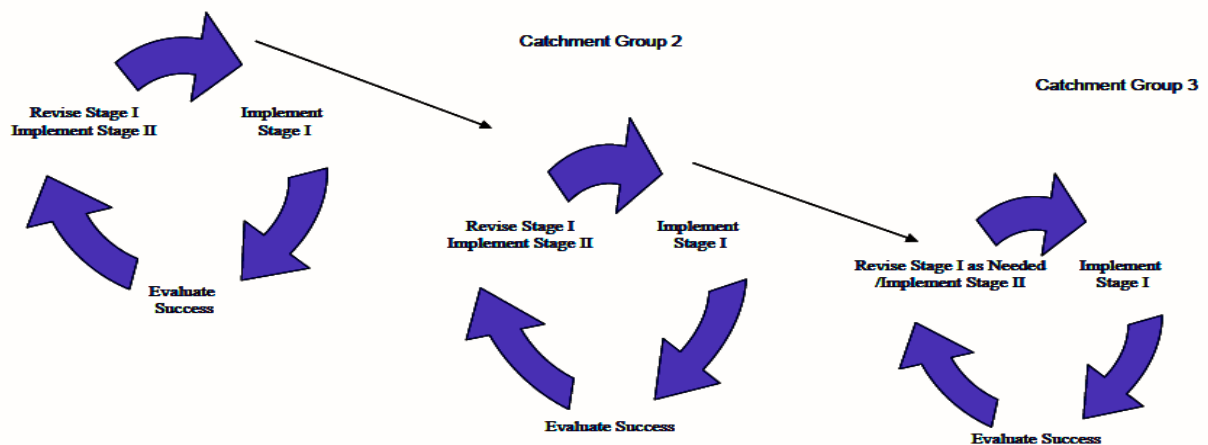
The Department, with guidance from numerous stakeholders, decided to do a gradual implementation rather than an immediate statewide implementation. Although this extends the time to implement the model statewide and requires the current “legacy” foster care system to remain intact longer, it provides multiple opportunities for refining the model through quality improvement cycles. The implementation schedule may accelerate as the model matures and catchment areas are added.

DFPS extensively analyzed the experiences of other states that moved to performance-based contracting. One theme that continues to emerge and is supported through an analysis by the University of Kentucky's Quality Improvement Center for the Privatization of Child Welfare Services is that designing, refining and implementing performance-based contracts must be viewed as a

"work in progress." In light of this research, the PPP recommended continuous evaluation of the Redesign model in each catchment area and for every stage of implementation in the catchment area. Information from both process and outcome evaluations will be used to guide decisions related to model modification and implementation schedules through a cascading rollout process. Evaluation of the procurement, Start-Up, Stage I, Stage II, and Stage III, in the first catchment areas will inform each phase of the process in subsequent catchment areas.

Roll-Out Sequencing

Catchment Group 1



Timelines

As noted above, all timelines are contingent upon legislative direction and funding and may be adjusted according to evaluation results, available resources, or other factors.

It is anticipated that over time much of the responsibility for FCR development and contract management will shift to the DFPS regions, making more rapid, simultaneous rollouts possible. The Department will begin preparing for this shift during the upcoming biennium and will determine resources needed to accomplish such a shift.

The Department will continue to operate the legacy foster care system until all catchment areas are in operation. However, the Department is making significant changes that will not only improve services and safety in the legacy system but will ensure providers are ready for FCR. Some of the FCR readiness/legacy system improvements being considered include uniform performance measures and data collection, improved oversight, enhanced training of foster parents and other caregivers, and uniform assessments.

As previously mentioned, resource limitations and evaluation results could alter the timeline for procurement and implementation plans.

High- Level Plan/Milestones 2010-2014

The following section provides a brief, high level view of significant project activities and milestones accomplished to date			
Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Develop FCR Model	Plan and implement process for broad stakeholder input; develop framework and model; issue RFIs, convene stakeholder meetings and open forums; solicit stakeholder comments via website; conduct internal surveys; review/analyze information re: foster care reform efforts.	2010	100%
Develop and Implement Communications Plan	Communicate FCR information via web, email and mail to key stakeholders including foster parents, providers and advocates; present at face-to-face meetings at stakeholder request	2010	Ongoing
Begin Statewide DFPS (Internal) Cultural Change Activities	Communicate through intranet, email and face-to-face meetings the vision of FCR, the proposed schedule and the Department's continued commitment to FCR	2010	Ongoing
Develop and Promulgate FCR-related Policy Changes	Develop local protocols and determine if waivers to rule or changes in policy are needed	2012-2014	Complete for 1 st and 2 nd catchment areas
Procure first two Catchment Areas	Develop RFPs, award contracts, and begin Start-Up Phase	2011-2013	100%
Develop Local Protocols in two catchment areas	Plan and conduct joint SSCC-DFPS meetings to develop local protocols; document and create joint protocol manual	2012-2014	Complete for 1 st and 2 nd catchment areas
Develop and Implement Catchment Specific Training	Provide SSCC and DFPS staff training on joint protocol manual and IMPACT changes	2012-2014	Complete for 1 st and 2 nd catchment areas

Support Regional FCR Activities	Hire Regional FCR Administrator; assist in cultural change activities; assist in development of protocol manual.	2012-2014	Complete for first two catchment areas
Manage SSCC Contracts	Note: Detail is provided in the Contract Management and Oversight section of this plan	2012-2014	Ongoing
Develop and Implement Evaluation Plan	Conduct Process evaluations on each catchment area Note: These activities are detailed in the Evaluation section of this plan	2011-2014	Ongoing
Develop and Implement Contingency Plan in Event of SSCC contract Termination	Develop contingency plan(s) to resume services until new SSCC contract can be procured, without disruption to services to children and/or families and while ensuring child safety *Note: Contingency plan was quickly and successfully deployed in Regions 2 and 9 upon termination of Providence Services Corporation contract termination.	2013-2014	100%

High-Level Plan/Milestones - 2015-2017

Determine amount and request funding for enhanced services: SSCCs are providing enhanced services to DFPS, including expanding capacity, developing and coordinating new services, providing transportation to placements. Additional funding is needed to support such activities to improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Develop LAR Request For FCR	Develop costs for enhanced services using Medicaid network management-related administrative payment as proxy; obtain IT cost estimates; develop estimated cost of work measurement study.	January 2015	100%
Conduct Work-Measurement Study To Determine If Additional Resources Should Be Transferred	Determine if funding is available for study; develop elements to be measured; initiate study and collect and analyze	2015-2017	25%

Implement SSCC-Specific Cost Reports (HHSC)	(HHSC Activities) Present draft cost report to stakeholders for review and comment; Revise report based on input; Implement cost report	2014-2017	50%
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Develop and implement plan for improving services in the "legacy" foster care system and ensuring readiness for statewide FCR implementation: The Department is committed to making immediate improvements to the foster care system and has been working with a group of legacy providers, the Committee on Advancing Residential Practices (CARP) to identify immediate systems improvements.

If CARP and PPP/FCR efforts are well coordinated, changes to the legacy system will not only improve services to children and youth in foster care, they will complement the FCR model and make the transition to implementation smoother. In addition, making clear that changes to the legacy system must support FCR child and youth outcomes and the FCR vision will help ensure FCR readiness. It will also reinforce the Department's commitment to FCR, which in turn, will support SSCC network development and system improvement.

Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Develop And Begin To Track Benchmarks For FCR Performance And Outcome Measures For Legacy System Providers	Begin communications with legacy providers regarding outcome measures and benchmarks; begin to track performance measures in legacy system	2015-2017	15%
Develop A Common Child Assessment And Implement Statewide	Continue to work with stakeholders to address common assessment; make necessary IMPACT changes	2015-2017	Pending
Begin Enhanced Communication/Collaboration With All Providers	Integrate CARP/PPP systems improvement activities; establish common goals and vision; develop newsletters and bulletins regarding FCR readiness/system improvement activities.	2015-2016	Pending
Develop Common Data Set For All SSCCs And Other Providers (Performance-Related)	Convene provider IT workgroup to develop common data set recommendations	Jan - June, 2015	10%

Some FCR activities have been suspended pending legislative direction. Once direction is received, it is important to re-engage stakeholders and re-start cultural change activities. FCR requires practice changes and it is important for all staff to understand the Department's commitment to FCR and to understand clearly what FCR is intended to accomplish. In addition, stakeholders need clear information regarding progress and FCR successes. Expanding communication, cultural change, and marketing activities will be critical, particularly in 2015 and 2016.

Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Update and Continue Implementation of Communications Plan	Convene PPP Present FCR information at meetings with DFPS staff Present FCR at stakeholder conferences and provider meetings Develop and distribute FCR newsletters to internal and external stakeholders	2015	Ongoing

Timeframes are contingent upon legislative direction and approval.

Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Determine (Statewide) Number And Geographic Coverage Of Catchment Areas	Develop draft map of catchment areas; publish for comment; Assess stakeholder comments; Finalize map/catchment areas.	2014	100%
Announce Department's Intent To Proceed With FCR; Develop And Implement Marketing Plan	Work with OCOK to develop marketing materials with focus on success stories; develop and disseminate announcement	**Pending legislative direction	20%
Determine And Announce Any Catchment Area(s) that will Be Procured over Biennium	Review and present catchment rationale for executive approval; engage regional directors in determining catchment area(s)	July 2015	20%

Develop And Release RFP For First (New) Catchment Area To Be Procured	Working with HHSC, immediately begin modification of RFP according to RFI comments and specific to catchment area; provide support to catchment area staff including providing guidance regarding participation in collaborative activities; immediately engage HHSC/Contracts in development of procurement plan	Pending legislative direction	Pending
Evaluate and Award		Pending legislative direction	Pending

Develop and Implement plan for external stakeholder involvement: The FCR framework/model was developed in 2010 with the help of the guiding body - the PPP - and over 3,000 other stakeholders. Although FCR will continue to evolve as each new catchment area is implemented and as more data becomes available, the direction for improving the foster care system has been set. Stakeholder guidance should therefore shift to implementation and operational issues and to using data to inform the FCR quality improvement process.

Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Develop and implement plan for clarifying and formalizing role of stakeholder groups	Develop specific strategies to transition PPP and CARP roles	2015	25%
Increase opportunities for local (catchment area) input	Explore restructuring of stakeholder input process with emphasis on development of local/ community based councils or committees	2016-2017	Pending
Develop opportunities for SSCCs to inform FCR direction and to assist the Department in identifying FCR implementation and operations issues	As SSCCs are added, develop committee to provide input to the PPP or other guiding body and to the Department	Pending	Pending

Evaluate and modify model according to evaluation/quality improvement plan and implement internal changes necessary to support FCR

Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Use Gap Analysis, Process Evaluations, And	Complete process evaluation on OCOK; analyze performance data available;	2015-2016	

Performance Outcomes To Inform RFP Development	analyze and present RFI results; meet with stakeholders (PPP, CARP and other key stakeholders)		50%
Identify (DFPS) Internal Changes and Resources Necessary To Support Successful Implementation of FCR	Implement internal governance structure; include executive level guiding body to facilitate faster decision-making and resource allocation	2015-2016	50%

Develop and implement plan to transition FCR from project to operations status			
Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Change Stakeholder Input Process	Shift role of PPP from guiding body to advisory council or disband current PPP and restructure group to combine CARP/PPP functions; establish SSCC operations council; develop strategies to increase local input and involvement in FCR implementation	2015	Pending
Increase role of Regional leadership in implementing FCR	With assistance from CPS Regional Directors and Contracts division, develop plan (including identification of resources needed) for moving some FCR procurement and contract management responsibilities to Regions; develop LAR request (if necessary) to support regional management of FCR procurement and contract management	2016-2017	Pending
Transition state office (SO) program resources to support FCR	Initiate SO CPS cultural change activities to ensure all CPS staff fully understand FCR; Begin to incorporate FCR principles, goals and outcomes into all foster care policy and into future legacy provider contracts	2015-2017	Ongoing until transition is complete
Implement internal decision-making structure that can influence resource allocation and eliminate internal barriers to FCR success	Implement governance structure as originally proposed to include executive level guiding body	2015-2017	50%

Procurement of SSCC(s)

Pending legislative approval, this plan includes the process/timeline associated with the tasks that must be performed to contract and implement FCR in a catchment area. (Catchment areas have not been named.).

Procurement of an SSCC		
Task	Anticipated Time Frame	Lead Responsibility
Modify RFP based on evaluation findings and stakeholder input	On-going	DFPS
Announce Intent to Procure in a Catchment Area	As soon as possible, with at least 60 days advance of RFP release	CPS Region with support of FCR Division
Begin Change Activities and Community Engagement	Simultaneous with Announcement of Intent to Procure	CPS Region with support of FCR Division
Release RFP	Posted for 60 days	HHSC Procurement
Evaluation of Responses	60 days	HHSC Procurement
Tentative Award/Negotiations	30 days	HHSC Procurement
Award/Enter into SSCC Contract		DFPS

The FCR model is community-based, and strategies employed to provide services may differ among catchment areas. Although required tasks, roles, and responsibilities are detailed in each RFP, maximum flexibility is provided in determining how the SSCC and DFPS catchment area staff will put the SSCCs' model into operation, requiring DFPS and the SSCC to work closely during the six-month start-up phase.

Catchment Area Implementation

There are several key tasks and activities that must be accomplished to ensure successful implementation of Foster Care Redesign in any given catchment area. Below is a high-level summary of some of those tasks.

Catchment Area Selection		
Task	Anticipated Time Frame	Lead Responsibility
Announce Catchment Area	As soon as possible	DFPS
Hire And Train Foster Care Redesign Administrator	Once catchment area is selected	CPS Region with support of FCR Division
Commence Regular Meetings Of Local Cultural Change Team (If Not Already In Existence)	Once catchment area is selected	CPS Region with support of FCR Division
Deploy Internal Communications Plan Within	Once catchment area is	CPS Region

Catchment Area	selected	
Establish Forecasts And Blended Foster Care Rate For The Catchment Area	Once catchment area is selected	HHSC Forecasting and Rate Setting
Establish Number Of Exceptional Care Days, Purchase-Of-Service Dollar Allocations, And Resource Transfer Amounts For The Catchment Area	Once catchment area is selected	DFPS
Develop Catchment Area Training Plan In Coordination With Center For Learning And Organizational Excellence	Once catchment area is selected	FCR Division with support from CPS Region
Deploy Plan For IT Readiness	Once catchment area is selected	FCR Division

Start-Up		
Task	Anticipated Time Frame	Lead Responsibility
Begin Joint Weekly Calls Between FCR Division, SSCC And CPS Regional Leadership	Within 1 st week of start up	FCR Division
Develop And Deploy Joint Communications Plan	Within 2 weeks of contract effective date	CPS Region and SSCC
Develop Schedule And Identify Participants For Joint Protocol Development And Finalize Training Plan*	Within 1 st month of contract effective date	CPS Region with support of FCR Division
Conduct Workgroups And Develop Joint Protocol Operations Manual*	Within first 3 months of start-up	CPS Region and SSCC with support of FCR Division
Train Regional Contracts, Billing Coordinators And Other Impacted Staff On Systems Changes	Within first 3 months of start-up	FCR Division and CPS Region
Establish Appropriate Tracking And Reporting Processes For SSCC And Regional Related Challenges	Within first 3 months of start-up	FCR Administrator
Complete Draft Of Joint Operations Manual For Review*	Within 1 week of final protocol session	FCR Division
Review, Edit And Approve Joint Operations Manual Draft*	Within 2 weeks after receiving	CPS Region and SSCC as well as DFPS Legal
Finalize And Deploy Joint Protocol And IT Trainings*	Within 1 month of last protocol session	DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence

Test IT Systems And Finalize Processes For Reporting Of Any Issues Encountered After Go-Live Date*	Within a month of go-live	FCR Division, SSCC and CPS Region
Establish Final Plan For Transition Of Activities (I.E. Pending Placements On Go-Live Date, Pending Service Requests)*	Within a month of go-live	CPS Region and SSCC
CPS Basic Skills Development Is Adjusted To Incorporate Training Within The Catchment Area*	Before go-live date	DFPS Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence
*This activity will be repeated before each stage of implementation.		

Once the six-month start-up period is complete and readiness to go live has been certified by both DFPS and the SSCC, communication increases to daily calls and meetings. Most issues are tracked and resolved at the local level.

	Mo 1	Mo 2	Mo 3	Mo 4	Mo 5	Mo 6	Mo 7	Mo 8	Mo 9	Mo 10	Mo 11	Mo 12
Prepare announcements according to communications plan and disseminate	X											
Begin (internal) cultural change activities, including convening cultural change committee	X	X	X									
Hire and train Catchment Area FCR Administrator		X										
Begin community engagement: conduct public forum, develop and deliver FCR presentations and begin meetings with key stakeholders	X	X	X	X								
Assist with startup activities, including convening and facilitating catchment area protocol sessions, developing catchment area protocol manual, review and route policy waivers if needed.					X	X	X					
Establish communications protocols and convene weekly meetings/calls between SSCC and DFPS for issue resolution					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Develop and implement catchment specific training				X	X	X	X	X				

Catchment Areas



Foster Care Redesign moves from operating one standard foster care model to multiple community-based models designed to fill community-specific gaps by building on that community's existing strengths. To ensure the greatest success of an SSCC, a catchment area should have at least 500 new entries of children into foster care each year, according to a 2011 analysis conducted by Chapin Hall, an affiliate of the University of Chicago. This analysis will continue to be tested as Redesign is implemented in catchment areas across the state.

Early indication (as outlined in the Public Consulting Groups, Cost Analysis of Foster Care Redesign, October 2014) is that there may be other factors that directly impact the SSCC and outweigh the need for 500 new entries, such as the concentration of population hubs, already established services, and community support in the designated catchment area.

In summer 2014, DFPS developed a map of potential catchment areas. This map was released for public comment from mid- July through mid- September 2014. Only one comment was received related to the proposed catchment areas.

Statewide Training Plan

Practice changes are under development as a result of CPS Transformation. To make the best use of existing CPS staff time and resources, DFPS intends to incorporate Foster Care Redesign into the Transformation training plan. The Basic Skills Development training curriculum is being revamped. The new curriculum will address the goal, foundational principles, and expected outcomes

of Foster Care Redesign, including the key components of the Redesign model that differ from the legacy system. This will ensure that new staff understand the differences in models and what to expect when Foster Care Redesign is implemented in their catchment area.

Catchment area-specific protocols will require that the FCR training curriculum be modified for each catchment area. In addition, and as noted in catchment-specific timelines, training on catchment-specific protocols will also be conducted. IMPACT modification will be applicable to all catchment areas. Training elements regarding DFPS systems changes are detailed below.

Information Technology Systems Changes/Training

Training will be conducted on changes to the DFPS State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) system known as IMPACT that have occurred since 2011 as a part of the Foster Care Redesign effort. This work has primarily focused on the following areas:

- Adapting the system to include an SSCC for placement and billing purposes
- Allowing Read-Only and some data entry by the SSCC into the IMPACT system
- Developing an automated process for transferring children between the legacy and redesign systems
- Developing a nightly data export of information from IMPACT to the designated SSCC data system

As Foster Care Redesign proceeds, there will be several additional phases of IMPACT modification to support the new model. Some of this work will include:

- Modification to the existing service authorization process, to better streamline processes and support a performance-based foster care model
- Functionality changes to allow uploading documents into the system by the SSCC
- Shared data entry functionality related to the Family Plan of Service as well as visitation plans
- Exploration of the possibility of interoperability of IMPACT with SSCC systems

Evaluation

DFPS is evaluating Foster Care Redesign using both process and outcome evaluation components. The evaluation includes an assessment of the DFPS redesign model and each SSCC's specific strategy to improve foster care outcomes in a catchment area. The evaluation plan is tied to the logic model shown below.

DFPS will use short- and long-term evaluation findings to determine if expected changes to the Texas foster care system are occurring and if child and youth outcomes are related to those changes. Moreover, the evaluation of each SSCC strategy will help determine if specific strategies are creating systemic changes in a catchment area that produce the desired outcomes. In other words, Foster Care Redesign evaluation will not only show the impact of changing how DFPS procures, contracts and pays for foster care services, but also which SSCC catchment area strategies are successful.

**Outcome Evaluation for the Redesigned Texas Foster Care System
--The Logic Model--**

Goal	Business Changes	Major Inputs	Major Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<p>To improve outcomes for children and families by creating sustainable placement resources in communities that will meet the service needs of children and youth in foster care, using the least restrictive placement settings</p>	<p>Competitively procure a Single Source Contractor (SSCC)</p> <p>Partner with SSCC using a performance-based contract</p> <p>Pay for foster care services using a single blended rate</p>	<p>DFPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource transfer • Local FCR administrators • Transitional support • Performance reviews • Training • IMPACT changes • Evaluation • Rate calculations • Readiness assessments • Management/oversight of SSCC contracts <p>SSCC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Data system(s) • Utilization reviews • Management/oversight of network contracts • Child placements and service provision • Assessment of child's service needs <p>Both</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication • Collaboration • Data sharing • Process and performance Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) • Plans of service • Community ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established protocols for DFPS and the SSCCs • Operations manuals • A full continuum of care • Adequate local placement capacity • Adequate number of placement settings that are least restrictive • Placement for all catchment area children who are new-to-care • Placements for all catchment legacy children who transition to the SSCC • Services that meet the therapeutic needs of children in care • Services that meet the therapeutic needs of children in care • Services that meet the needs of the families with children in care • Services that prepare youth for adulthood • Supervised independent living services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children and youth are safe • More placements closer to children's and youth's homes and communities • Improved placement stability • More sibling groups placed together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved permanency outcomes with no increase in the return-to-care rate • Fewer days of paid foster care

Major systemic changes may not be observable for many months and not until additional catchment areas become a part of the redesigned system. However, the impact that redesign has on the well-being of children can begin to be observed in the short term through performance measures detailed below, particularly if a common assessment tool such as CANS is implemented (as has been recommended by stakeholders).

A Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process plays a major role in the evaluation. CQI affords opportunities to identify specific model (DFPS) or strategy (SSCC) issues that are impeding systemic change and the achievement of child and family outcomes. Once identified, corrections can occur to put both model and strategy on trajectories for success. For the most part, the redesign model will be evaluated by aggregating outcome data from all SSCCs and comparing it to the performance data of the legacy foster care system. If the aggregate performance data for the SSCCs shows improvements to child and youth outcomes, the changes made to the foster care system using the DFPS redesign model can be assumed effective. Similarly, if improvements to outcomes are tied to a specific SSCC, the redesign strategy implemented by the SSCC can be assumed effective.

High-Level Evaluation Plan/Milestones 2015-2017

Evaluation tasks are numerous and ongoing. The following are examples of high-level evaluation tasks.			
Task	Description	Timeframe	% Complete
Complete Process Evaluation for FCR implementation activities	Review implementation of the FCR contingency plan in Regions 2 and 9; Review other post contract termination activities in Regions 2 and 9 and in SO; Evaluate 1 st and 2 nd quarter performance data for OCOK; Write report.	Jan-May 2015	80%
Share process evaluation findings and lessons learned	Present Process Evaluation findings to internal and external stakeholders; Incorporate approved recommendations/lessons learned into next RFP	June 2015	
Track and analyze contract performance measure data and develop actions based on findings			
Complete Rider 29 Report		Feb and Aug Annually	Ongoing
Conduct Outcome/performance	Report data quarterly and every	2014-2017	Ongoing

measure evaluation	six months; Meet with SSCC's and regional staff to review data and complete analysis		
*Report child well-being data *Pending CANS decision		Quarterly 2015-2017	

Process Evaluation

For Foster Care Redesign, the process or formative evaluation plan includes an assessment of the development, implementation, and delivery of catchment area services. In addition, this component of the evaluation will examine each SSCC catchment area infrastructure for delivering the services that are intended to support the achievement of Redesign's desired outcomes. Public Consulting Group conducted a cost analysis during 2014 to assess costs associated with operating the first two catchment areas. In the future, SSCC costs and resource cost/benefits will be captured through HHSC cost reports and/or work measurement studies. Also, a gap analysis that identifies the number and percentages of children placed more than 50 miles from their home communities will be used to expose local placement deficiencies. The logic for this assessment is to determine if placement proximity is essential to positive permanency outcomes.

The timeline for process evaluations of current and future SSCCs is as follows:

- Stage I Start-Up and Implementation
 - Three months after Start-up
 - Six months after start-up
- Stage II
 - Three months after start-up
 - Six months after start-up
- Stage III Start-up: no process evaluation is planned

Outcome Evaluation

Outcomes for the redesigned foster care system include both contract performance measures and system change measures. The contract performance measures were developed using the Quality Indicators adopted by the Public Private Partnership. The chart below shows each contract performance measure and its corresponding Quality Indicator. The system change measures include performance related to permanent exits from paid foster care (permanency) and re-entries into foster care after permanency is achieved. The system change measures will be discussed in greater detail later in this report. The collection of outcome data through August 2015 will be sufficient to evaluate both the Foster Care Redesign model and the SSCCs' strategies to implement Redesign. Until then, performance data will be reported in three- and six- month intervals to provide a snapshot of the direction that Redesign is taking.

Contract Performance Measure	Corresponding Quality Indicator
Safety (OC 1): % of children and youth who do not experience abuse, neglect, or exploitation while placed with SSCC	First and foremost, all children and youth are safe from abuse and neglect in their placement.
Placement stability (OC 2): % who have two or fewer placements during the 2 year performance period	Children and youth are appropriately served in the least restrictive environment that supports minimal moves.
Placement proximity (OC 3a): % of children and youth placed within 50 miles of their home	Children and youth are placed in their home communities.
Placed with siblings (OC 3b): % of sibling groups placed together	Children and youth are placed with their siblings.
Monthly contact with family (OC 3c): % of children and youth who have at least one monthly contact with a significant other or family member who is not a parent or sibling	Connections to family and others important to the child are maintained.
Monthly contact with siblings (OC 3d): % of children and youth in foster care who have monthly personal contact with each sibling in foster care	
Youth have opportunities for employment (OC 4a): % of youth in foster care who have regular job at some time during the year	To be fully prepared for successful adulthood, youth are provided opportunities, experiences and activities similar to those experienced by their non-foster care peers.
Youth complete PAL training (OC 4b): % of 17 year olds who have completed PAL Life Skills Training	
Youth have a driver's license (OC 4c): % of 16+ year olds who have a driver's license or state ID card	
Placements in foster family homes (OC 5): % of children and youth placed in a foster family home	Children and youth are appropriately served in the least restrictive environment that supports minimal moves.
Participation in service planning (OC 6a): % of 10+ year olds who participate in development of a DFPS-approved service plan	Youth are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their lives.
Participation in placement decisions (OC 6b): % of children and youth who participated in at least one discussion about his/her opinion regarding placement options	
Participation in court (OC 6c): % of court hearings attended by 10+ year olds	
No measure established at this time	Services respect the child's culture.

Contract Performance Measures

Every SSCC contract includes the same set of contract performance measures. However, the baselines and targets for those measures may be different in each contract. Initial baselines typically reflect the 24-month pre-Redesign performance of the legacy foster care system in the defined catchment area. DFPS and the SSCC use the baselines to negotiate initial performance targets for each measure. With the exception of the safety measure which is set at 100%, all initial targets are negotiated with an SSCC and are higher than the DFPS legacy baselines. At 18 months into a two-year performance period, DFPS will calculate new baselines reflecting the SSCC performance on each measure and use them to negotiate subsequent targets for the next two-year performance period. During a performance period, DFPS provides the SSCC with performance status reports at three- and six-month intervals, depending on the measure.

As part of the outcome evaluation, the performance of individual SSCCs will be compared one to another to help determine if their respective Redesign strategies are effective in achieving the performance targets established for each contract measure and to determine if specific strategies are more or less effective in achieving of those targets.

Child Well-Being

In addition to the contract performance measures described above, child well-being data will be reported on a quarterly basis. Measuring changes in well-being will be accomplished by administering a standardized assessment tool. Knowing if the redesigned foster care system impacts the well-being of children in the short-term is critical. This knowledge allows the major systemic changes to occur over longer periods of time without having to slow or cease the process of rolling out the redesigned system in other areas of the state.

Measuring Systemic Changes and Continuous Quality Improvement

DFPS has contracted with the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall to provide additional outcome data for Redesign. Measurement of four key outcomes will tie two underlying assumptions of Redesign to changes in permanency rates, utilization of paid foster care days, and rates of re-entry into paid care after permanency is achieved. Specifically, placing more children in their home communities and reducing the number of placement changes children experience while in foster care are two assumptions that underlie the expected increase to permanency rates and the expected reduction in the utilization of paid foster care days.

To evaluate these assumptions, and to lead a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process, Chapin Hall will measure the following four outcomes:

- Placement stability
- Placement proximity
- Permanent exits from paid foster care (number of children exiting paid foster care through an adoption, family reunification or placement with relative or fictive kin and number of paid foster care days utilized)
- Re-entry into the foster care system

Placement stability and placement proximity outcomes are SSCC contract performance measures. The permanency outcome (number of permanent exits and number paid foster care days utilized during a performance period) will be used to assess financial incentives and remedies in the second year of the SSCC's last stage of implementation. The re-entry outcome will help to ensure that any improvements to the permanency outcomes are not offset by an increase in the re-entry rate to foster care.

The CQI process that Chapin Hall will lead is the actual framework for the outcome evaluation. Using "Baseline-Target-Actual" data, Chapin Hall defines the differences between baseline values and actual performance values for each of the four outcomes described above. At six-month intervals Chapin Hall determines if the differences are changing for each SSCC. If so, and in a direction that moves away from a defined target, Chapin Hall and DFPS will begin working with an SSCC to determine if allowable changes to its Redesign strategy can narrow the difference between actual performance value, the baseline value and expected performance target.

Changes to processes, operations, service quality, and capacity may bring about the desired change in performance. Improving on other contract performance measures might also bring about desired improvements to the four Chapin Hall outcomes. This process continues every six months, affording the SSCC opportunities to continuously improve its performance. The CQI process is critical during Stage III of implementation. Continuously reducing the number of paid foster care days, either by having more permanent exits or shorter stays in care, will result in payment of financial incentives. Conversely, utilizing more than the baseline days of care will result in financial remedies.

As described thus far, CQI can benefit individual SSCCs by identifying strategy changes that can result in improved performance. The process is adaptable and can also be used to inform and improve the DFPS Redesign model as information is shared across catchment areas. Using the CQI findings from individual SSCCs may be sufficient to initiate changes to the DFPS redesign model. Aggregating performance data from multiple SSCCs and then measuring differences between redesign performance and DFPS legacy performance (baseline) is another way to initiate the CQI process for the model.

Depending on the time and extent of any differences between actual and expected performance, DFPS and its stakeholders will begin identifying changes to the model that will lead to further improvements in Redesign outcomes. Measuring gaps for the model may not be necessary every six months given the time needed to implement Redesign in multiple catchment areas. DFPS will analyze and determine if annual measurement is more appropriate and informative.

SSCC Contract Management

The following are some examples (High-Level) of contract-related tasks to be accomplished.

Task	Description	Timeframe
Procure SSCC	Participate with HHSC legal and contracts staff in evaluation and contract negotiation activities	Pending Legislative Direction

Implement Phase II For Catchment 3b	Develop readiness assessment for Stage II; review accounting manual and systems, management plan, operations manual, community engagement plan, CQI plan and provider network for approval/disapproval	2015-ongoing
Monitor SSCC Performance	Review results of performance measures; identify trends, where technical assistance is needed, evaluation of implementation, fiscal, program and administrative compliance; review fiscal monitoring plan	2013-ongoing
Develop Tracking For Purchase Of Service Dollars		

DFPS manages performance-based contracts by conducting ongoing and continual oversight of the contractor's performance. Performance is measured by the continual review of data that indicates an SSCC's current status and identifies predictive trends. Whenever reviewed data raises compliance concerns, the contract manager may require the contractor to develop and submit a corrective action plan that lays out the steps the SSCC will take to reverse the trend.

The contract manager and other subject matter experts (SMEs) continually review the results of the performance measures through:

- Data provided in required reports submitted by the contractor
- Ad hoc reports
- Third party review and analysis of data and trends, if applicable
- IMPACT data reports
- Financial reports, and
- CLASS compliance reports.

This ongoing continual approach of data collection, analysis, and management assists with ensuring:

- Early identification of problems and trends
- Areas where technical assistance can be beneficial
- Evaluation of service implementation in accordance with the contract and the service delivery model as designed, and
- Fiscal, programmatic and administrative compliance pertaining to the contractor's implemented processes and procedures and the DFPS contract terms and conditions.

DFPS will track performance throughout the contract period. Performance results may be used by DFPS to make decisions about contract status, to adjust the nature and intensity of DFPS' contract monitoring and quality assurance activities, and to keep stakeholders informed about the success of the performance based contracting effort. Any and all analyses can be used by DFPS to determine subsequent performance targets, the need for contract changes, or impose corrective actions.

Enhanced Fiscal Monitoring

The contract requires the SSCC to submit cost reports and external financial statements as well as undergo annual independent and single audits. DFPS will use the findings of the independent audit to assess the overall financial viability of the organization. The department will use the single audit to assess the SSCC's financial viability and contract compliance as it relates to the program requirements of the SSCC contract.

Ongoing fiscal monitoring includes but is not limited to:

- Review of the contractor's financial management systems to ensure:
 - Accountability and proper documentation for DFPS' dollars spent
 - Sufficient cash flow is on hand and procedures are in place to monitor cash flow
 - Proper and standard accounting procedures are in place and utilized
 - Sufficient internal controls are in place and are strictly enforced
- Analysis of financial reports that assess the current financial viability of the organization, such as:
 - Cost reports
 - Internal and external financial statements,
 - Annual independent audit
 - A single audit, when required
- Review of contractor's invoices submitted to DFPS for payment
- Review of contractor's adherence to Prompt Payment Act and proper payment of subcontractors, when applicable.
- The composition of management, administrative, direct care, and other program staff; ratio of administrative to direct staff.
- The program structure such as: caseload size; average length of stay; age of children; percentage in-home versus out-of-home.
- Monthly service usage compared to budgeted service usage by service type for the SSCC system.

Administrative Monitoring

DFPS staff review and assess the SSCC contractor's policies, procedure, and overall organizational structure, the efficiency of a lead agency's operations and proper oversight of the of provider network.

Ongoing administrative monitoring includes but is not limited to:

- A review of the contractor's organizational structure that ensure;
 - Staff have the appropriate qualifications for the services provided
 - Staffing pattern is sufficient to support service delivery
- Contractor has an adequate staff training plan that supports the services provided.
- Subcontract monitoring plan and timeline are in place to manage and oversee any subcontracted service providers, when applicable.
- Proper insurance coverage is current and maintained.
- Background checks are conducted as required and continual compliance with this contract requirement is strictly enforced.

- A system is in place for tracking and reporting critical incidents.
- Contractor is accessible and responsive to the contract manager, or designated department personnel.
- The contractor is in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.
- Documentation of service delivery is maintained in accordance with contract requirement(s) and DFPS Minimum Standards, when applicable.

Programmatic Monitoring

DFPS staff review and assess the SSCC service delivery system to determine if it is consistent with contract requirements, including outputs, outcomes, quality, and effectiveness of programs. Service-related data and information is reviewed for compliance with process and outcome expectations as identified in standards rules, established protocols, and the contract, to determine the degree to which the identified need is being met and the quality of the service being provided.

Ongoing programmatic monitoring includes but is not limited to:

- Performance measure results are tracked and assessed on a quarterly basis. Trends and patterns in performance measurement data is identified, documented and communicated to the SSCC and DFPS leadership.
- Safety and well-being outcomes that are showing negative trends will activate a more in-depth review and possible intervention and technical assistance actions by DFPS and the SSCC.
- Review and analysis of IMPACT data reports, ad hoc reports, CLASS data and incident reports.
- Review and analysis of other contract deliverables.
- Complaints received from internal staff and external stakeholders.
- Compliance of DFPS policies and procedures.
- Compliance is maintained with agreed upon protocols.
- Compliance with DFPS Minimum Standards, when applicable.
- The program structure such as: caseload size; average length of stay; age of children; percentage in-home versus out-of-home.
- The existence of available support services for families such as prevention/diversion services, when indicated and applicable according to the SSCC model and implementation stage.

Contract Oversight

In addition to contract monitoring activities outlined above, FCR contracts are subject to the following oversight:

State Auditor's Office (SAO)

The State Auditor's Office (SAO) is the independent auditor for Texas state government that operates with oversight from the Legislative Audit Committee, a six-member permanent standing committee of the Texas Legislature, jointly chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The SAO is authorized, by Chapter 321, Texas Government Code, to perform audits, reviews, and investigations of any entity receiving state funds, including state

agencies and higher education institutions. SAO performs audits with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards, including those issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

DFPS Internal Audit

DFPS Internal Audit performs a retrospective review of selected contracts based on a risk assessment methodology. Accordingly, a provider must be operating for a period of time prior to the internal audit review. This is typically one year with a report not being available until six months later.

Contract Oversight and Support (COS)

DFPS has an independent Contract Oversight and Support (COS) Division apart from the DFPS Contract Management Division. There are three units within the DFPS Contract Oversight & Support (COS) Division:

The COS Policy Unit establishes and maintains agency-wide policies and processes to ensure quality contract management and monitoring. The COS Policy Unit also provides training and works to ensure that staff have the technical assistance necessary for effective contract management and monitoring.

The COS QA Unit works to manage and mitigate risk associated with agency contracts by establishing risk assessment methodologies, overseeing the risk assessment process, and ensuring that contract staff comply with statutes, rules, and established policy throughout each stage of contracting lifecycle through annual quality assurance evaluations via on-site and desk review processes.

The COS Data Unit reports on contract information and contract lifecycle activities, supports and maintains contract data systems, including HCATS (the Health and Human Services Contract Administration and Tracking System) and the IMPACT contracts database, establishes the annual Statewide Monitoring Plan (SMP), and tracks the progress of the SMP.

COS conducts an annual QA evaluation for all SSCC contracts maintained by the agency in order to provide an independent report to DFPS executive staff.