

RIDER 31: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES STAFFING

FISCAL YEAR 2014 - FISCAL YEAR 2015

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PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 1, Rider 31, of the 83rd Regular Legislative Session directs the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to provide data on:

- turnover
- fill rates
- initiatives undertaken during the reporting period to improve staff recruitment and retention, including an analysis on the following initiatives:
 - establishing a career ladder for certain positions
 - providing on call pay
 - paying higher salaries for targeted degrees
 - for employees headquartered in certain counties
- resources expended on the initiatives
- outcomes quantifying the impact of the initiatives.

Additionally, DFPS is required to outline the reasons for CPS staff turnover, identify patterns in turnover, and make recommendations for specific interventions to address identified concerns.

TURNOVER

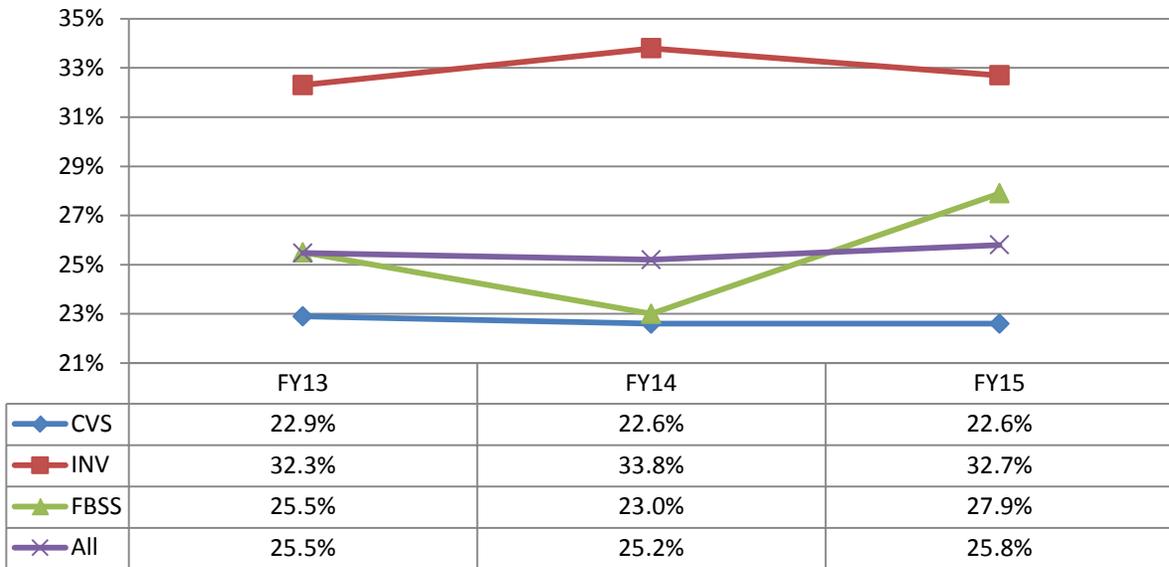
The overall fiscal year turnover for CPS caseworkers in 2015 marginally increased from 25.2 percent to 25.8 percent.

In fiscal year 2014, DFPS reintroduced the CPS Specialist I position to add career growth opportunities for its caseworkers. Since its reestablishment, turnover for CPS Specialists I increased from 28 percent to 43 percent, which was likely due to a delayed impact from the lengthy hiring, training, and fully case-assignable certification process.

This delayed impact to turnover varied from nine to ten months under the old training model in fiscal year 2014 (Basic Skills Development) and six to seven months under the new training model (CPS Professional Development), which began in the third quarter of fiscal year 2015 and was delivered across all regions in the first quarter of fiscal year 2016.

Although turnover for most stages of service remained relatively stable - or even decreased - Family-Based Safety Services saw a sharp increase. This phenomenon was seen across several regions and is being monitored by the newly created Workforce Development Division.

**Chart 1
CPS Caseworker Turnover**



FILL RATES

CPS' workforce generally remains filled to a rate of over 95 percent. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2014, CPS' fill rate dropped sharply below its average annual fill rate. This was due to an influx of positions released in September 2013. The second and third quarters saw the fill rates increase as the positions were hired and on-boarded.

Table 1: CPS Caseworker Fill Rates

Caseworker Type	Fiscal Year	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Annual
FBSS	2013	95.6%	95.3%	96.7%	95.5%	95.8%
FBSS	2014	92.8%	94.9%	96.8%	98.1%	95.6%
FBSS	2015	98.2%	96.4%	96.2%	95.3%	96.5%
INV	2013	95.6%	97.2%	97.3%	95.6%	96.4%
INV	2014	85.1%	90.3%	95.2%	96.1%	91.7%
INV	2015	96.7%	95.5%	94.2%	93.8%	95.0%
CVS	2013	99.3%	100.7%	100.2%	101.4%	100.4%
CVS	2014	86.1%	89.4%	94.2%	97.1%	91.7%
CVS	2015	97.7%	95.8%	95.0%	94.8%	95.8%

REASONS WHY STAFF LEAVE

The results of fiscal year 2015 exit surveys, administered by the State Auditor's Office to employees separating from the agency, identify the following as the top three reasons employees reported for leaving the agency:

- 24.8%: Poor working conditions or environment (e.g., safety, work-related stress, and/or workload issues)
- 19.4%: Better pay or benefits:
- 15.2%: Issues with my supervisor or issues with employees I supervise

Although the order has changed over the years, and in some quarters "Retirement" lands in the top, these three issues continue to surface as the main reasons why people are leaving DFPS.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION INITIATIVES

FISCAL YEAR 2014

RIDER 32: COLLEGE DEGREE PAY

Rider 32 allows DFPS to pay 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent above the current base salary for employees with targeted college degrees determined by the department to be relevant to their positions. The targeted degrees include but are not limited to: social work, counseling, early childhood education, psychology, criminal justice, elementary or secondary education, sociology, human services and child development.

The purpose of this rider is to create parity between those current employees who have master's degrees and applicants who have their masters and receive 6.8 percent above base upon hiring.

Although authorized, the implementation of this initiative requires the availability of surplus funds.

RIDER 33: ON-CALL PAY

Rider 33 allows the agency to pay compensation for on-call time at the following rates: credit for one hour of base pay worked for each day of on-call during the normal work week, and two hours of base pay worked for each day of on-call during a weekend and on holidays. This credit would be in addition to actual hours worked during normal duty hours and actual hours worked during on-call status.

Although authorized, implementation of this initiative requires the availability of surplus funds.

RIDER 34: HIGH-RISK PAY

Rider 34 allows the agency to pay an additional \$50 per month for the following CPS positions:

- Investigative caseworker and human service technician
- Conservatorship caseworker and human service technician
- Family Based Safety Services caseworker and human service technician
- I See You caseworker and human service technician

Although authorized, implementation of this initiative requires the availability of surplus funds.

RIDER 35: LOCALITY PAY

Rider 35 allows the agency to pay employees headquartered in certain counties - identified based on formulas established by the agency - additional compensation not to exceed 90 percent of the market salary of comparable jobs. The employee is only eligible for this compensation while headquartered in the eligible county.

Region 9 began experiencing an increased rate of turnover as a result of increased energy exploration in the Midland-Odessa area. To counter the effect of a higher cost of living, the agency received approval from the 83rd Legislature to provide a stipend for those in that area. The monthly stipend of \$1,000 was initiated on September 1, 2013. As shown in Table 2, CPS Investigators followed the same trend as overall CPS caseworker turnover, with a spike in fiscal year 2013 and relative stabilization across fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

Table 2: CPS Turnover in Region 9			
	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015
CPS Caseworkers	42.1%	27%	30%
CPS Investigators	47.6%	25.2%	28.8%

The following amounts were expended for this initiative:

FY2014: \$742,355 (All Funds)
FY2015: \$1,618,603 (All Funds)
Total: \$2,360,958 (All Funds)

CAREER LADDER MODIFICATIONS

Funds appropriated for the 2014-2015 biennium were used to modify the caseworker career ladder. The new career ladder begins new CPS caseworkers at a Caseworker I level - as opposed to their previous entry at a Caseworker II.

Additionally, certification levels were amended to allow workers to attain their first certification sooner. For example, CPS workers are eligible to receive their first pay increase at nine months rather than the previous, longer timeline of eighteen months.

All programs' workers' certification pay increases were increased from 7% to 10% of their salary.

The effects of adding a new entry point into the caseworker career ladder will be determined over the course of the next several fiscal years. Currently, the average tenure of a caseworker is roughly 3 years. The agency can expect that this additional rung will extend the length of time CPS workers will remain in direct delivery positions.

The number of separations that occurred amongst caseworkers from the three main stages of service who were in their first year of service decreased from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2015.

- Fiscal Year 2014: 49.5 percent of caseworkers who left the agency within the fiscal year were in their first year of service.
- Fiscal Year 2015: 45.8 percent of caseworkers who left the agency within the fiscal year were in their first year of service.

The largest decrease in the number of workers who left within their first year occurred in the Investigation stage.

- Fiscal Year 2014: 58.3 percent of Investigators who left the agency within the fiscal year were in their first year of service.
- Fiscal Year 2015: 52.9 percent of Investigators who left the agency within the fiscal year were in their first year of service.

Under the new Continuous Learning model the agency expects that employees will leave sooner since new employees will begin to gain a realistic perspective during their first month of shadowing their mentor and during their field-based training.

\$8,624,959 (All Funds) was expended for caseworker certification in the 2014-2015 biennium. Of that amount, \$6,965,604 (All Funds) is attributable to the modification of the program which increased the salary percentage that each caseworker receives at each certification level by 3 percent and decreased the number of months between the first and second levels of certification eligibility by 50 percent and 57 percent, respectively.

HIRING BONUSES

From September 1, 2012 through December 17, 2013, 43 CPS caseworkers were offered \$5,000 signing bonuses when hired. Thirty-nine of the caseworkers were hired to work in Region 9 (most in Ector and Midland counties), while four worked in other regions. Of the 43

caseworkers hired, 22 (51 percent) were Conservatorship staff, 16 (37 percent) were Investigative staff, and 5 (12 percent) were Family-Based Safety Services staff.

Caseworkers who were offered bonuses were expected to work for CPS for at least one year.

After review of the data, shown below in Table 3, the agency found that offering hiring bonuses in Region 9 made little to no difference on retention in the region and the practice was eliminated.

The net payout over the life of the Hiring Bonus program was \$234,189 in All Funds. This total accounts for payments and recoupments from those employees who did not fulfill their time commitment to the agency.

Table 3: Region 9 Employees Hired (Fiscal Year 2013 - February 2014)									
	Hired	Left within 6 mos.		Left within 7-9 mos.		Left within 10-12 mos.		Total Number left the agency	
	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bonus Recipients	43	6	14.0%	1	2.3%	2	4.7%	9	20.9%
Non-Recipients	51	6	11.8%	1	2.0%	1	2.0%	8	15.7%
Total	94	12	12.8%	2	2.1%	3	3.2%	17	18.1%

SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

DFPS recognizes that the workload, emotional impact, and complexity of everyday responsibilities of frontline staff can impact the morale of even the most resilient workers. DFPS uses the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) as a means to evaluate morale. The SEE, developed by the University of Texas Institute for Organizational Excellence, provides an opportunity to collect the opinions of all employees regarding organizational effectiveness, working environment, staff engagement, and job satisfaction. Attachment 1 contains more information on feedback regarding DFPS' relative weaknesses and strengths outlined on Table 4.

Table 4: SEE Themes of Interest	
Relative Strengths	Relative Weaknesses
Health and Safety	Fair Treatment
Supervisory Issues	Valuing Staff
Travel and Telework	Staff Training
Cultural Diversity	

The agency is preparing to initiate the next SEE which is scheduled to begin in early 2016. The agency hopes to exceed its 2014 response rate of 69 percent.

MASTER INVESTIGATORS

In fiscal year 2014, CPS introduced the positions of Master Investigators (MIs) and Master Conservatorship Workers. These tenured workers are deployed to "Hot Zones", areas of the state that are experiencing difficulties and an increased level of workload stress. Some of the factors considered are:

- High turnover rates
- High number of vacancies
- High caseload
- Critical incidents that may affect morale

CPS Systems Improvement conducted an evaluation and found that Master Investigators (MI) are having a "significant and positive impact" and generally leave areas stronger than they found them. Analysis found that counties remained stable for at least 3 months after deployments ended. From August of 2014 until June of 2015, MIs have closed 1,999 (1,293 delinquent) cases in 27 counties and reduced "Hot Zone" scores in counties they worked in by an average of 21 percent.

The following amounts were expended for this initiative:

FY2014:	\$1,720,786 (All Funds)
<u>FY2015:</u>	<u>\$2,589,348 (All Funds)</u>
Total:	\$4,310,134 (All Funds)

FISCAL YEAR 2015

CPS TRANSFORMATION

In the Summer of 2014, The Sunset Commission conducted a review of the Health and Human Services System, including DFPS. During this same time period, CPS underwent an operational review, conducted by The Stephen Group (TSG), a third-party contractor.

CPS prioritized both groups' findings and developed its action plan for implementation. This effort is known as CPS Transformation. The initiatives below are derived from *Priority A: To Develop a Professional and Stable Workforce*. CPS recognized that a well-trained workforce could improve CPS' ability to protect children. Therefore, CPS designed a comprehensive approach that begins with the recruitment and hiring of the right candidates, follows the employee through a new model of training, and works to ensure retention through engagement.

EXPAND RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

DFPS took several steps in order to expand efforts in recruitment, education and marketing toward job seekers about protective services careers at DFPS. The Talent Acquisition Group (TAG) initiated an aggressive recruitment program, increasing the overall number of events significantly from the same period in 2014. A comparison of recruitment in FY 14 and FY15 shows how significant the increase has been. The increase is less pronounced in the second quarter of fiscal year 2014. This is explained in part by the fact that recruiting efforts follow a seasonal calendar; December and January are specifically considered low season for recruitment.

	Q1 FY14	Q1 FY15	Q2 FY14	Q2 FY15	Q3 FY14	Q3 FY15	Q4 FY14	Q4 FY15
Career Fair	11	48	17	18	21	61	2	7
Military Career Fair	4	9	0	5	1	25	0	12
Total	15	57	17	23	22	86	2	19

In addition to increasing the number of career fairs, TAG diversified the type of recruitment activities that were conducted.

Type of Recruitment	Example
University Sponsored Events	Job Fairs
	Career Days
Classroom Presentations	Criminal Justice
	Social Work
	Business
	Nursing
	Pharmacy
Volunteer and Internship Programs	Class Presentations
	Coordination with Universities
	College Day Symposium
Agency Hosted Events	Student Ride-Along Opportunities
	Community Colleges
Other School Sponsored Events	High Schools
	Junior High Schools
	Community Board Presentations
Community Outreach	

CPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MENTOR PROGRAM

The new basic training, called "CPS Professional Development" (CPD), shifts from task-based teaching to one that focuses on worker competencies such as the ability to detect abuse and neglect, recognize a child's emotions, and strengthen collaboration skills. This new model is meant to ensure that workers understand the broader concepts and purposes behind required tasks and how they fit together in the context of a case.

The worker will be assigned a mentor on their first day and shadow that employee for the first month. Experiencing the job first-hand will make the classroom learning component less abstract. This same mentor will also work with their mentee for up to 16 weeks.

As of October 2015, the entire state is training new workers under the new CPS Professional Development model.

A June 2015 focus group made up of supervisors, caseworkers, and program directors shared that:

- Shorter classroom time and immediate time in the field builds on new worker's enthusiasm.
- Supervisors appreciate the first-hand experience new workers are getting quickly.
- The adjustable timeline of training helps to better address individual training needs.
- Finding a sufficient number of qualified mentors is an issue in some areas of the state.

The Child and Family Research Partnership at the University of Texas' LBJ School of Public Affairs is conducting a third-party review to help ensure the soundness of the model and its implementation. The assessment is scheduled to be completed in Winter 2016.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Sunset Recommendation 1.1 directed the agency to consolidate all existing workforce management functions under one operational unit and add additional critical functions to better support employees and systematically identify root causes of turnover. DFPS completed the reorganization necessary to establish this division and in August 2015, hired the Director. This division is tasked with:

- monitoring and providing regular reports on areas such as compliance with annual performance evaluation requirements, capped caseload policies, use of positive performance levels, and areas with critical turnover problems;
- analyzing employee exit surveys and interviews;
- evaluating the effectiveness of DFPS' retention efforts, such as merit pay;
- creating an employee complaints process, including anonymous complaints, and report on complaint data and trends
- fulfilling the agency's legislative reporting requirements

Relative Strengths: Health and Safety, Supervisory Issues, Travel and Telework, Cultural diversity

Relative Weaknesses: Fair Treatment, Valuing Staff, Staff Training

- Health and Safety

To enhance information on safety in the core survey, DFPS has added safety-related survey items to all iterations of the survey. In addition, the survey has contained both core and HHSC-added questions on wellness topics. Considered as a group, health and safety has contained both high-scoring and low-scoring items. The most recent items added in 2014 received very high scores.

- Supervision

Survey items dealing with supervision have been the most numerous of items among all topics measured by the SEE. In addition to supervision-related survey items on the core survey, DFPS added survey items about supervision in all three iterations of the survey. Over time, results regarding supervision have revealed both strengths and weaknesses for the organization as a whole.

- Travel/Telework

In 2014, DFPS added a question about adequacy of travel distances, which received a relatively positive response. The results on this question, combined with the results on telework and remote applications, are a positive set of ratings for the organization as a whole.

- Cultural Diversity

The SEE contains one core question on recruitment, development and retention of diverse staff. DFPS has added survey items on valuing diversity on all three iterations of the survey. Overall, this is a mid-range scoring topic on the survey.

- Fairness

As a group, survey items concerning fairness have also been low-scoring over the course of the SEE. In 2014, DFPS added four survey items on fairness to better understand this topic. A positive trend can be seen in some of the survey items from 2012 to 2014. The four new survey items added in 2014 point to both strengths and weaknesses in aspects of fairness.

- Valuing Staff

As a group, survey items related to the valuing of staff have been low-scoring over the three iterations of the SEE. DFPS has worked to learn more about this topic by adding survey items in every iteration of the survey. Overall, a positive trend is apparent in this group of items, particularly from 2012 to 2014.

- Staff Training

The SEE has included several questions concerning training throughout the three survey iterations, and DFPS has added selected questions on this topic on every survey. Overall, trends have been positive in this area.

- Quality and Performance

Service quality and organizational performance has been another major theme associated with numerous items throughout the SEE survey. To enhance understanding of quality and performance, DFPS has added items in all three iterations of the survey. These items have included both strong and weak-scoring items. As a group, items on quality and performance throughout the survey show improvement, particularly from 2012 to 2014.