



## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

COMMISSIONER  
John J. Specia, Jr.

December 3, 2012

The Honorable Rick Perry  
Governor  
P. O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

The Honorable Jane Nelson, Chair  
Committee Members  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
201 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 420  
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable David Dewhurst  
Lieutenant Governor  
Capitol Station  
P. O. Box 12068  
Austin, Texas 78711

The Honorable Richard Peña Raymond, Chair  
Committee Members  
House Committee on Human Services  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768

The Honorable Joe Straus  
Speaker  
Texas House of Representatives  
P. O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Governor Perry, Governor Dewhurst, Speaker Straus, Chair Nelson, Chair Raymond and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

House Bill 753, 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, directs the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) "to study the salaries of each type of Child Protective Services caseworker to determine the role salary plays in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers and in the turnover rate for each type of caseworker."

The study conducted a survey of current employees, an analysis of comparable positions within the Texas State Classification system, current average salaries including teachers in Elementary or Secondary Education, and other states' salaries for CPS caseworker positions. The survey found that caseworkers leave, or intend to leave, due to their working conditions including workload, supervision issues, and inadequate compensation. The analysis finds that in order to maximize recruitment and retention initiatives, all concerns shared by the caseworkers should be equally addressed.

The Honorable Rick Perry  
The Honorable David Dewhurst  
The Honorable Joe Straus  
The Honorable Jane Nelson  
The Honorable Richard Peña Raymond  
Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Members of the House Committee on Human Services  
December 3, 2012  
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Considering this data analysis, the report makes the following recommendations:

- use "locality pay" to pay caseworkers by region or area of the state;
- provide pay increases to entry level staff with degrees for which DFPS is statutorily required to recruit;
- approve and fund the DFPS LAR exceptional item to modify the certification program;
- provide an ongoing routine and predictable merit program for direct delivery staff in all programs;
- provide High Risk Compensation pay for DFPS caseworker staff that work in certain job titles; and
- allow DFPS to pay compensation for on-call time.

We appreciate the opportunity to share this information with you. If you have any questions, please contact Ann Strauser, Director of the Center for Consumer and External Affairs, at (512) 438-3318 or by email at [Ann.Strauser@dfps.state.tx.us](mailto:Ann.Strauser@dfps.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

  
John J. Specia, Jr.  
Commissioner

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# *Child Protective Services Salary Study*

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Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

*December 2012*

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## Executive Summary

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House Bill 753, 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, directs the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) “to study the salaries of each type of Child Protective Services caseworker to determine the role salary plays in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers and in the turnover rate for each type of caseworker.”

The major components of this study include:

- Survey of current employees
- Analysis of comparable positions within Texas State Classification system and current average salaries including teachers in Elementary or Secondary Education
- Analysis of other states salaries for CPS caseworker positions

CPS salaries have increased by 5.7 percent over the last several years. Beginning September 1, 2005, investigative workers and supervisors started receiving a monthly supplemental pay of \$416.66 for as long as they remained in an eligible position. The 79th Legislature created this incentive to attract and retain CPS investigative workers and supervisors.

Within CPS, criminal justice majors make up the largest portion of the targeted degrees at just over 15.5 percent. They are followed closely by psychology majors at 14.5 percent and social work degree holders at 13 percent. Non-targeted degree holders continue to make up a significant portion of hires and given the challenges faced in many areas of the state remain an important part of the applicant pool.

The turnover rate for caseworkers remains high though it has decreased since 2007 when turnover for investigators was at an all-time high of over 40 percent. Turnover dropped significantly by 2009 but is once again on the rise as the economy grows stronger.

The main reasons why they leave or intend to leave have remained consistent from year to year:

- poor working conditions and environment (safety and work-related stress),
- workload concerns making it difficult to perform adequate work,
- supervision issues, and
- inadequate compensation.

A survey of caseworker attitudes about salary showed the following:

- Almost 78 percent of respondents placed emphasis on the importance of salary when accepting their position with CPS.
- Roughly 67 percent of the caseworkers sampled reported a favorable impression of salary when applying for their initial position.
- However, only 3 percent of current caseworkers sampled stated they were adequately paid with regard to the stress and demands of casework.
- Of current employees, 74.7 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their current salary.

A review of other state jobs with similar challenges to those faced by caseworkers found that the salary ranges were typically lower for those job classifications, however, the average salary for those positions is similar or higher than that of CPS caseworkers. Of the comparable

positions, only the CPS caseworker position required a bachelor's degree as a minimum qualification.

There are several tools used by other state or federal agencies to scale an employee's salary to the particular challenges of a position, including the cost of living in a particular location or the dangers associated with the position.

- Hazardous duty pay/High risk compensation pay
- Locality pay
- Merit programs

A review of child welfare positions in neighboring states found that although Texas has a competitive entry level salary compared to those states, after entry most of those states had greater increases in the salaries of existing employees.

The report makes the following recommendations:

- Use "locality pay" to pay caseworkers by region or area of the state and add an additional percent to their base salary.
- Provide pay increases to entry level staff with degrees for which DFPS is statutorily required to recruit.
- Approve and fund the DFPS LAR exceptional item to modify the certification program. The proposal seeks to decrease turnover that happens before the caseworker has a chance to become proficient in their job by allowing upgrades and pay increases sooner in the caseworker's tenure.
- Provide an ongoing routine and predictable merit program for direct delivery staff in all programs.
- Provide High Risk Compensation pay for DFPS caseworker staff that work in certain job titles. These staff would include investigators (including Special Investigators) as well as CPS Human Services Technicians (who provide transportation for clients) and all CVS, FBSS, and "I See You" staff.
- Allow DFPS to pay compensation for on-call time.

## Introduction

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The mission of Child Protective Services (CPS) is to protect children from abuse and neglect. In support of this mission approximately 4,800 CPS workers in over 250 offices statewide conduct the following activities:

- Investigate reports of abuse and neglect of children;
- Provide services to children and families in their own homes;
- Place children in foster care;
- Provide services to help youth in foster care make the transition to adulthood; and
- Place children in adoptive homes.

Recruiting and retaining quality staff is essential for CPS to achieve its mission of protecting children.

House Bill 753, 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, added Section 40.0328 to Chapter 40 of the Human Resources Code, requiring the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) "to study the salaries of each type of CPS caseworker to determine the role salary plays in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers and in the turnover rate for each type of caseworker." The bill requires DFPS report to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and standing committee of each house with jurisdiction over the department results of the aforementioned analysis.

## Background

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For the purposes of this study, caseworkers have been divided into four categories<sup>1</sup>:

- Investigations (INV);
- Conservatorship (CVS);
- Family Based Safety Services (FBSS); and
- Other CPS caseworkers.

The "Other CPS caseworkers" category consists of:

- Kinship Development (KIN) workers: Kinship Development workers provide ongoing support to relative caregivers by visiting the home at least monthly, finding needed community resources and services, and providing tangible support by accompanying caregivers at such gatherings as school meetings, DFPS planning meetings, and court hearings. They help to maintain the placement stability of the kinship placement by helping families find solutions to problems in parenting and maintaining open and

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<sup>1</sup> | See You workers were included in the CVS category. INV Peer Trainers and Special Investigators were included in the INV category.

regular communication with the primary worker to ensure information pertaining to the child and the child's placement is obtained and shared.

- Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) workers: PAL services are provided to youth in substitute care to prepare them to live independently when they become adults. The PAL stage can be opened for any youth who is currently or has been previously in the substitute care stage and who meets the age requirements (at least 14 years old).
- Foster and Adoption (FAD) workers: As a licensed child-placing agency, CPS has its own foster homes and has a foster and adoptive home development program. The program is responsible for recruiting, developing, verifying, monitoring, and supporting foster and adoptive homes that are licensed by DFPS. **FAD services** include screening, training, and studying appropriate foster and adopt candidates; supporting and training certified homes; and matching homes with children needing placement.

### **CPS Caseworker Minimum Requirements and Targeted Recruitment**

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Promoting or maintaining an adequate applicant pool is necessary because the worker screening process is rigorous. Applicants first must meet the educational requirements and pass a general application screening, be provisionally recommended on the CPS worker pre-employment assessment, and pass an agency-scored writing skills test to move forward in the selection process. Almost 24% of applicants completing the pre-employment assessment are not recommended; thus, they are eliminated from consideration. Applicants moving to the interview stage must have a competitive interview, receive acceptable employment references, and pass a background check before being offered a position.

All CPS caseworkers must have at least a four year college degree in order to meet licensing standards. The agency targets recruitment efforts towards applicants holding degrees in the following areas:

- Criminal Justice
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Counseling
- Early Childhood Development
- Education
- Human Services
- Sociology

A review of fiscal year 2012 hiring data revealed that criminal justice majors made up the largest portion of the targeted degrees at just over 15.5%. They were followed closely by psychology majors at 14.5% and social work degree holders at 13%. The other targeted degree holders made up about 15% of the hires during the time period reviewed. Just over one third of the remaining hires included applicants holding degrees outside the targeted group.

It appears applicants with a degree in social work may have more desirable options because they do not make up a significant portion of hires despite an automatic increase to their starting

salary of 6.8% for a master's degree or 3.4% for a bachelor's degree. A similar dynamic can be observed in areas where bilingual applicants are in short supply.

Non-targeted degree holders continue to make up a significant portion of hires and given the challenges faced in many areas of the state remain an important part of the applicant pool.

### CPS Caseworker Salaries

CPS salaries have increased by 5.7% over the last several years (Table 1). Beginning September 1, 2005, investigative workers and supervisors started receiving a monthly supplemental pay of \$416.66 for as long as they remained in an eligible position. The 79th Legislature created this incentive to attract and retain CPS investigative workers and supervisors.

The 79th Legislature also provided appropriations for a general state employee pay raise of four percent, or at least \$1,200 a year, beginning September 1, 2005, and three percent, or at least \$600 per year, beginning September 1, 2006. The Legislature stipulated that staff receiving the supplemental pay for investigations were not eligible for either of the general state employee raises.

Other salary increases are a result of the 80th Legislature approving a general state employee pay raise of two percent, or a \$50 per month minimum, in each of the fiscal years of the biennium starting on September 1, 2007.

Table 1: Average Salary FY 2006 - FY 2011 by CPS Position Type

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	All
CVS	\$32,513	\$32,901	\$33,391	\$33,832	\$34,264	\$34,516	\$33,602
FBSS	\$32,725	\$33,375	\$33,678	\$34,132	\$34,212	\$34,406	\$33,834
INV	\$36,327	\$36,042	\$36,663	\$37,596	\$38,336	\$38,056	\$37,218
Other	\$36,094	\$38,754	\$39,215	\$39,789	\$40,327	\$41,245	\$39,164
All	\$34,946	\$35,172	\$35,574	\$36,276	\$36,809	\$37,051	\$35,998

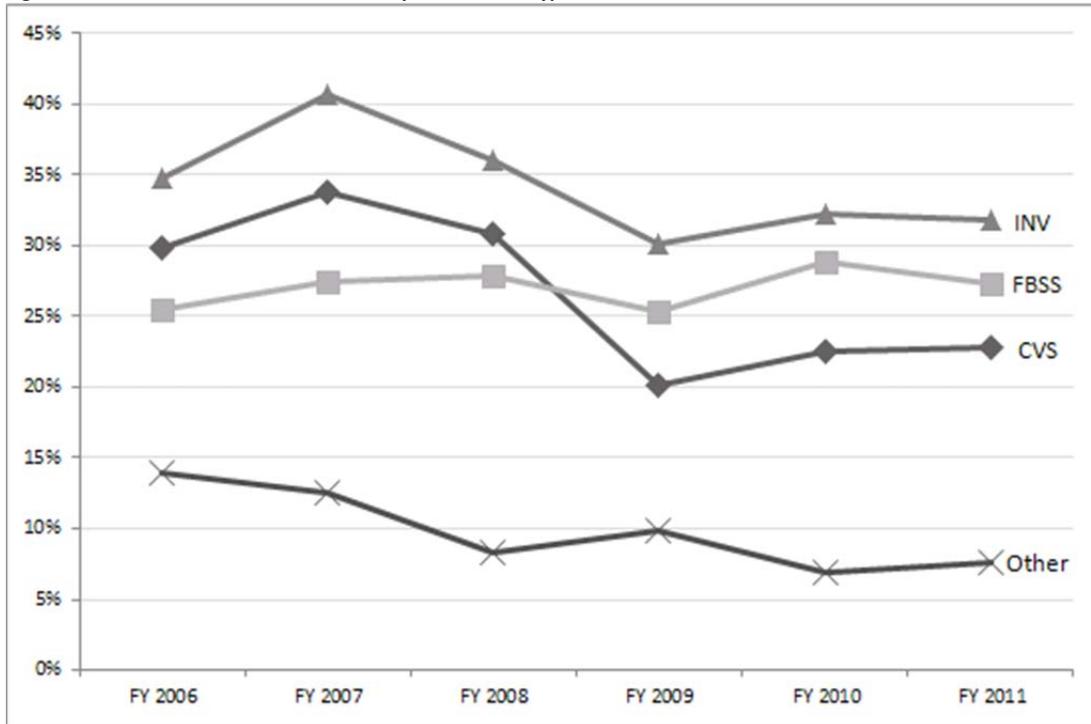
Source: DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics

### CPS Caseworker Tenure and Turnover

The staff in the "Other CPS caseworkers" category include Kinship Development (KIN) workers, Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) workers, and Foster and Adoption (FAD) workers. Staff in this category have an average of 9.1 years of experience as compared with staff in FBSS, INV and CVS positions, who have an average ranging from 2.8 years to 3.1 years.

The turnover rate for caseworkers remains high although it has decreased since 2007 when turnover for investigators was at an all-time high of over 40 percent. Turnover dropped significantly by 2009 but is once again on the rise as the economy grows stronger (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Turnover Rates FY 2006 – FY 2011 by CPS Position Type



DFPS has several ways of determining why staff leave the agency, including exit surveys through both the State Auditor's Office and DFPS, and the biennial Survey Of Employee Engagement (SEE) administered by the University of Texas at Austin. The latter survey measures staff intent to leave as well as whether staff believe they are adequately paid. Caseworkers have been clear that there are four main reasons why they leave or intend to leave:

- poor working conditions and environment (safety and work-related stress);
- workload concerns making it difficult to perform adequate work;
- supervision issues; and
- inadequate compensation.

Year-to-year, those reasons continue to be the primary factors in a caseworker's decision to leave the agency in spite of improved tools for caseworkers and increased training for supervisors to increase their ability to support staff.

## Data Sources Referenced in Report

The major components of this salary study include:

- **Survey of current employees** in order to assess their perceptions of salary based on their tenure, education, type of casework and current salary as a caseworker.
- **Analysis of comparable positions within the Texas State Classification system and current average salaries including teachers in Elementary or Secondary Education.** This analysis looks at differences in pay among teachers across Texas and caseworkers

across Texas. Also examined are the salaries of other Texas State jobs with similar attributes as those of CPS caseworkers: high stress and job demands, emotionally charged environments and unpredictable situations providing unwanted services.

- **Analysis of other states' salaries for CPS caseworker positions.** This analysis of caseworker salaries in states bordering Texas was to measure how Texas compares to similar positions with regard to salary, as well as education type and requirements, and frequency/amount of upgrades by tenure.

## Recruitment and Retention Survey

The Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Survey was administered between January 2012 and May 2012 and disseminated to 1,837 currently employed CPS caseworkers. It was primarily aimed at collecting recruitment and retention data but also contained questions about caseworkers' plans to leave in relation to salary. A total of 1,532 respondents completed the survey, a response rate of 83 percent<sup>2</sup>.

Recruitment and Retention demographic data was reported from the survey, the Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT) system, and the Health and Human Services Administrative System (HHSAS).

**Table 2: Recruitment and Retention Surveys Completed**

	# Completed R&R Surveys	% Completed R&R Surveys	% Social Work Degrees <sup>3</sup>	Average Tenure (years)	Mean Monthly Salary
INV	406	26.5%	18.7%	4.4	\$2,917.05
CVS	448	29.2%	22.3%	3.5	\$2,890.47
FBSS	379	24.7%	23.0%	3.6	\$2,899.08
Other	299	19.5%	34.8%	8.9	\$3,238.30
Total	1,532	100.0%	24.0%	4.9	\$2,969.05

Source: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

The sample was relatively evenly distributed across all caseworker types.

- Twenty-four percent of the survey respondents had a bachelor of social work (BSW) or master of social work (MSW).
  - The "Other CPS caseworkers" group had the greatest percentage of participants with social work degrees and was more tenured than any of the remaining groups.
- The mean salary amounts were similar for each casework area, aside from the Other category.
  - The Other group's mean salary was significantly greater than the INV, CVS and FBSS casework groups. Their tenure was also significantly higher.
- On average, caseworkers with a social work degree earned a higher salary than those without a social work degree<sup>4</sup> (data not shown).

<sup>2</sup> Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

<sup>3</sup> Includes Bachelor of Social Work and Masters of Social Work degrees, as self-reported by respondents

## Exit Survey

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The Exit Survey was given to 720 caseworkers who had either transferred to a non-casework position or exited the agency between January 1, 2012, and May 18, 2012; the majority of those who received the survey had left the agency. Ninety-seven caseworkers completed the survey, a response rate of 13.5 percent.

Exit Survey demographic data was reported from the survey, IMPACT, and HHSAS.

**Table 3: Exit Surveys Completed**

	# Complete Exit Surveys	# of Respondents Leaving DFPS	# of Respondents Leaving Caseworker Position	% Complete Exit Survey	% Social Work Degrees <sup>5</sup>	Average Tenure (years)	Mean Monthly Salary
INV	32	19	13	32.7%	25.0%	3.3	\$2,909.08
CVS	35	18	17	35.7%	22.9%	4.0	\$2,965.55
FBSS	20	16	4	21.4%	38.1%	3.2	\$2,848.18
Other	10	3	7	10.2%	30.0%	8.1	\$3,233.03
Total	97	56	41	100.0%	27.6%	4.0	\$2,949.26

Source: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

Some Exit Survey showed:

- While there were comparatively fewer Other casework participants, the Other group was significantly more tenured with an average eight years of service compared to an average tenure of roughly four years for the INV, CVS and FBSS groups.
- Twenty-eight percent of all Exit Survey respondents had a BSW or MSW.
- The mean salary amounts were similar for each casework area.

## Survey of Employee Engagement

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The two lowest scoring constructs from the Survey of Employee Engagement were Pay and Job Satisfaction.

The Pay construct addresses perceptions of the overall compensation package offered by DFPS. It describes how well the compensation package 'holds up' when employees compare it to similar jobs in other organizations. Low scores suggest that pay is a central concern or reason for discontent. A low score is generally considered a score of less than 325. The Pay construct score for CPS in 2010 was 199. The Pay construct score for CPS in 2012 declined to 177.

The Job Satisfaction construct addresses employees' attitudes about the overall work situation. This construct looks at the degree to which employees intrinsically like their jobs and the job. Low scores can be attributed to many factors and may suggest a number of remedies. In

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<sup>4</sup> CPS pays a higher starting salary to caseworkers with a social work degree compared to caseworkers with a non-social work degree.

<sup>5</sup> Includes Bachelor of Social Work and Masters of Social Work degrees

general, job satisfaction stems from these factors: supervisory effectiveness, manageability of the workload, supportiveness of the environment, and the level of pay and benefits. The 2010 Job Satisfaction construct score was 314. The Job Satisfaction construct score declined to 309 in 2012.

## Role of Salary in Recruitment

The Recruitment and Retention Survey, a perception survey of current caseworkers, was used to assess the role salary played when caseworkers were applying for a position. The following results reflect what a caseworker perceived about their salary when reflecting on their initial hire.

In the Recruitment and Retention Survey, caseworkers were asked the importance they placed on salary when they decided to take a position with CPS. Almost 78 percent of 1,532 respondents placed emphasis on the importance of salary when accepting their initial position with CPS (Table 4). However, only about eight percent of caseworkers indicated they chose to become a caseworker because of the salary. A commonly cited reason for becoming a caseworker was that their educational background led them to become a caseworker. Approximately 34% of the overall sample indicated they chose to be a caseworker because it was what they studied in school.

### Importance/Impression of Salary When Deciding to Accept CPS Caseworker Position

Almost 78 percent of 1,532 respondents to the recruitment and retention survey placed emphasis on the importance of salary when accepting their position with CPS (Table 4).

Table 4: Importance of Salary When Accepting Position

	Very Important/ Important	Neutral	A Little Bit/ Not At All
INV	81.8%	12.6%	5.7%
CVS	71.2%	22.1%	6.7%
FBSS	77.8%	14.0%	8.2%
Other	81.9%	11.0%	7.0%
Total	77.7%	15.4%	6.9%

Source: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

Roughly 67 percent of the caseworkers sampled reported a favorable impression of salary when applying for their initial position (Table 5).

Table 5: Impression of Salary when Applying for Position

	Very Important/ Important	Neutral	A Little Bit/ Not At All
INV	68.2%	20.4%	11.3%
CVS	62.9%	23.4%	13.6%
FBSS	70.2%	20.3%	9.5%

Other	69.2%	19.4%	11.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.4%</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>

Source: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

## Role of Salary in Retention

Prior to taking the job, new employees are informed in numerous of the challenges associated with the position.

- Applicants are offered a self-assessment to help determine their suitability for the job;
- Applicants are required to view a realistic job description and view a realistic job preview video prior to being scheduled for an interview; and
- During the job interview, each applicant and the hiring specialist review and discuss the job demands.

## Level of Satisfaction with Current Salary

Despite these efforts, from the survey results, it appears that a different impression of salary emerges after the new employee accepts the position. Caseworkers were asked their current perception of the salary. Responding caseworkers had an average of 4.9 years of service.

Of the 1,532 respondents to the recruitment and retention survey, only three percent of caseworkers sampled stated they were adequately paid in relation to the stress and demands of casework. Of the total survey respondents, 1,145 (74.7%) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their current salary, 130 (8.5%) were very satisfied or satisfied, and 257 (16.8%) were neutral (Table 6). Of the 1,145 dissatisfied or very dissatisfied respondents, CVS workers comprised the highest percentage at 30 percent. Of the 387 respondents who were neutral or satisfied with their salaries, 126 (32.6%) were investigators.

**Table 6: Satisfaction with Current Salary**

	Very Satisfied or Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	
CVS	29	6.5%	71	15.8%	348	77.7%
FBSS	31	8.2%	65	17.2%	283	74.7%
INV	42	10.3%	84	20.7%	280	69.0%
Other	28	9.4%	37	12.4%	234	78.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>1145</b>	<b>74.7%</b>

Source: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

Of the 1,145 respondents who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their salary, 171 (14.9%) had left the agency as of October 2012. However, 18.3 percent of respondents who indicated a neutral level of satisfaction with their salary had also left (Table 7).

**Table 7: Level of Satisfaction with Current Salary by DFPS Employment Status**

	Total	Still Employed at DFPS	Left DFPS	% Left DFPS
Very Satisfied or Satisfied with Current Salary	130	116	14	10.8%
Neutral	257	210	47	18.3%
Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied with Current Salary	1145	974	171	14.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>15.1%</b>

Sources: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover; DFPS Management Reporting & Statistics

Of the 1,145 respondents who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their salary, 536 (46.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were intending to leave the agency or change positions within the next year to make more money. As of October 2012, 108 (20.1%) of those 536 had already left the agency (Table 8).

**Table 8: Caseworkers Who are Dissatisfied with Current Salary by Intention to Leave and DFPS Employment Status**

	Total	Still Employed at DFPS	Left DFPS
Strongly Agreed or Agreed They Intended to Leave	536	428 (79.9%)	108(20.1%)
Neutral	371	331(89.2%)	40(10.8%)
Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed They Intended to Leave	238	215(90.3%)	23(9.7%)

Sources: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover; DFPS Management Reporting & Statistics

Of the 56 CPS Exit Survey respondents who left DFPS, 43 stated that salary was important or very important when deciding to leave their position with DFPS (Table 9).

**Table 9: Exit Survey – Importance of Salary in Decision to Leave DFPS**

	CVS	FBSS	INV	Other	Total Count	Average Tenure (Months)	Average Annual Salary
Very Important & Important	16 (37.2%)	11 (25.6%)	14 (32.6%)	2 (4.7%)	43	34	\$35,296
Neutral	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (50.0%)		6	27	\$34,649
Not Important & Did Not Even Think About It	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	7	50	\$36,368
	<b>18 (32.1%)</b>	<b>16 (28.6%)</b>	<b>19 (33.9%)</b>	<b>3 (5.4%)</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>\$35,361</b>

Sources: Survey of CPS Perceptions of Salary for HB 753 CPS Caseworker Salary Study: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover, DFPS Management Reporting & Statistics

## Salary Schedules and Comparisons of Texas Workforce

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DFPS obtained information on salaries of like positions in Texas to determine how CPS Caseworker salaries compared. Salary schedules for positions with the federal government were also examined.

### Federal Employees

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The General Schedule (GS) classification and pay system covers the majority of civilian white-collar Federal employees (about 1.3 million worldwide) in professional, technical, administrative, and clerical positions. GS classification standards, qualifications, pay structure, and related human resources policies (e.g., general staffing and pay administration policies) are administered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on a Government-wide basis.

The law does not specify detailed requirements for defining General Schedule (GS) locality pay areas. Currently there are 32 locality pay areas in the GS system, which serve as means by which the government pay is compared with the local sector's pay for the same job. All GS employees have the same salary based on GS level; for example, a GS 8 in Kansas makes the same pay as a GS 8 in New York. Then, the federal government compensates for where the employee is located in the US. Most GS employees are also entitled to locality pay, which is a geographic-based percentage rate that reflects pay levels for non-Federal workers in certain geographic areas as determined by surveys conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>6</sup>

### Border Patrol

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Entry levels for Border Patrol staff are GS-5, GS-7 or GS-9, depending on qualifications. Upon successful completion of the 6½-month probationary examination, individuals hired at the GS-5 level are eligible for promotion to grade GS-7 and individuals hired at GS-7 are eligible for promotion to GS-9. Career progression to the GS-11 and GS-12 generally follows after one year at the preceding lower grade level (GS-9/GS-11). Positions above the GS-12 level are filled through agency merit promotion competition. Entry-level Agents are entitled to special salary rates for law enforcement officers, and may be entitled to special locality pay. A 2008 schedule for Border Patrol jobs looks like this:

Using a 2008 salary schedule, a GS-5 with no experience starts at \$41,260. Additional pay includes a locality payment of 27.39 percent for the locality pay area of Houston-Baytown-Huntsville, TX<sup>7</sup>. The Homeland Security website tells applicants: "You'll start out in the low to mid-40's (including over-time, holiday, and night pay) in your first year. In the next two years, assuming you perform all duties in a satisfactory manner, you can expect to be making up to the mid-50's."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> US Office of Personnel Management

<sup>7</sup> The same locality pays applies for counties that surround this locality to include border counties in Texas

<sup>8</sup> US Department of Homeland Security Website

## Teachers

All Texas teachers are subject to a schedule of salary increases for each year of tenure. Depending on the location of the school district, the salary schedules (2010-11) for new teachers with no experience vary. The actual average starting salary for a new teacher in 2012 was \$35,794 and is 31 percent higher than the teacher minimum allowed starting salary of \$27,320. The actual starting salary for districts with more than 10,000 students is \$43,548<sup>9</sup>.

The average salary for all teachers is \$48,375 with an average tenure of 7.7 years. By comparison, the average salary for all CPS caseworkers is \$37,051 with an average tenure of 3.6 years. Fifty-three percent of CPS caseworkers have three years or fewer in tenure. School districts have the ability to pay above the minimum in order to attract talented teachers to their district whereas CPS is not funded to do this.

**Table 10: Select Texas Teachers' Salaries**

	All Teachers	Marble Falls	Bullard	Arlington	Harlingen	El Paso
Salary Schedule (with no experience)	\$27,320	\$38,500	\$31,320	\$46,276	\$42,500	\$43,734
Average Salary	\$48,375	\$47,068	\$41,983	\$52,236	\$48,816	\$49,211
Average Tenure (in years)	7.7	7.2	6.8	9.0	9.7	10.4

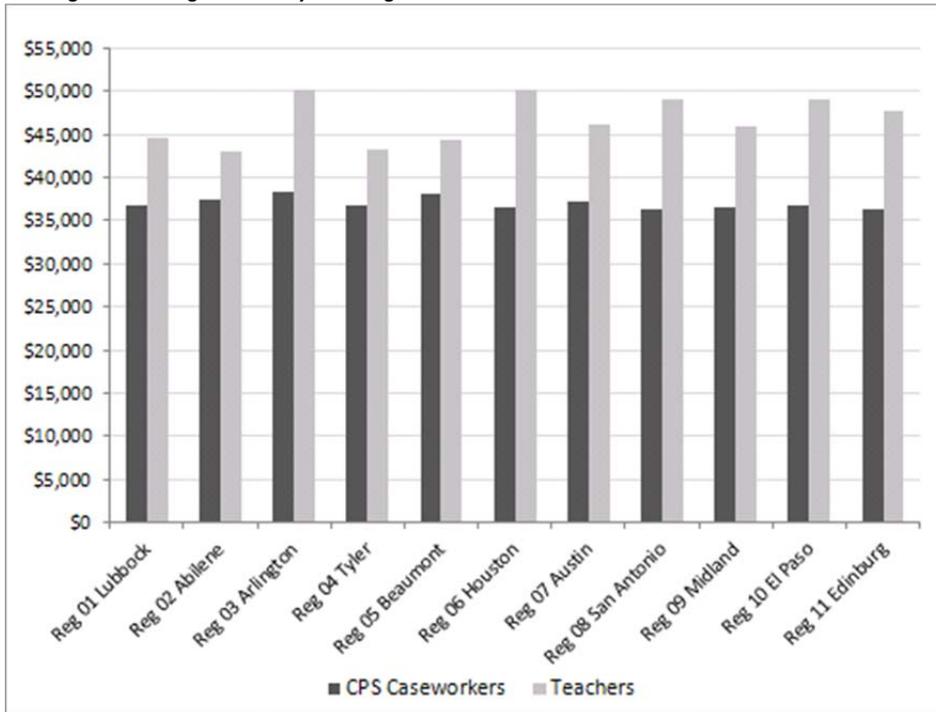
The Texas Administrative Code dictates minimum base salary for teachers by years of experience. In no instance may a school district pay classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time counselors or full-time nurses (RN) less than the state base salary listed for that individual's years of experience as determined by Section 153.1021 of the Texas Administrative Code, Commissioner's Rules on Creditable Years of Service.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, many districts pay an annual supplement of up to \$4,000 to individuals who teach in "Critical Need Areas" such as Math, Science and Special Education, as well as those who are bi-lingual.

Table 10 shows a comparison of selected small and large districts across Texas. The "All Teachers" column shows the minimum that must be paid to all teachers, their actual average salary and their average tenure. The columns that follow compare the individual beginning salary for the selected districts, as well the average salary and tenure for that district. These salaries do not include special supplements given for "Critical Need Areas".

Figure 2 depicts another view of how differently teachers are paid across the state as compared to caseworkers. There are certain counties within each region such as Midland and Odessa (Ector County) where, due to the cost of living and housing situation, teachers are paid close to \$47,000 per year, similar to what teachers are paid in Travis County. CPS salaries are flat across the state and do not take into account cost of living changes in the metropolitan areas.

<sup>9</sup> TEA adhoc report and 2011-12 TASB/TASA Teacher Report  
<sup>10</sup> TEA Website

Figure 2: Average Salaries by DFPS Region - Texas Teachers versus Texas CPS Caseworkers - 2011



Source: Texas Association of School Boards/Texas Association of School Administrators Salary Survey and DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics.

### Other Comparable State of Texas Salaries<sup>11</sup>

DFPS made the selection of state classes with which to compare CPS caseworkers because, in each of the jobs below, as with CPS caseworkers, the employee works directly with clients and is generally in an emotionally charged environment where their presence may not be welcomed. Additionally, these jobs are highly stressful and unpredictable. With the exception of CPS classes, none of the job classes listed in the table below require a college degree, and only the Child Support Officer positions prefer a college degree according to the SAO Job Descriptions.

The comparison highlights that, although the salary ranges are lower for most of these positions, the average salary is close to or exceeds the average CPS caseworker salary, particularly those who do not receive the \$5,000 per year stipend. The ranges listed were gathered from each state's respective state auditor, not actual employee salary ranges (Table 11).

Table 11: Salaries of Comparable State Classes

Job Class Title	Range Min	Range Max	Average
Correctional Officers	\$22,581	\$52,130	\$34,190
Child Support Officers	\$25,132	\$55,258	\$35,002
Juvenile Correctional Officers	\$22,581	\$61,034	\$35,328
Parole Officers	\$29,933	\$69,878	\$38,825
All CPS Caseworkers	\$31,729	\$49,180	\$37,051
Non-Investigative CPS Caseworker			\$36,132
Investigative CPS Caseworker			\$38,056

<sup>11</sup> Average salary data was provided by the Comptroller of Public Accounts, October 2012

## Hazardous Duty Pay

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Hazardous duty is generally defined as duty performed under circumstances in which an accident could result in serious injury or death. Duty involving a physical hardship is duty that may not in itself be hazardous, but causes extreme physical discomfort or distress and is not adequately alleviated by protective or mechanical devices.

Currently, Commissioned Peace Officers/Law Enforcement Officers from the following agencies are eligible for hazardous duty pay: Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), Texas Facilities Commission (TFC), Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC), Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and Institutions of Higher Education.

Additionally, certain Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) employees and other non-commissioned TJJD employees are offered hazardous duty pay. Authorized correctional career positions including Correctional Officer through Warden, Food Service Manager III and IV and Laundry Manager III and IV full-time employees will receive hazardous duty pay of \$12 per month for each year of hazardous duty state service up to a maximum of \$300 per month. Full-time employees in positions other than a correctional career position receive hazardous duty pay of \$10 per month for each year of hazardous duty state service and are not subject to a maximum per month.<sup>12</sup>

Certain employees of the TJJD perform hazardous duties and are eligible for hazardous duty pay. To be eligible to receive hazardous duty pay, an employee of TJJD must routinely be in direct contact with youth placed in a residential facility of TJJD, or with youth released under the supervision of TJJD.<sup>13</sup>

The situations or circumstances CPS caseworkers encounter could be considered hazardous or, at least, as ones causing "emotional hardship" and physical safety concerns. When asked about safety and stress, 97 percent of the respondents to the R&R Survey said that taking into consideration the stress and demands of casework, they felt underpaid. Ninety-three percent felt underpaid, considering the risks and safety of the job. In order for DFPS staff to benefit from hazard duty pay, the Texas Administrative Code, Title 34, Rule §5.39 would have to be amended to include CPS caseworkers.

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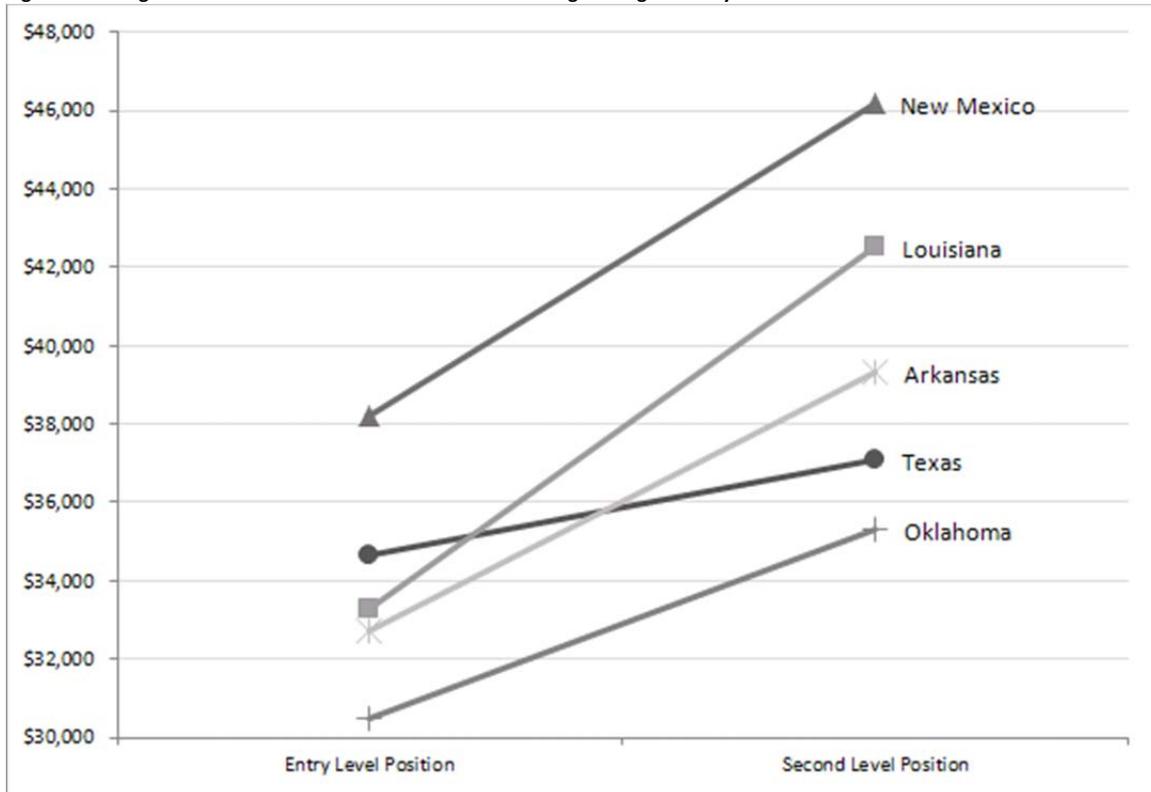
<sup>12</sup> Texas Department of Criminal Justice Website

<sup>13</sup> Comptroller of Public Accounts Website

## Salary Comparisons with CPS Caseworkers in Other States

DPFS requested information for CPS salaries from the four states bordering Texas. The charts below outline the information we received as it compares to Texas CPS salaries. Arkansas did not provide a comprehensive response to DPFS's requests for information, but additional data was obtained from the Arkansas agency equivalent to the, regarding average salaries and job descriptions.

Figure 3: Average Salaries of CPS Caseworkers for Texas and Neighboring States by Position Level



It is important to note the variations among the states' education and experience requirements for caseworker positions. New Mexico and Arkansas caseworkers must have bachelor's degrees in specific areas; New Mexico goes further, requiring a certification or eligibility for certification in social work and years of experience in the state's higher level positions.

### Texas

Child Protective Services Specialist II is the entry level position that requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited four year university. Child Protective Services Specialist positions III and IV require a combination of DFPS caseworker experience of 18 months and three and one half years, respectively, as well as on-going training, resulting in the caseworker attaining certification. Certification allows caseworkers to promote to the next level in the Child Protective Services series. Former employees with Child Protective Services specialist experience may return at their former classification. New hires or rehires with a bachelor's or

master's degree in social work get an incremental increase in their starting salary at the time of employment.

DFPS has proposed an exceptional item in the fiscal years 2012-2015 Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) to allow for direct delivery staff to promote sooner with a change in the current certification process. For complete details see the Appendix.

The current CPS certification program allows for two salary increases: a promotion from CPS Specialist II to III, and from CPS Specialist III to IV. This proposed exceptional item allows for three salary increases by implementing an additional promotion from CPS Specialist I to II. This item also moves the first salary increase from occurring at 18 months tenured to nine, and the second increase from 24 months to eighteen.

In an effort to reduce the turnover and increase retention of both newly hired and tenured staff, implementation of this program would amend the level of existing staff by reclassifying them one level lower than their current level, i.e. change a worker III to II. This reclassification will be done while maintaining the employee's salary, providing it does not exceed the max of the lower level. This will ensure existing staff also have an opportunity to realize a salary increase through the proposed program.

## Oklahoma

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Child Welfare Specialist I is a training position that requires a bachelor's degree. Child Welfare Specialist II requires either a bachelor's or master's degree in behavioral science and one year of professional social work, or a bachelor's degree and two years of professional social work. Child Welfare Specialist III requires the same education and experience as the Specialist II, plus one year of child welfare experience. Oklahoma is currently undergoing a restructuring of their Child Welfare Services system as the result of a settlement agreement in the DG vs. Yarbrough case, a federal class action civil rights lawsuit involving Oklahoma's child welfare system, which will include a significant increase in salary over the coming years.

## Louisiana

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Job levels range from Child Welfare Specialist Trainee to Child Welfare Specialist III. Movement through the levels is based on experience and job performance. Typically, jobs are filled at the Child Welfare Specialist Trainee or Child Welfare Specialist I level, then employees move through the series based on the duties that are assigned to the position. Once the employee qualifies for advancement and performs duties competently according to the agency's standards, the employee may be reallocated to the next level in the series. However, agencies may fill positions at any level, from Child Welfare Specialist Trainee to Child Welfare Specialist III, as long as the duties support the position. Positions may be filled competitively or by reallocating the position through the career ladder.

## New Mexico

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Intake, Investigations, and Permanency Planning Workers require a bachelor's degree in social work, education, counseling, psychology, sociology, criminal justice or family services/studies from an accredited college or university. Experience is not required for these positions.

Intake, Investigations, and Permanency Planning Senior Workers require a bachelor's degree in social work, education, counseling, psychology, sociology, criminal justice or family services/studies from an accredited college or university and a combined two years of experience in any of the following: working with communities; working on health or social service related matters; social work/case management, or behavioral health and/or health care issues.

Placement Workers require a bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited college or university. Experience is not required for this position. Candidates must also be licensed through the New Mexico Social Work Examiners Board as an LBSW, LISW or LMSW to practice as a Social Worker in New Mexico or be eligible for such licensure in accordance with New Mexico requirements.

Placement Senior Workers require a bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited college or university and a combined two years of experience in any of the following: working with communities; working on health or social service related matters; social work/case management, or behavioral health and/or health care issues. Candidates must also be licensed through the New Mexico Social Work Examiners Board as an LBSW, LISW or LMSW to practice as a Social Worker in New Mexico or meet eligibility requirements for such licensure in accordance with New Mexico requirements.

## Arkansas

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Family Service Workers require the formal education equivalent of a bachelor's degree in social work, sociology, psychology, or a related field and the successful completion of a six month training class within the agency's core training period.

Family Service Program Coordinators require the formal education equivalent of a bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, sociology, or related field and two years of experience in social service programs or a related area.

Family Service Worker Specialists require the formal education equivalent of a bachelor's degree in social work, sociology, psychology or a related field and three years of experience as a social field worker or a related area.

**Table 12: Salaries of CPS Caseworkers for Texas and Neighboring States by Position Level**

State	Job Title	Range Min	Range Max	Average
Texas <sup>14</sup>	CPS Specialist II*	\$31,729	\$49,180	\$34,656
	CPS Specialist III	\$33,633	\$52,130	\$37,104
	CPS Specialist IV	\$35,651	\$55,258	\$40,560
Oklahoma	Child Welfare Spec I*	\$30,382	\$44,170	\$30,509
	Child Welfare Spec II	\$33,854	\$48,561	\$35,310
	Child Welfare Spec III	\$37,335	\$53,080	\$37,860
Louisiana	Child Welfare Spec Trainee*	\$25,854	\$54,434	\$30,645
	Child Welfare Spec I*	\$27,664	\$58,240	\$33,293
	Child Welfare Spec II	\$31,678	\$66,685	\$42,543
	Child Welfare Spec III	\$33,904	\$71,344	\$51,539
New Mexico	Intake, INV and Permanency Worker*	\$29,473	\$49,171	\$35,006
	Placement Worker*	\$33,155	\$49,171	\$38,188
	Senior Intake, INV & Permanency Worker	\$34,590	\$54,308	\$41,912
	Senior Placement Worker	\$37,835	\$54,308	\$46,196
Arkansas	Family Service Worker*	\$30,713	\$52,167	\$32,821
	Family Service Program Coordinator	\$32,249	\$54,775	\$39,331
	Family Service Worker Specialist	\$33,861	\$57,514	\$38,752

Notes:\*Denotes the entry level position. Ranges listed are from the state's classification office not actual employee salary ranges.

## Summary of Findings

DFPS polled CPS staff in the states contiguous to Texas to make salary comparisons. There are differences in educational and experience required by each state. Arkansas did not provide a comprehensive response to requests for information, but DFPS was able to obtain sufficient comparative information such as the range and average salary for workers by obtaining data posted on an Arkansas state website.

- Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma had entry level salaries below the entry level salary for DFPS caseworkers. New Mexico has a higher average entry level salary.
- Beyond entry level, the salaries in Louisiana, Arkansas and New Mexico increased between \$4,800 and \$5,400 compared to those in Texas. Oklahoma's salaries did not increase as quickly, however, Oklahoma is currently undergoing a restructure of their Child Welfare Services system as the result of a settlement agreement in the DG vs. Yarbrough case, a federal class action civil rights lawsuit involving Oklahoma's child welfare system. The salaries will increase between \$1,200 and \$2,400 per year each fiscal year beginning in 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Texas - Averages include Investigator positions receiving the \$5000 per year stipend.

## Recommendations

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### For Recruitment

- A. Use "locality pay" to pay caseworkers by region or area of the state and add an additional percentage to their base salary.

As noted on pages 10 through 12 of this report, teachers and federal employees are paid differently depending on the size of the district and funding (in the case of teachers). Federal employees are paid a base salary combined with an additional percentage based on cost of living in the locality where they work.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) provides statistics and analyses on the dynamics of the Texas labor market and provides monthly reports to allow for research of economic indicators, such as job growth, unemployment statistics, and salary and wage information. TWC provides detailed profiles of Texas as a whole and broken down by industry, the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA), and the Workforce Development Areas (WDA). Each profile is updated monthly.

Using the TWC reports, DFPS would formulate a geographic-based percentage rate that reflects pay levels for similar workers in certain geographic areas. The percentage rate would be reassessed each year.

This will require additional funding. It may be possible to address this increase at the point of hire without statutory changes. The agency would determine any applicable increase and adjust the starting salary using existing human resources policy that allows agency commissioners to set the starting salary anywhere within a position's salary range.

- B. Provide pay increases to entry level staff with degrees for which DFPS is statutorily required to recruit: social work, counseling, early childhood education, psychology, criminal justice, elementary or secondary education, sociology and human services. Pay increases should be commensurate with degree type: a 3.4 percent increase for a bachelor's degree, and a 6.8 percent increase for a master's or doctoral degree.

As presented on pages 18 and 19 of this report, many states hire caseworkers who have earned specific degrees and require state certifications for some promotions. Currently, DFPS only provides an initial increase in pay of 3.4 percent for bachelor's degree in social work and a 6.8 percent initial pay increase for those hired with a master's degree in social work.

This will require additional funding. The agency currently provides an automatic salary increase to new hires holding a bachelor's degree in social work or a master's degree in social work. This practice could be extended to the other targeted degrees using existing human resources policy.

## For Retention

- A. Approve and fund the DFPS LAR exceptional item to modify the certification program. The proposal seeks to decrease turnover that occurs before the caseworker has a chance to become proficient in their job by allowing upgrades and pay increases sooner in the caseworker's tenure. See the appendix for more information regarding this item.
- B. Provide an ongoing routine and predictable merit program for direct delivery staff in all programs.

Caseworkers were asked in the R&R survey to list the top three benefits that could be offered to caseworkers to help retain staff if salaries cannot be increased, for example: performance merit payment, improved health insurance coverage, retirement benefits, deferred compensation, leave accruals, safety, salary/benefit package, better opportunity, workload/stress too high to maintain, needed more flexibility in work time or location, too little vacation, and no upward mobility. "Merit payments" was a term used by 70 percent of the respondents as a benefit that could help retain staff. "Reduce stress" and "reduce workload," at 54 percent and 49 percent, respectively, were the two other most frequently used terms.

Statutory changes could allow DFPS to implement a compensation program similar to one administered by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA). The Comptroller's office is currently authorized to pay its high-performing employees additional compensation and is responsible for determining which employees are eligible for this incentive payment. The CPA incentive payment has no effect on merit salary increases or one-time merit payments.

- C. Provide High Risk Compensation pay for certain DFPS caseworker staff: investigators for all programs, including Special Investigators, as well as CPS Human Services Technicians (who provide transportation for clients) and all CVS, FBSS, and "I See You" staff.

As noted on page 13 of this report, statute now offers hazardous duty pay for certain state staff who interact directly with clients in highly charged situations.

Implementation of similar pay could be achieved by revising the General Appropriations Act Article II to allow DFPS to provide extra pay (High Risk Pay) to certain classifications in APS, CPS and CCL programs. This item will also require additional funding and the ability to identify eligible employees using a specific code in the Comptroller's system.

- D. Allow DFPS to pay compensation for time worked on-call in the following manner: payment for one hour worked on-call per day during a normal work week and payment for two hours worked on-call per day during weekends and on holidays. This credit would be in addition to actual hours worked during normal duty hours or while on-call. Non-exempt employees who work on-call in addition to a normal 40-hour work week will receive FLSA overtime rates for on-call duty.

Currently, the Texas Facilities Commission and the Texas Department of Transportation may pay compensation for on-call time, and this type of pay is common in the private sector.

A General Appropriations Act rider would allow DFPS to be more competitive in recruiting and retaining staff for critical positions that require staff to rotate through an on-call period.

- E. Provide pay increases to casework staff who earn degrees while employed at the agency for which DFPS is statutorily required to recruit: social work, counseling, early childhood education, psychology, criminal justice, elementary or secondary education, sociology and human services. Similarly, provide pay increases to casework staff who already hold these degrees but were not compensated during recruitment. Pay increases should be commensurate with degree type: a 3.4 percent increase for a bachelor's degree and a 6.8 percent increase for a master's or doctoral degree).

As presented on pages 18 and 19 of this report, many states hire caseworkers who have earned specific degrees and require state certifications for some promotions. Currently, DFPS does not pay for degrees acquired while working for the agency.

This will require additional funding and may require statutory changes; however, it may also be possible to use existing law related to equity adjustments to recognize existing staff who obtain a targeted degree.

# Appendix

## Optimize Certification Timeframes

To increase retention, DFPS is proposing to request funds to provide promotions for direct delivery caseworkers sooner in their tenure through the agency’s certification program. One in four new caseworkers quit within their first year. Certification rules would be changed to allow Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL), Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL), Child Protective Services (CPS) and Statewide intake (SWI) direct delivery caseworkers to be eligible to receive their first certification promotion 9 months from the date of hire. All programs except RCCL will have different timeframes for the second and third certification levels as shown below. The row entitled "% Terminating" illustrates the number of terminations at specific months of tenure.

Our proposal seeks to decrease the turnover that occurs before the caseworker has a chance to become proficient in their job by allowing promotions and pay increases sooner in the caseworker's tenure.

Caseworker Program	Hire Date	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5				Year 6			
		3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48	51	54	57	60	63	66	69	
APS	Current	B14			B15			B16								B17									
	Proposed	B14			B15			B16								B17									
	% Terminating		10.7	18.9	25.4			34.8		39.4		51.0		55.0		58.9		62.7							
CCL INSP	Current	B13						B15								B17									
	Proposed	B13			B15										B17										
	% Terminating		3.6	3.6	10.7		38.7		38.7		39.6		39.6		68.5		69.9								
CCL INV	Current	B15						B16							B17										
	Proposed	B14			B15			B16							B17										
	% Terminating		3.6	3.6	10.7		38.7		38.7		39.6		39.6		68.5		69.9								
RCCL INSP	Current	B15						B17				B19													
	Proposed	B15						B17				B19													
	% Terminating		0		25			28.6				52.4													
RCCL INV	Current	B17						B18																	
	Proposed	B17						B18																	
	% Terminating		0		25			28.6				52.4													
CPS INV	Current	B15						B16							B17										
	Proposed	B14			B15			B16							B17										
	% Terminating		15.6	22.2	28.9		45.2		51.4		60.0		65.4		65.3		67.8								
CPS Non-INV	Current	B15						B16							B17										
	Proposed	B14			B15			B16							B17										
	% Terminating		15.6	22.2	28.9		45.2		51.4		60.0		65.4		65.3		67.8								
SWI	Current	B14						B15							B16									B17	
	Proposed	B14			B15			B16							B17										
	% Terminating		11.4	13.9	15.2		39.4		46.2		59.9		62.0		62.7		63.6		75.0		76.8		76.8		

