



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

COMMISSIONER
Anne Heiligenstein

October 1, 2009

The Honorable Rick Perry
Office of the Governor
State Capitol, Room 2S.1
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable Jim Pitts
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol Extension, Room E1.032
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable Steve Ogden
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Extension, Room E1.038
Austin, Texas 78701

Mr. John O'Brien, Director
Texas Legislative Budget Board
1501 Congress Avenue, 5th Floor
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Sirs:

Retaining staff is critical for the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to achieve its mission of protecting children, the elderly and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation by involving clients, families and communities. Improvement in turnover measures between FY 2008 and 2009 is encouraging. DFPS employees are seeing a commitment from agency leadership to reduce turnover and make the work environment better for employees.

Pursuant to Rider 13, Senate Bill 1, 81st Regular Legislative Session, DFPS is directed to develop a Human Resources Management Plan designed to improve employee morale and retention. The plan must focus on reducing employee turnover through better management. The FY 2010 Human Resources Management Plan will build on the success of the past year's retention efforts. Per the requirements of Rider 13, we respectfully submit the following items:

- progress made on the FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan;
- a discussion of the turnover statistics for FY 2009;
- an analysis of workforce retention challenges; and
- an outline of the initiatives for the new FY 2010 Human Resources Management Plan.

The Honorable Rick Perry
The Honorable Steve Ogden
The Honorable Jim Pitts
Mr. John O'Brien
October 1, 2009
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Thank you for the opportunity to present this information. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Heiligenstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Anne Heiligenstein

Enclosures

cc: Mary Katherine Stout, Office of the Governor
Katherine Yoder, Office of the Governor
Sarah Hicks, Senate Committee on Finance
Brittani Bilse, Senate Committee on Finance
Amy Peterson, House Committee on Appropriations
Julie Haerber, House Committee on Appropriations
Nancy Millard, Legislative Budget Board

Rider 13 - Human Resources Management Plan

A Report from
The Texas Department of Family and
Protective Services

October 1, 2009

Introduction

Senate Bill 1, Rider 13, 81st Regular Legislative Session directs the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to develop a Human Resources Management Plan designed to improve employee morale and retention. The plan must focus on reducing employee turnover through better management. The effectiveness of the agency’s plan shall be measured by whether there is a reduction in annual employee turnover rates at the agency, specifically by the reduction in the turnover rates for caseworkers.

To review the new FY 2010 Human Resources Management Plan within the context of the past year, this document includes the following:

- Progress made on the FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan
- Discussion of the turnover statistics for FY 2009
- Analysis of workforce retention challenges
- An outline of the FY 2010 Human Resources Management Plan
- Appendix: Turnover and HR-Related Data for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009

FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan

The DFPS Workforce Support and Retention Initiative (WSRI) stemmed from the FY 2008 Human Resources Management Plan and was continued in the FY 2009 plan. This initiative was designed to be a comprehensive effort to capitalize on activities occurring in different areas and programs around the state and to allow for ongoing high-level attention from executive staff.

The WSRI included seven work groups each focusing on a particular aspect of employee retention. They were Managing Workloads, Valuing Employees, Promoting Employee Communications & Input, Strengthening Supervision, Enhancing Work Environment, Improving Hiring Practices, and Local Retention Pilots.

A group of projects were outlined in October 2008 for the FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan. The following table shows the status of those projects:

FY 2009 Human Resources Management Plan Projects

Project	Status
<p>Study Workers with High Caseloads – The work group will study workers who maintain high caseloads to determine if there are short-term steps that can be done to improve processes and workload.</p>	<p>In Progress – Surveys were sent to workers with the highest caseloads and their supervisors in August 2009. DFPS staff members are currently analyzing those surveys and expect to report the results to agency and program leadership in October 2009.</p>
<p>Employee Recognition Plan – Recognizing employees is critical to morale and retaining staff. DFPS will develop and implement an employee recognition plan.</p>	<p>In Progress – The work group recommends that regional and division managers develop recognition plans for their staff to include formal recognition, informal recognition and public recognition. The WSRI project manager will move the recommendation forward with agency and program leadership.</p>

Project	Status
<p>Initiating and Maintaining a Sense of Connection – New employees need to feel welcomed when they come to DFPS and valued as they continue employment. The agency will develop and implement strategies for initiating and maintaining employees’ sense of connection with the agency, beginning with new employees in their local supervisory units.</p>	<p>In Progress – The Valuing Employees work group developed the rookie year on-boarding concept and supporting materials to help supervisors welcome new employees before their first day of work and enhance support to them through their first year. The Intranet page that will house the materials is under construction.</p>
<p>Informing Employees about Perks – Many businesses offer special benefits for particular groups of customers. As government employees, DFPS employees can take advantage of these benefits. DFPS will develop and implement a plan for informing employees about available perks throughout the state. The plan will assign responsibility for maintaining an up-to-date list in each region.</p>	<p>Complete – Regional wellness coordinators collect information about perks, such as discounts, for state employees.</p>
<p>Case Distribution – Assigning cases to workers is handled at the local level. The Managing Workloads work group will research and recommend systems to improve the distribution of cases taking into consideration case complexity, number of clients/victims being served and other factors that impact workload.</p>	<p>Not Actionable – The work group planned to initiate a university study, but decided against further study for two reasons. First, the work group determined from a survey of child welfare agencies that DFPS is considered a leader in case triage. Second, the 81st Regular Session brought about more pressing research topics such as trend analysis related to MH&MR investigations.</p>
<p>SOE Projects – The DFPS Executive Team and WSRI work group leaders will put the SOE results to use by initiating a handful of projects directly tied to the workplace issues highlighted in the SOE results. (More information on SOE is on page 8 of this report).</p>	<p>Complete – An action plan was placed on the WSRI Intranet page so that employees could follow the progress of the SOE projects.</p>
<p>Establish WSRI Intranet Page – The WSRI Intranet page will provide information to employees about the WSRI and its activities. The page will also serve as an archive for prior electronic communications to staff regarding retention.</p>	<p>Complete – The WSRI Intranet page includes resources, links to previous editions of the Human Resources Management Plan, a communications archive and information about each work group.</p>
<p>Tenured Worker Leadership Program – The DFPS Tomorrow Worker Leadership Program has been implemented in all regions except Regions 3 and 6. This program provides training to frontline workers who want to be promoted into supervisory positions.</p>	<p>Complete – DFPS Tomorrow has now been implemented in all regions.</p>
<p>Mentoring Program – DFPS will provide a quality mentoring program for supervisors and caseworkers.</p>	<p>In Progress – The work group has developed a recommendation on a mentoring program for supervisors. The WSRI project manager will move the recommendation forward with agency and program leadership.</p>
<p>Communicating Safety and Security Policies and Procedures – The Enhancing Work Environment work group will establish ongoing communications strategies for safety and security policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Complete – DFPS has established "Safety Central," an Intranet page bringing together all workplace safety and security information.</p>

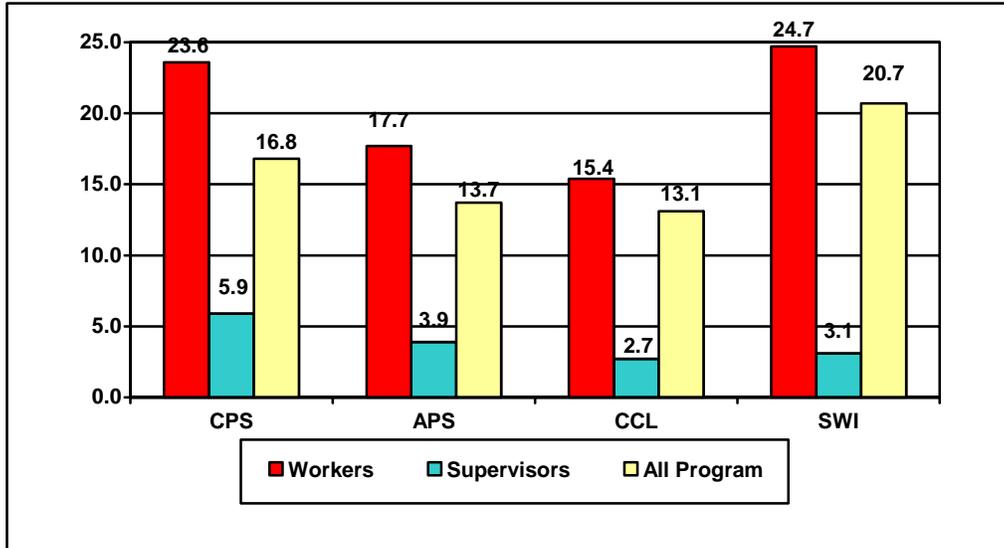
Project	Status
<p>Mobile Technology – The Enhancing Work Environment work group will review mobile technology survey results for impact/transition issues.</p>	<p>Complete – Tablet PCs were phased in with CCL monitoring and investigative staff beginning in early 2008. The purpose of giving staff tablets is to assist them with meeting the timeliness standards for those programs. Staff were surveyed about working with the tablets. The Enhancing Work Environment work group reviewed the mobile technology survey results and found no significant issues negatively impacting staff.</p>
<p>Formalize Processes for Flexible Work Schedules – The Enhancing Work Environment work group will finalize a flexible work schedules policy for DFPS executive management approval.</p>	<p>In Progress – The procedures for alternative work schedules and telework are near completion. Support tools for supervisors are under development.</p>
<p>Realistic Job Preview – DFPS will produce a realistic job preview video for caseworker positions. Job applicants will watch the video before an interview. Applicants can remove themselves from the hiring process if they decide they no longer want to pursue employment as a caseworker.</p>	<p>In Progress – The video is scheduled for release this fall 2009.</p>
<p>Scenario-based Skills Test – DFPS will pilot a scenario-based skills test during the hiring process for caseworkers. Primarily, the test exposes applicants to scenarios they will likely face in the field so that the hiring specialist can score how the applicants respond. Secondly, each applicant produces a writing sample.</p>	<p>Not Actionable – DFPS is in the process of re-procuring pre-employment testing services. The work group determined piloting a scenario-based skills test should be put on hold until the procurement process is complete.</p>
<p>Standardize Testing for Bilingual Pay – Bilingual pay can be used as a recruiting tool for field offices that find it difficult to attract qualified bilingual caseworkers. Regions that offer bilingual pay have different methods for testing an applicant’s proficiency in the second language. DFPS will standardize the way applicants are tested.</p>	<p>In Progress – Developing a standardized test for bilingual applicants has been delayed. The HHSC Civil Rights Office (CR) reviewed the DFPS procedures around bilingual pay. CR found these procedures non-discriminatory but suggested that they be formally documented. DFPS is currently documenting those procedures. Once that is done, DFPS can begin developing the standardized test.</p>
<p>Pilot New Ideas – The Region 8 (Bexar County) Retention Pilot serves as an incubator for ideas and innovations that support staff retention. This work group tests new ways of doing business before those policies or processes are taken agency-wide.</p>	<p>Complete – Retention efforts in Region 8 (Bexar County) have been successful in reducing turnover. Local management has continued retention efforts there. The WSRI has initiated local retention groups in Tarrant County and Statewide Intake.</p>

FY 2009 Turnover Results

Turnover measures at DFPS have been improving since the annual turnover rate reached 21.2 percent in FY 2007. The Human Resources Management Plan’s efforts will be determined by the turnover across the agency and particularly among caseworkers. The agency’s turnover rate decreased from 19.4 percent in FY 2008 to 15.2 percent in FY 2009. Certainly the national economic downturn has helped employee retention at DFPS.

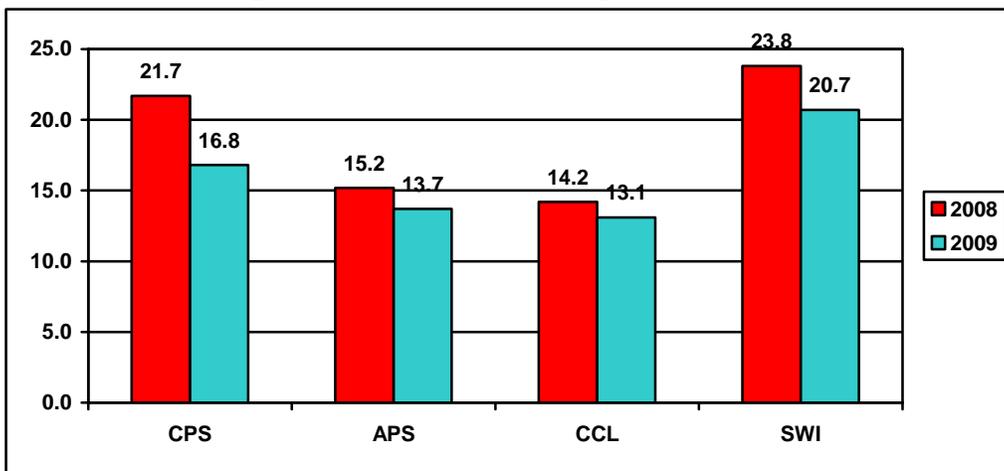
The dramatic changes in the overall employee turnover rate and the turnover measures in each program are encouraging. The following chart shows the FY 2009 turnover for Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL) and Statewide Intake (SWI).

Percentage Turnover by Program, FY 2009



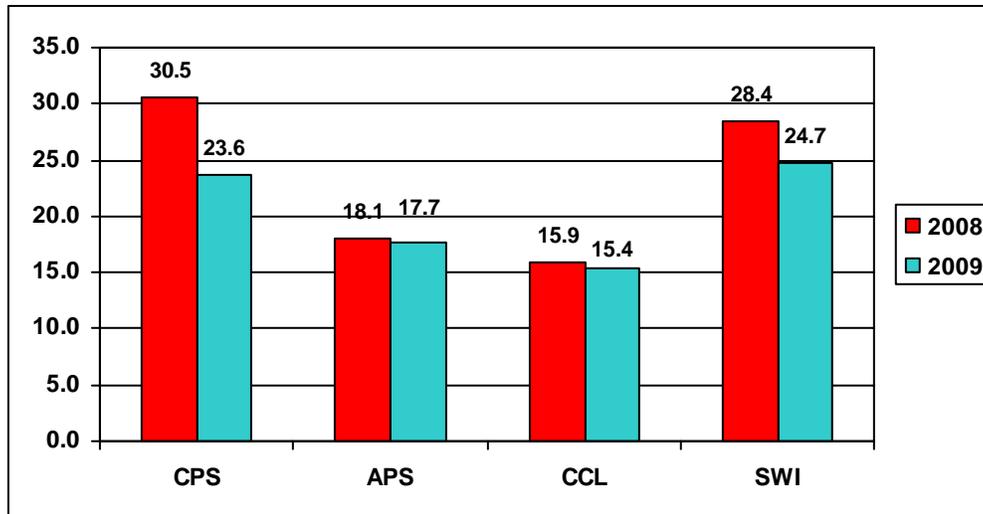
From FY 2008 to FY 2009, the turnover rates in all four programs decreased. The CPS turnover rate decreased from 21.7 percent in FY 2008 to 16.8 in FY 2009. APS saw a decline of 1.5 percentage points, from 15.2 percent to 13.7 percent. Turnover in CCL dropped from 14.2 percent to 13.1 percent. The turnover rate for SWI decreased during this time by 3.1 percentage points, from 23.8 percent to 20.7 percent. The turnover rates in FY 2008 and FY 2009 for CPS, APS, CCL and SWI are shown in the following chart.

Percentage Turnover for All Programs, FY 2008-2009



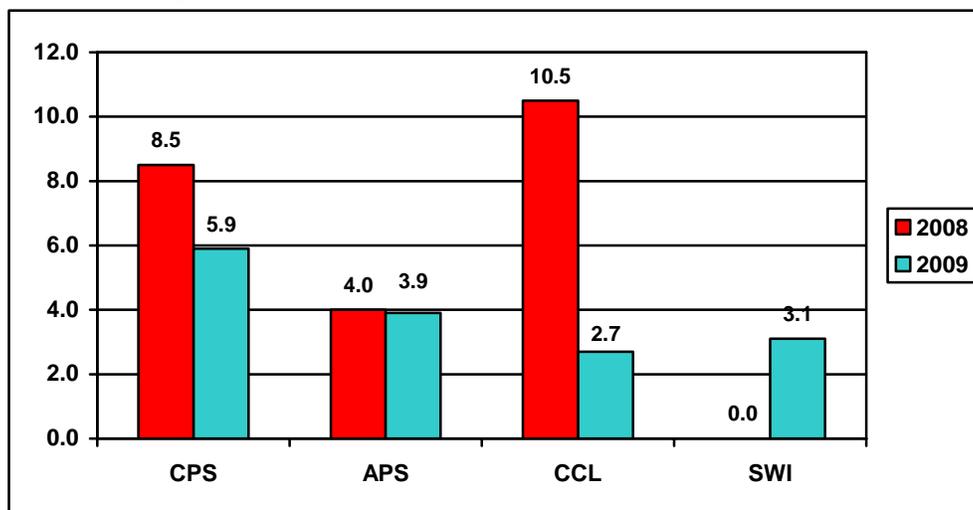
The turnover rates for DFPS workers decreased in FY 2009. The rate for CPS workers fell by 6.9 percentage points, from 30.5 percent to 23.6 percent. The agency retained more APS caseworkers in FY 2009; their turnover rate went from 18.1 percent to 17.7 percent. The turnover rate for CCL workers decreased from 15.9 percent to 15.4 percent. SWI workers' turnover fell from 28.4 percent to 24.7 percent. The turnover rates in FY 2008 and FY 2009 for CPS, APS, CCL and SWI workers are shown in the following chart.

Percentage Turnover for Workers, FY 2008-2009



Supervisors are critical to retention, so knowing how the agency is doing in retaining supervisors is important to the efforts of retaining caseworkers. The turnover rate for CPS supervisors decreased from 8.5 percent in FY 2008 to 5.9 percent in FY 2009. APS saw a slight decrease as well, from 4.0 percent to 3.9 percent. In CCL, the FY 2009 turnover for supervisors is down from 10.5 percent in FY 2008 to 2.7 percent. No SWI supervisors left the agency in FY 2008. Their turnover in FY 2009 was 3.1 percent. The turnover rates in FY 2008 and FY 2009 for CPS, APS, CCL and SWI supervisors are shown in the following chart.

Percentage Turnover for Program Supervisors, FY 2008-2009



Overall, the turnover data for DFPS is encouraging. The agency's turnover rate decreased from 19.4 percent in FY 2008 to 15.2 percent in FY 2009. Turnover in all four programs decreased over the same period.

DFPS Analysis of Workforce Retention Challenges

DFPS uses multiple sources of information about why employees leave the agency and why employees stay. Several key sources are described below:

Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE)

The data gathered through the SOE assists DFPS to understand, from the viewpoint of the employee, what the organization is doing well, where improvement efforts should be targeted, and how employees perceive various aspects of the workplace. The SOE is conducted in state agencies every two years by a research team at the University of Texas and was last administered in February and March 2008. According to the 2008 SOE results, DFPS employees rated the agency highest in employment development, strategic orientation, external communications, fairness and availability of information. According to the SOE researchers, the high response rate in 2008 – 67 percent – indicates “that employees have an investment in the organization, want to see the organization improve and generally have a sense of responsibility to the organization.” The next iteration of the SOE will be in early calendar year 2010.

The State Auditor’s Office (SAO) Survey of Exiting Employees

In 2001, legislation was passed requiring the SAO to develop an online employee exit survey as a direct source for employees to provide feedback about their reasons for leaving state employment. HHS agencies have had some challenges in getting these surveys completed by departing staff, and the data is of somewhat limited use as currently collected and presented by the SAO. DFPS reviews and analyzes all responses received. There were 253 surveys completed in the first three quarters of FY 2009.

DFPS Exit Survey

The DFPS Exit Survey was launched in January 2009. Its goal is to gather the opinions of exiting employees about the positive and negative aspects of working at DFPS, what caused them to leave and what DFPS can do to keep employees.

Qualitative Focus Groups

Over the past few years, the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Executive Team of DFPS have participated in the “Commissioner’s Tour”, conducting multiple site visits to offices in every region of the state. During these meetings, staff are given the opportunity to provide candid feedback about morale and conditions in the agency. Employees are also given opportunities to provide more detailed feedback in structured focus group settings. In the first set of focus groups, retention was the focus for discussion in every region with staff representing all levels of the organization and all DFPS programs.

Independent Studies

A variety of external studies are done on employee retention in the human services field in general and several on DFPS in particular. In the past year, these have included theses and dissertations by Master’s and PhD-level researchers, focused on CPS worker retention.

Out of these various sources of information, a core group of underlying causes for turnover were identified:

Compensation and Reimbursement

According to the 2008 SOE results, more than 64 percent of DFPS employees do not believe that “people are paid fairly for the work they do.” Compared to the 2006 survey, DFPS improved in 19 of 20 constructs measured. “Fair pay” was the only area in which the agency did not show improvement. Concerns about pay are cited as a primary factor for leaving DFPS in 18.3 percent of the FY 2008 SAO exit surveys.

DFPS employees travel more than employees at any other state agency, and bearing those costs up-front is a financial burden for employees. A workgroup separate from the WSRI has been formed to address travel issues. The group is analyzing ways to make the travel voucher auditing and payment processes run more smoothly and is developing tools for employees and supervisors to use when completing travel vouchers. DFPS has also hired seven additional travel voucher auditors.

Support for New Caseworkers

When caseworkers leave DFPS, they typically do so within the first two years of employment. In FY 2008, the turnover rate for entry level CPS workers was 38.3 percent. The turnover rate for entry level APS workers was 31.6 percent. Caseworkers start their jobs in a 12-week training program, and by the end of the first two years, they are functioning with a full caseload. During these two years, learning is constant, and expectations are continually increased. To provide quality service to clients, it is critical that DFPS systematically select caseworkers and equip them to succeed.

Workload Concerns

Many DFPS employees feel overworked. More than 33 percent of respondents to the 2008 SOE survey said that the amount of work they are asked to do is unreasonable. Almost 29 percent felt that their work environment did not support a balance between work and personal life. More than 25 percent did not feel they have the necessary resources to perform their jobs. It is critical to retention that DFPS reduce workload where possible and support employees where reduction is not possible.

Supervision

While supervisor effectiveness as measured by the SOE has improved between the years 2006 and 2008, the researchers still call it an “area of concern.” The turnover rate for CPS supervisors was 8.5 percent in FY 2008. With so many supervisors leaving the agency, caseworkers with management potential must be promoted early in their tenures. Therefore, they may not have the requisite experience that managers and frontline employees prefer. This makes grooming and training potential supervisors all the more important. Continual management training for current supervisors is also critical.

FY 2010 Human Resources Management Plan

More than 100 people were involved in the WSRI. People from across the agency and across the state worked on the projects undertaken in FYs 2008 and 2009. Now that DFPS is on the right track regarding turnover, the work can be streamlined. DFPS employees saw a commitment from agency leadership to reduce turnover and make the work environment better for employees. Employees may not have been able to pinpoint specific projects contributing to their willingness to stay, but they knew they saw progress.

Because of the success of the WSRI in FY 2009, similar work will continue in FY 2010. The project was closed in August 2009, but the work left over will continue. DFPS will undertake the following projects in FY 2010.

2010 Survey of Organizational Excellence

Much of the data supporting projects undertaken in the Human Resources Management Plan comes from the Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE). This survey was last administered to DFPS employees in February and March 2008. The next iteration of the survey will be done in

early 2010. The survey data will be analyzed for agency-wide issues. Regional data will be shared with CPS and APS regional directors. District data will be shared with CCL district directors.

FY 2009 DFPS Exit Survey Results

DFPS began surveying individuals terminating employment with the agency in January 2009. This survey is more extensive than the survey administered by the State Auditor's Office and is customized to the agency's needs. The survey data from FY 2009 will be analyzed for agency-wide issues. Regional data will be shared with CPS and APS regional directors. District data will be shared with CCL district directors.

Statewide Intake Retention Initiative

While all DFPS programs have shown improvement, turnover at the agency's abuse and neglect call center, Statewide Intake, remains significantly higher than turnover in other programs. Leadership in Statewide Intake has initiated a retention project patterned after the Workforce Support and Retention Initiative. Focus groups were held with workers and supervisors to glean ideas on ways to improve the program for staff. Managers are chairing work groups comprised of supervisors and workers to address the issues raised.

Tarrant County Retention Initiative

Under the guidance of the CPS and APS regional directors and the CCL district director, staff in Tarrant County are undertaking a retention initiative called "Stay Another Day." The initiative was started after a similar initiative in Bexar County had success. Focus groups were held with workers and supervisors to find ways to improve the work environment within the county. Work groups are determining projects to undertake.

Study Workers with High Caseloads

Despite the reduction in caseloads over the past few years, stress related to workload continues to be a significant factor contributing to turnover. Workers who maintain high caseloads will be studied to determine if there are short-term steps that can be done to improve processes and workload. Surveys were sent to selected workers and their supervisors in late FY 2009. Those responses will be analyzed and reported to agency and program leadership.

CPS Realistic Job Preview

DFPS will produce a realistic job preview video for CPS caseworker positions. Job applicants will watch the video before an interview. Applicants can remove themselves from the hiring process if they decide they no longer want to pursue employment as a caseworker. It is far better for DFPS to deal with low applicant pools than invest in new caseworkers who will not be successful. The video will show actual interviews with CPS caseworkers giving the positive and negative aspects of the job. The video is nearly complete.

Standardize Testing for Bilingual Pay

Bilingual pay can be used as a recruiting tool for field offices that find it difficult to attract qualified bilingual caseworkers. Regions that offer bilingual pay have different methods for testing an applicant's proficiency in the second language. In FY 2009, DFPS began work to standardize the way applicants are tested; however, this process was delayed. The HHSC Civil Rights Office (CR) reviewed the DFPS procedures around bilingual pay. CR found these procedures non-discriminatory but suggested that they be formally documented. DFPS is currently documenting those procedures. Once that is done, DFPS can begin developing the standardized test.

Rookie Year On-Boarding

The WSRI Valuing Employees work group spent a great deal of time studying how to integrate new employees into the agency's culture. They discovered that many employers tend to view this process taking somewhere between a day and a week. In their research, the work group found that this process takes much longer and begins before the employee arrives for the first day of work. The work group developed the rookie year on-boarding concept to help supervisors welcome and support their new employees through the first year. The materials are being finalized and will be rolled out to supervisors.

Conclusion

Retaining staff is critical for DFPS to achieve its mission of protecting children, the elderly and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation by involving clients, families and communities. Improvement in turnover measures between FY 2008 and 2009 is encouraging. DFPS employees are seeing a commitment from agency leadership to reduce turnover and make the work environment better for employees. The FY 2010 Human Resources Management Plan will build on the success of the past year's retention efforts.

TURNOVER AND HR-RELATED DATA

RIDER 13 EMPLOYEE ANNUALIZED TURNOVER REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)

Functional Title	FY 2008 Turnover Rate ¹	FY 2009 Turnover Rate ¹
All Employees	19.4%	15.2%

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)

Functional Title	FY 2008 Turnover Rate ¹	FY 2009 Turnover Rate ¹
CPS Workers	30.5%	23.6%
CPS Supervisors	8.5%	5.9%
CPS Program ³	21.7%	16.8%
CPS Specialist II ²	38.3%	31.3%
CPS Specialist III	19.1%	12.6%
CPS Specialist IV	11.0%	10.9%
CPS Specialist V	11.3%	5.5%
CPS Special Investigator	34.2%	18.2%
CPS CVS Caseworker	30.9%	20.1%
CPS FBSS Caseworker	27.9%	25.3%
CPS INV Caseworker	36.1%	30.1%

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)

Functional Title	FY 2008 Turnover Rate ¹	FY 2009 Turnover Rate ¹
APS Workers	18.1%	17.7%
APS Supervisors	4.0%	3.9%
APS Program ³	15.2%	13.7%

CHILD CARE LICENSING (CCL)

Functional Title	FY 2008 Turnover Rate ¹	FY 2009 Turnover Rate ¹
CCL Workers ⁴	16.8%	15.4%
CCL Supervisors	5.6%	2.7%
CCL Program ³	14.8%	13.1%

RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE LICENSING (RCCL)

Functional Title	FY 2008 Turnover Rate ¹	FY 2009 Turnover Rate ¹
RCCL Workers ⁴	14.1%	9.1%
RCCL Supervisors	18.8%	13.3%
RCCL Program ³	12.9%	8.2%

STATEWIDE INTAKE (SWI)

Functional Title	FY 2008 Turnover Rate ¹	FY 2009 Turnover Rate ¹
SWI Workers	28.4%	24.7%
SWI Supervisors	0.0%	3.1%
SWI Program ³	23.8%	20.7%

¹NOTE: DFPS turnover is calculated using the method required by the LBB performance measure for CPS caseworker turnover: (the total number of full time, regular employees who terminated during the period and remain terminated DIVIDED BY the average number of full time, regular filled positions on the last day of each quarter in the period) TIMES 100 to produce a percentage. As a result, the State Auditor's Office turnover calculation varies slightly from DFPS due to methodological differences in calculating the average number of filled positions and the total number of terminated employees.

²Entry level for CPS workers is CPS Specialist II. The state classification for this level is Protective Services Specialist II.

³Because program group totals include all employees in that program, this number will exceed the total number of workers and supervisors in the program.

⁴CCL and RCCL Workers include employees serving in worker job codes and in the Inspector job codes.