



**TEXAS**  
Department of Family  
and Protective Services

**Fiscal Year 2023  
Capacity Building Plan  
Based on the  
Foster Care Needs Assessment**

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

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November 2022

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## Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 264.1261, of the Texas Family Code, “appropriate management personnel from a child protective services region in which community-based care has not been implemented, in collaboration with foster care providers, faith-based entities, and child advocates in that region, shall use data collected by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) on foster care capacity needs and availability of each type of foster care and kinship placement in the region to create a plan to address the substitute care capacity needs in the region.” The [Foster Care Needs Assessment](#) assists to inform the goals and objectives outlined in this plan, which specifically addresses the needs of non-community based care regions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8A, 9, 10, and 11.

## **Region 3 West and East (Catchments 3A and 3C) Plan to Increase Capacity**

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

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

Stakeholder and provider meetings for Region 3 Metroplex East and West have been held throughout 2021-22, focusing on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for fiscal years 2022-23. As far back as 2021, the Regional Foster Care consortium has held quarterly meetings to discuss capacity needs for children in foster care. DFPS holds quarterly meetings with providers to also discuss capacity needs. These meetings are typically held during the months of August, November, February, May. The Region 3 Collaborative (agencies in Metroplex East and West) meets every other month to discuss recruitment and capacity information.

While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the ongoing discussions and initial development of the regional capacity strategic plan (not an all-inclusive list): Amazing Grace, Our Community Our Kids, CK Family Services, Upbring, Children's Hope, Agape Manor, Texas Family Initiative, Vessels with Purpose, Jonathan's Place, Hope Cottage, Texas Baptist Home for Children, AGH, Azelway, Arrow, Make A Way, Kids First Inc., TGIF, Benchmark, Angelheart, Passage of Youth, Refugee House, TFL, and ACH.

Other stakeholders involved in building capacity and achieving permanency in Region 3 Metroplex East and West include faith-based organizations such as Embrace and Watermark, as well as the following rotary clubs: Denton Rotary Club, Plano West Rotary Club and Dallas Rotary and organizations such as the Region 3 Foster Care Consortium. Providers in Region 3 Metroplex East and West are invited and encouraged to attend weekly child placing agency (CPA)/residential treatment center (RTC) staffing's regarding specific children needing placement, with the goal of providing more detailed information about the child's needs and

current behavior. Providers can speak directly with the child's worker with questions about the child. Many placements have been facilitated using this method.

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

## **Goal 1: Support children and youth transitioning between settings**

Positive outcomes including reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or adoption are more likely when we strengthen family supports.

### **Objective 1.1: Support the transition of youth from paid foster care to kinship or other placements**

- Ensure earlier and adequate communication with treatment team to include, but not limited to CPS, the children involved, therapists, and CPAs.
- Implement pre-placement program to include pre-placement staffing, pre-placement visit, post-placement staffing and follow up via skype or phone.
- Ensure staff are informed of the need for wrap around services and pre-placement visits.
- Connect kinship families with supports provided by the kinship development worker and maintain communication with kinship placement to offer support.
- Have foster parents create a "scrap book" for the child of their experiences, etc., in foster home. with pictures, child "likes," what a typical day looks like for child before any placement changes, as well as for child to take to home when reunified.
- Educate regarding the creation of safety plans with the child's support network, if there are any issues.
- Keep the child involved in planning and ensure their voices are heard.

### **Quick Wins**

- Ensure CPS revisits kin options throughout the case, even though a relative may not have been an option early in the case. Ask the question: "What can we do to make this kinship placement work?"
- Make quicker referrals to kinship unit once a relative is identified.
- Send the caseworker a photo/video of home, pets, and other things when a child is accepted for placement to make child more comfortable.
- Reduce risk of child behavioral reactions due to increased child involvement in transitions.

## **Goal 2: Maintain sibling groups and build capacity for sibling groups**

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

### **Objective 2.1: Ensure CPU searches remain active until siblings are placed together**

- Communicate to providers the need for targeted recruitment and increasing sibling placements.
- License for full capacity.
- Emphasize to foster parents, CPA, centralized placement unit (CPU), and caseworkers the critical importance of sibling connection. Discuss importance of transition planning when working on placing siblings together and discuss realities of change in role dynamics within a foster family once a separated sibling joins the family where other sibling has been living.
- Have CPAs and DFPS Foster/Adoptive Home Development (FAD) ask families to be open to placement of at least two children.
- Ensure siblings are placed geographically close and get monthly visits together if all siblings cannot be placed together.

#### **Quick wins**

- Keep siblings within the same CPA, if not all in same home.
- Conduct pre-placement visits.
- Ensure sibling visits and willingness of caregivers to allow siblings to spend the night.
- Have CPS meet with the new placement prior to the placement being made and communicate how that child(ren) can be supported.

## **Goal 3: Build capacity for older youth to be placed closer to home and in a family-like setting**

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

### **Objective 2.1: Ensure older youth are placed close (within 50 miles) to home or with relatives.**

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

### **Quick wins**

- Conduct pre-placement visits.
- Debunk myths with caregivers on the challenges of caring for older children.
- CPS will meet with the new placement prior to the placement being made and communicate how that child(ren) can be supported.

## **Goal 4: Identify supports to caregivers to meet children's needs**

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

### **Objective 4.1: Cross-provider education and information sharing**

- Cross provider education and information sharing, including how to overcome barriers regarding transportation, therapies, doctor's appointments, day care, etc.
  - ▶ Therapy in homes
  - ▶ Youth Empowerment Services (YES) waiver
  - ▶ Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)/ECI Hopes
  - ▶ Staff nurse practitioners
  - ▶ Network doctors
- Transportation-some CPAs have hired transporters
- Include the above in quarterly provider meetings.
- Let caregivers know what to expect, i.e., children being upset after visits, parents not showing up for visits.

### **Objective 4.2: Support transition of youth from RTCs to less restrictive settings**

- Encourage the foster parent to meet the children/youth before they go to the home (face-to-face, Skype, Facetime) that could help reduce fear on both ends.
- Critically review the common applications to ensure they still accurately depict the child's needs.
- Critically review the current local curriculum on completing common applications.
- Utilize respite services, YES waivers, therapy, and psychological evaluations.
- Utilize safety plans, if there are any issues.
- Keep the child involved in planning.
- Begin conversations with residential treatment center (RTC) providers regarding how to prepare for the child/youth's transition needs when a child reaches moderate or basic level.

## Fiscal Year 2023 Capacity Building Plan:

- Inform legal stakeholders of the importance of normalcy and least restrictive placements.
- Implement step-down visits prior to placement.
- Have foster parents create a “scrap book” for the child of their experiences, etc., in foster home. with pictures, child “likes,” what a typical day looks like for child before any placement changes, as well as for child to take to home when reunified.

### **Quick wins**

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

## **Goal 5: Keeping the provider community informed of CPS capacity needs**

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

### **Objective 5.1: CPS will communicate with providers what capacity is needed both regionally and specifically for certain children needing placement, allowing providers to relay to CPS what the plan is for growth while allowing opportunity for questions and concerns**

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

# Region 4 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder/provider meeting for Region 4 occurred on July 14, 2022, where the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed.

While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the Regional capacity strategic plan: Arrow Child and Family Ministries, A World For Children, Azleway Children’s Services, Buckner Children and Family Services, Christian Homes and Family Services, City of Hope, Grace Manor, Girls Haven, Hope Haven, Lonestar Social Services, Methodist Children’s Home, Noble Children’s Services, and Upbring.

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

## Goal 1: Increase capacity for basic and moderate children

The region needs to increase capacity for basic and moderate children in both foster home placements, as well as emergency placements.

### Objective 1.1: Increase awareness

- Have CPS and CPAs conduct quarterly foster/adopt expos in areas around the region using a standardized presentation with regional data.
- Have CPS and CPAs work with regional faith-based partners to identify recruitment opportunities in all counties that will support foster care and adoption initiatives.

### Objective 1.2: Utilize foster parent experience/expertise

- Utilize current foster families in panels and foster/adopt expos to promote the need for foster care placements.
- Continue to approach current and former foster families to consider increasing capacity where appropriate.

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

## Goal 2: Develop effective response systems to support and maintain foster families

The needs assessment identified a need for increased basic and moderate placements for school and teenaged children. The workgroup determined the need to support and maintain existing and new foster families in an effort to meet this projected need.

## **Objective 2.1: Create and sustain forums to support foster parents**

- Identify and create forums in areas where foster care community collaborations would be beneficial.
- Have CPS, CPAs, and faith-based partners continue to work together in a foster care community collaboration that meets quarterly to plan and implement support services for families.

## **Objective 2.2: Develop supports**

CPS, CPAs, and faith-based partners will:

- Recruit a pool of babysitters to support foster families using the babysitting initiatives model.
- Develop foster family fun nights and parents' night out to support foster families.
- Develop resource rooms or closets to support foster families.
- Develop confident and knowledgeable foster families by providing collaborative training opportunities and resource fairs.
- Develop wrap-around support services for foster caregivers.

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

## **Goal 3: Increase and maintain sibling placements**

The region identified a need to increase the number of siblings placed together.

- CPS will continue to have a monthly scan call to discuss barriers for getting siblings back together and identify next steps to move toward that goal.
- CPU will continue to work with CPA and CPS case managers for homes to accept sibling groups when openings are identified.
- Whenever sibling groups must be separated, CPU will work with CPA and CPS case managers to keep siblings placed within the same CPA.

# Region 5 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder/provider meeting for Region 5 occurred on July 14, 2022, where the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed.

While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the Regional capacity strategic plan: Arrow Child and Family Ministries, A World for Children, Azleway Children’s Services, Buckner Children and Family Services, Christian Homes and Family Services, City of Hope, Girls Haven, Grace Manor, Hope Haven, Lonestar Social Services, Methodist Children’s Home, Noble Children’s Services, Upbring

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

## Goal 1: Increase capacity for basic and moderate children

The region needs to increase capacity for basic and moderate children in both foster home placements, as well as emergency placements.

### Objective 1.1: Increase awareness

- CPS and CPAs will conduct individual and collaborative recruitment events in areas around the region using community festivals and other events to raise awareness for the need for foster families.

### Objective 1.2: Utilize foster parent experience/expertise

- Utilize current foster families in panels and recruitment events to promote the need for placements for foster care.
- Approach current and former foster families to consider increasing capacity and/or consider taking emergency placements where appropriate.

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

## Goal 2: Develop effective response systems to support and maintain foster families

The Needs Assessment identified a need for increased basic and moderate placements for school aged children. The workgroup determined the need to support and maintain existing and new foster families in an attempt to meet this projected need.

### **Objective 2.1: Develop supports**

- CPS and CPAs will collaborate with faith-based partners to develop wrap-around support services for foster caregivers.
- CPS and CPAs will work with faith-based and community partners to develop resource rooms or closets to support foster families.
- CPS and CPAs will work collectively to empower and develop confident and knowledgeable foster families by providing collaborative training opportunities and resource fairs.

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

### **Goal 3: Increase and maintain sibling placements**

The region identified a need to increase the number of siblings placed together.

- CPS will continue to have a monthly scan call to discuss barriers for getting siblings back together and identify next steps to move towards that goal.
- CPU will continue to work with CPA and CPS case managers for homes to accept sibling groups when openings are identified.
- Whenever sibling groups must be separated, CPU will work with CPA and CPS case managers to keep siblings placed within the same CPA.

## **Regions 6A and 6B Plan to Increase Capacity**

The Foster Care Needs Assessment is reviewed annually and provides historical analysis, as well as forecasted capacity needs. While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. In collaboration, all the participants committed to dedicating the necessary resources to implementing the regional strategic plan.

As a region, the following barriers were identified in building and successfully utilizing capacity:

- Frequency and location of parental, child, and sibling visits.
- Potential underutilization of all available foster homes within the region.
- The ever-changing face of foster families (two parent working homes, increase in licensed kinship homes, etc.).
- Increased training requirements.
- Recruitment challenges in rural areas within Region 6, which border other regions.
- Caregivers inadequate preparedness to care for youth with higher levels of care.

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

### **Goal 1: Increase basic/moderate foster home capacity**

The current supply of basic and moderate foster homes meets the forecasted demand in Regions 6A and 6B; however, there are a lack of homes which can support basic/moderate children age 14 and older.

#### **Objective 1.1: Improve utilization of existing placements**

- CPS staff will begin utilization of the general placement search (GPS) in March 2022. Providers will ensure required vacancy and preference information on capacity continues to be entered into the GPS application. CPS will obtain feedback from providers and staff at quarterly provider meetings.
- CPS and CPAs will review the current practices of placement teams to ensure all appropriate placement options are considered within their legal county and/or region first.
- Region 6 CPA collaborative meetings will continue quarterly and include an update on the strategic capacity building plan.
- CPS will hold a quarterly staffing to include the CPU, program staff, and CPAs to identify existing basic/moderate foster homes for separated siblings, children placed outside of the region, and children ready to transition into a less restrictive environment.

- Providers expressed they are not familiar with the other placement options and resources in Region 6. As such, the providers will develop a plan to learn more about each other and the available resources surrounding their placements. They will use this information to better support caregivers and children.
- Providers have been able to access the monthly [DFPS Data Book](#) since February 2020. The Regional Systems Improvement team will continue to support providers and the community in their ability to access and utilize the data book by providing training webinars.

## **Goal 2: Increase specialized/intense/TFFC foster home capacity**

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

### **Objective 2.1: Improve transitions from RTC into a least restrictive placement**

- Communication between CPS and RTC providers will be improved through quarterly meetings to identify gaps and formulate solutions.
- RTC providers and CPS will collaborate to increase the number of youth who transition from RTCs into a least restrictive placement.
- Regional directors will identify RTC providers who will come to the table and discuss upcoming discharges and how together we can better prepare children for subsequent placements.
- The Capacity Think Tank will be used to improve the communication and partnership between Shelters, RTCs, and CPAs.
- Providers/placements will share information prior to placement changes.
- Regional staff will share the TFFC foster home enrollment link with providers and continue to express the importance and the need for those homes.

### **Objective 2.2: CPAs will identify currently licensed homes that could expand their service provision to include Specialized/Intense placements**

- CPAs will develop and provide specialized training to comply with minimum standards for placing treatment needs children within a family setting.
- CPS and CPAs will develop additional opportunities to provide supportive respite for families caring for children with higher needs.
- CPAs will increase recruitment efforts for children with higher needs.
- Existing therapeutic homes will be willing to support newly licensed therapeutic homes by allowing them to shadow the family and reach out for coaching/support.

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- CPS will hold a quarterly staffing to include CPU, program staff, RTCs, and CPAs to identify existing foster homes children ready to transition into a least restrictive environment.

### **Goal 3: Increase siblings placed all together**

Region 6A and 6B are committed to evaluating all separated siblings for potential reunification and increasing the number of sibling groups with all siblings placed together.

#### **Objective 3.1: Evaluate each currently separated sibling group for possibility of reunification in the same home**

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

## Region 7 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder/provider meeting for Region 7A and 7B occurred on July 21, 2022, where Regional Director Lindsey Van Buskirk spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements. While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the regional capacity strategic plan: AngelHeart, Arrow, Starry, Upbring, A World For Children, Depelchin Children's Center, Presbyterian Children's home and Services, The Payton Foundation, Texas Baptist Children's Home, Hope House, Pathways Youth and Family Services, Therapeutic Family Life, Safe – Foster In Austin, Giocosa, Lighthouse Family Network, Circles of Care, Central Texas Children's Home, Helping Hand Home, Hope Rising, Renaissance, Lifeworks, Settlement Home, Whispering Hills Achievement Center, Central Texas Table of Grace, Option House, and Safe Alliance.

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

### **Goal 1: Increase support for existing caregiver/placement capacity**

Fostering youth is hard and emotional work. Families find navigating the system difficult.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment forecasts an increased number of youth who have specialized and intense needs. As a result of increased youth needs, it is important to educate and empower caregivers to access resources to assist in meeting the youth's needs while maintaining a stable placement.

#### **Objective 1.1: Education on STAR Health services**

STAR Health offers extensive services and complex case management services; however, case managers and families are not aware of all the services available.

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

#### **Objective 1.2: Identification of LMHA resources**

It is important for families to understand the support and services the local mental health authorities (LMHAs) can provide for families and foster youth.

- CPS will have a YES waiver provider attend a regional provider meeting to explain their services to all CPA case managers.

- CPS Swill work with CPA case managers and LMHAs to create a county specific list of resources and contact phone numbers to provide families.

## **Goal 2: Increase prepared families who are willing to accept for youth who are ready to exit residential treatment centers.**

Youth we struggle to move to a lesser restrictive placement after their level of care has dropped while completing treatment in a residential treatment setting are those who have significant behavioral history which includes arrest history, untreated mental health concerns, substance abuse history, and significant traumatic experiences.

### **Objective 2.1: Targeted recruitment**

Focus will be on recruitment of people who have history working with youth in different capacities.

- Specific placing agencies and DFPS will begin a workgroup and process to link CPAs to RTCs, so as a youth is making progress, the CPA can recruit and begin relationship building between the youth and potential foster caregiver. This will allow for a longer transition period to begin prior to the youth's discharge.
- Recruitment will be a team effort by the local adoption collaborative and all agency partners.
- Present information sessions to professional groups with history of working in juvenile detention, hospitals, schools, and from the law enforcement community. Information sessions will be provided by multiple agency representatives.
- Utilize FosterCommunity.org to assist with streamlining information to match families with the best agency to work through.

### **Objective 2.2: Specialized caregiver training**

In order to ensure families are prepared to meet the needs of the youth, it is imperative they have the training and knowledge on how to respond and care for youth with significant traumatic history and triggered responses.

- Each family who goes through the licensing process will be able to serve treatment level youth and be trained in emergency behavior intervention as supported by their CPA.
- Each family who becomes licensed will receive Trust Based Relational Intervention or another trauma informed caregiver training.
- DFPS will continue to provide Pathways to Permanence 2 training throughout the region to all caregivers who are actively parenting a child who is not their own. DFPS will continue to partner with all CPA to offer this training to families.
- Each agency participating in this specialized recruitment effort will also build an internal agency support system for crisis intervention.

### **Objective 2.3: Intensified household support**

In order to ensure families are prepared to meet the needs of youth, it is imperative they have community and agency support.

- Each agency participating in this specialized recruitment effort will build an internal support system for crisis intervention to help support families.
- LMHAs will be engaged at the immediate time of placement and respond to the home for support and to assess the needs of the youth.

### **Goal 3: Increase families who are willing to accept placements and work with the youth and extended family through successful reunification.**

Throughout the region and across all CPAs, we are seeing a trend of more adoption motivated families who do not want to be verified as foster placements.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment forecasts an increase number of youth who have specialized and intense needs. As a result of increased youth needs, it is important for caregivers to support youth through the trauma of removal to decrease trauma responses and partner with families to support youth and families through success.

### **Objective 3.1: Media activity to support recruitment**

We will focus on recruitment of people who are willing and committed to be foster placements with a focus on assisting with safe family reunification.

- As a team and through the foster community, we will work together for a media campaign to highlight the need for foster parents who are supportive of family reunification.

## **Region 8A Plan to Increase Capacity**

A stakeholder/provider meeting for Region 8A occurred on October 10, 2022, where Regional Director Kelley Johnson-Davis spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements. While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following people and organizations for participating in the development of the regional capacity strategic plan: Kelley Johnson-Davis, DFPS regional director; Crystal Smith, DFPS regional director assistant; Monica Diaz, DFPS regional systems improvement specialist; Viki Hinson, DFPS CPU program director; Jacquelynn Bingham, DFPS CPU supervisor; Leticia Lozano, DFPS conservatorship (CVS) program administrator; Janet Blair, DFPS CVS supervisor; Natasha Hayden, North Texas Youth Connection; Tracy Rock and Janet Martinez, Roy Maas Youth Association; Adrian Quintanilla, Belong; Shannan Stavinoha, Parks Youth Ranch; Paula Potter, LSU; Stephanie Jones, Kid Net; Jenny Hensarling, ACH Services; Center for Youth Care; Tessa Kiselewski, Safe Austin; and Kenneth Collier, McKesson.

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

### **Goal 1: Increase placements in basic/moderate foster care**

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identified the greatest need for basic/moderate foster beds. This need is primarily needed for ages under 14. Foster parents serving these youth need to have strong supports in place in order to be successful. It is believed the best recruiters for these placements come from other foster parents who are currently fostering this population. If we can increase the support for current foster parents who are serving this population, they will be more prone to recruit new foster parents.

#### **Objective 1.1: Collaborative focus on basic/moderate foster care placements**

- A brainstorm session will be held at the next provider meeting to discuss ideas of what can be done on the provider side to identify basic/moderate foster homes on the onset of the child placement.

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

#### **Objective 1.2: Partner to support foster parents**

- Each CPA will build a support network for foster parents to include respite care.

- Build a FAD unit to help develop a “swift” program which guides caregivers through the adoption process.

### **Objective 1.3: Collaborative informational meetings**

- CPS will send out to the providers on website with information on scheduled informational meetings for new potential foster parents. Providers will distribute to their current or potential foster parents for recruitment.
- CPS will invite the various CPAs in Region 8A to the recruitment meetings so families can hear about the agencies and they can select the agency that works best for them.
- CPS and CPAs will continue to work on jointly recruiting homes that can serve our children in catchment area 8A.

### **Objective 1.4: Seek additional supports**

- CPS will work with the various CPAs in Region 8A to identify current programs utilized to support foster parents who are serving this population. Once all the information and resources are gathered, CPS will create a resource guide to share with all providers. The target date for completion of this guide will be March 2023.

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

## **Goal 2: Increase prepared families who are willing to accept for youth who are ready to exit residential treatment centers.**

Youth we struggle to move to a lesser restrictive placement after their level of care has dropped while completing treatment in a residential treatment setting are those who have significant behavioral history which includes arrest history, untreated mental health concerns, substance abuse history, and significant traumatic experiences.

### **Objective 2.1: Targeted recruitment**

We will focus on the recruitment of people who have history working with our youth in different capacities.

- Specific placing agencies and DFPS will begin a workgroup and process to link CPAs to RTCs so as a youth is making progress, the CPA can recruit and begin relationship building between the youth and potential foster caregiver. This will allow for a longer transition period to begin prior to the youth’s discharge.
- Recruitment will be a team effort by the local adoption collaborative and all agency partners.

- Present information sessions to professional groups with history of working in juvenile detention, hospitals, schools, and from the law enforcement community. Information sessions will be provided by multiple agency representatives.
- Utilize FosterCommunity.org to assist with streamlining information to match families with the best agency to work through.

### **Objective 2.2: Trauma informed caregiver training**

In order to ensure families are prepared to meet the needs of our youth it is imperative they have the training and knowledge on how to respond and care for youth with significant traumatic history and triggered responses.

- Each family who goes through the licensing process will be able to serve basic level youth and be trained in emergency behavior intervention as supported by their CPA.
- Each agency participating in this recruitment effort will also build an internal agency support system.

### **Objective 2.3: Household support**

In order to ensure families are prepared to meet the needs of our youth it is imperative they have community and agency support.

- Each agency participating in this specialized recruitment effort will build an internal support system for crisis intervention to help support families.

### **Goal 3: Increase placements with kinship caregivers**

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identified a 7 percent decrease for Catchment 8A in kinship placements. A total of 42 percent of children removed were placed in a kinship home within 60 days of removal. We understand placing children with family members at the onset of a removal or at least within 60 days of a removal is extremely important to the children's well-being.

### **Objective 3.1: DFPS focused efforts**

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

- FAD and kinship supervisors will attend Child Protective Investigation (CPI) and CPS program meetings to discuss and encourage kinship placements
- During an Initial Coordination Meeting, the family group conference specialist will inquire about the child resource form completion to see if a relative has been identified
- FAD unit will help identify/address barriers for kinship caregivers to become licensed.
- Build a FAD unit to help develop a "push" program which guides caregivers through the adoption process.

Fiscal Year 2023 Capacity Building Plan:

# Region 9 Plan to Increase Capacity

Stakeholder/provider meetings for Region 9 occurred on October 5 and 10, 2022, where the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed, and a regional/catchment data presentation was shared, focusing on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for fiscal year 2023.

While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the Region 9 Capacity Strategic Plan: High Sky, Arrow Child and Family Ministries, A World for Children, Children’s Hope, Children’s Home of Lubbock, New Horizons, Buckner, Pathways, Texas Baptist Children, The Attic, One Accord, and the West Texas Together Collaborative.

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

## Goal 1: Increase placement capacity for youth 12 and under

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

### Objective 1.1: Providers will seek to increase capacity

- Identify and prepare families who are willing to accept placement of basic elementary age children and moderate level teenagers within already licensed homes and through recruitment efforts of newly licensed homes.
- In conjunction with one another all CPAs agree to ensure at least 1/3 of their licensed active homes take school aged children.

### Objective 1.2: Recruitment efforts for respite care

- All CPAs agree that if a family is unsure if they want to be a long-term foster care placement, they will educate them about respite care services needs to see if they would be willing to assist with short term placements to alleviate current foster parents who are in need of respite services.

## **Goal 2: Utilizing strategies already in place to work with the CPAs and stakeholders to reach people who have an interest in fostering and adopting**

### **Objective 2.1: Increase regional awareness**

- In partnership with The Attic and One Accord, expand recruitment efforts in the Permian Basin area to region wide recruitment events through their social media platforms.
- DFPS will continue joint in-person outreach efforts, events and question and answer sessions in partnership with the West Texas Together Collaborative which includes all local CPAs and community partners. Sessions will be scheduled near the start of foster parent pre-service orientations to keep recruitment momentum going.
- During the recruitment process, all local CPAs will work on communicating the realistic expectation of foster parents to avoid surprises and home closures of newly licensed homes.
- DFPS will expand informational meetings to rural counties.
- DFPS will continue to expand the Heart Gallery Project through One Accord to all counties of Region 9.
- There will be collaborative efforts with DFPS, stakeholders, community partners, and CPAs to execute media public service announcements and commercials on how the regional community can get involved.

## **Goal 3: Recruit foster placements for teenagers**

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

### **Objective 3.1 Utilizing strategies already in place work with the CPAs and stakeholders to reach people who have an interest in fostering and adopting teenagers.**

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

# Region 10 Plan to Increase Capacity

Stakeholder/provider meetings for Region 10 occurred on September 22, 2022, where the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed, and a regional/catchment data presentation was shared, focusing on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for fiscal year 2023.

While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the Regional capacity strategic plan: The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Emergence Health Network, El Paso Psychiatric Center, 65th District Court, El Paso Child Crises Center, El Paso Center for Children, A World for Children, Upbring, Texas Foster and Texas CASA of El Paso.

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

## Goal 1: Increase placement capacity for youth 12 and under and large sibling groups

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

### Objective 1.1: Determine availability of least restrictive placement options

- DFPS will evaluate identified barriers within each CPA to taking placements of sibling groups, youth 12 and under through continued monthly meetings.
- Based on the information collected, the CPAs will work jointly to increase capacity for placements in licensed homes with available bed space as well as recruit additional placements.
- There will be collaborative efforts with stakeholders in helping promote recruitment events as outlined under goals 2 and 3.

## Goal 2: Develop a marketing strategy to reach the Region 10 community

### Objective 2.1: Grow capacity by recruiting foster placements

- The UTEP Department of Social Work will collaborate with the UTEP department of marketing to assist with the development of a region wide foster care recruitment campaign.
- In partnership with the El Paso Child Crises Center, county wide recruitment events and informational meetings will be shared via their social media platforms

- There will be collaborative efforts with stakeholders and CPAs in helping create and participate in joint county wide recruitment events and media public service announcements.

### **Goal 3: Recruit foster placements for teenagers**

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

#### **Objective 3.1 Utilizing strategies already in place work with the CPAs and stakeholders to reach people who have an interest in fostering and adopting teenagers.**

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

### **Goal 4: Increase support for caregivers with high needs children**

In order to grow capacity in this area it is believed there must be increased support for existing caregivers.

#### **Objective 4.1: Identify gaps**

- UTEP will conduct a focus group/survey with existing foster parents to determine additional training needs foster parents identify. In turn this will allow training topics to be provided through of the Child Welfare Training Collaborate that focuses on the foster parents' current need.

#### **Objective 4.2: Address identified gaps**

- In partnership with the Texas Systems of Care Governance Board Collaboration, DFPS will work to streamline swifter access to mental health care.

## Region 11 Plan to Increase Capacity

A provider meeting for Region 11A and 11B occurred on September 21, 2022, where the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed, and a regional/catchment data presentation was shared, focusing on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for fiscal year 2023.

While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following agencies who participated in the creation of this plan: Arms Wide Adoption Services, Children's Hope Residential Services, Families Especial Inc, AMIkids Rio Grande Valley, Upbring, Lutheran Social Services of the South, Arrow Child and Family Ministries, Agape Harbor, and Bair Foundation-Harlingen.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team, Child placing unit and Subject Matter Experts:

### **Goal 1: Increase the number of basic and specialized foster homes**

The Region 11 Needs Assessment indicates the greatest need in both catchment areas: 11A and 11B, is for Specialized Foster Homes for children ages 0 to 17.

#### **Objective 1.1: Faith based community engagement along with child welfare boards will collaborate with CPAs/DFPS to raise awareness of the need for foster families and provide information at events they attend within their counties.**

- DFPS will provide data and demographic information to the child welfare boards to provide to prospective foster parents with information to start the fostering process and will work with the community to build Welfare boards in those counties that do not have an existing one.
- CPAs will tap into their local child welfare boards for foster family support, activities and how the boards can assist in the permanency for children.
- Faith based community engagement and CPAs will support existing families through functions, awareness events, respite care and continue to help build existing family's capacities.
- DFPS will keep all handouts that includes all the CPAs information updated.
- DFPS and regional CPAs will continue to have collaborative informational meetings to provide information to prospective families in face to face and/or virtual meetings. Collaborative meetings will allow perspective families the ability to choose which agency in which they would like to work.

**Objective 1.2: CPAs will continue work to increase the number of available beds for children.**

Regional CPAs agree to continue working together to set up various ways to recruit new foster families.

- CPAs will continue to hold and attend recruitment awareness events throughout the region.
- CPAs will make efforts to expand existing foster family's capacity and reach out to current respite care providers and inquire if they would consider taking placements of (moderate/specialized) service level children.
- Faith based community engagement along with some Region 11 providers will work together to reorganize the One Heart Coalition within Region 11. The group will focus on growth, recruitment, awareness, and the planning of recruitment fairs collaboratively within Region 11.

**Goal 2: Increase the likelihood that a CPA/GRO will accept a child, to include children without placement, when they have open beds and are able to meet the child's needs.**

**Objective 2.1: CPAs/GRO's will continue to work with CPU and CPS to provide all information and identifying available beds through the GPS system.**

- DFPS in collaboration with CPAs/ general residential operations (GROs) will conduct/facilitate match meetings, preplacement visits and virtual interviews with children without placement to provide as much information about the child as possible in order to find them a placement that are willing and able to meet their needs.
- The clinical coordinator will continue to setup interagency meetings that include primary staff and subject matter experts to discuss the child's unmet mental health needs, refer to daily superior health update through star health and discuss what next steps need to occur to support the child.

**Objective 2.2: CPAs will work to improve comfort level while interacting with RCCL and heightened monitoring representatives.**

There is an expressed concern from CPAs that interacting with Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) can be intimidating for foster parents and CPA employees.

- CPA employees agreed to invite RCCL/heightened monitoring staff to trainings, meetings and other events to help foster communication, relationships and understanding.

## Fiscal Year 2023 Capacity Building Plan:

- RCCL will be sending out information about forums throughout the fiscal year to DFPS/CPAs which will include new/upcoming licensing regulations and changes. These forums will allow for comments and questions to ensure everyone fully understands the changes taking place.
- CPAs will continue to invite CPS leadership to foster parent events and agency meetings.

### **Objective 2.3: CPS staff will put special emphasis on strengthening kinship placements and offering maximum support.**

Region 11 staff will continue to focus on placing children in safe kinship placements.

- Upon learning of potential kinship placements, CPI/Family Based Safety Services staff will complete the preliminary kinship assessment in attempts to place children with appropriate relatives at the beginning of a case.
- Throughout the case, DFPS staff will continue to utilize the practices learned from Collaborative Family Engagement to identify kinship caregivers who may be considered for not only placement, but also to provide support and assistance to caregivers who are able to be the primary caregivers.
- Faith based community providers will support kinship families through CarePortal to meet needs and help sustain the placement.
- Agape Ranch will continue to provide respite through the citywide respite program.
- Communication between DFPS CVS and FAD staff will be strengthened by ensuring FAD is invited to legal staffings and informed of court decisions and any changes to the licensing process will be relayed to the CPA.

### **Objective 2.4: CPA will provide DFPS with their new agency goals at the beginning of their new fiscal year in January 2023 to increase foster care capacity.**

Region 11 CPS staff will obtain CPAs plans to increase the capacity in Region 11 after the start of the new year on January 1, 2023.

- Each CPA will provide DFPS with their agency's plans geared toward increasing foster care capacity within Region 11, monthly.
- CPS will continue to have a forum at the quarterly provider meeting to present progress on goals.

### **Goal 3: Increase the placement of sibling groups together and build capacity for sibling groups in the foster care system**

Region 11 will explore all possibilities to keep siblings together. If siblings cannot be placed together, then every effort will be made to place siblings in close proximity to each other to ensure visits and connections to each other are maintained.

#### **Objective 3.1: CPS will make all efforts to ensure siblings are placed together and remain together throughout their time in foster care.**

- CPAs will focus their attention on larger capacity homes and provide extra attention/support in an effort help maintain sibling bonding and maintaining capacity.

#### **Objective 3.2: When siblings are separated, CPS will continue to make all efforts to have them be placed together and if not possible then to be placed within close proximity.**

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

### **Goal 4: Increase RTC beds for teens and establish psychiatric transition services**

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identified 66 RTC and 28 psychiatric transition beds are needed to meet Region 11's needs in fiscal year 2023.

- DFPS will continue to voice the need for residential treatment and psychiatric transition placements for our children in Region 11 at stakeholder meetings.
- DFPS will be available to partner with local hospitals/psychiatric services and discuss the implementation of specialized programs to meet the needs of our youth.

## List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
CPA	Child placement agency
CPI	Child Protective Investigations
CPS	Child Protective Services
CPU	Centralized placement unit
CVS	Conservatorship
DFPS	Department of Family and Protective Services
ECI	Early Childhood Intervention
FAD	Foster/Adoptive Home Development
GPS	General placement search
GRO	General residential operations
LMHA	Local mental health authority
RCCL	Residential Child Care Licensing
RTC	Residential treatment center
TFFC	Treatment Family Foster Care
UTEP	The University of Texas at El Paso
YES	Youth Empowerment Services