



# **Quarterly Report**

## **Office of Community-Based Care Transition Implementation Status**

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December 2021\*

# Table of Contents

- Introduction ..... 3
- Background..... 3
- New Office of Community-Based Care Transition and Statewide CBC Director ..... 3
- Implementation Updates on CBC Communities ..... 4
  - Update for Region 3B..... 4
  - Update for Region 2 ..... 5
  - Update for Region 1 ..... 5
  - Update for Region 8B..... 5
  - Update on CBC Expansion ..... 6
- Implementation Updates on New Senate / House Bills (87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session) ..... 6
  - Senate Bill 1896 ..... 6
  - Data Access and Standards Governance Council ..... 7
  - Mentor Feasibility Study ..... 7
  - Capacity Building ..... 7
  - House Bill 3041 ..... 8
  - Senate Bill 910 ..... 8
- Conclusion ..... 8
- Appendix A: Current Community-Based Care Communities..... 10

\*Note: REVISED as of January 3, 2022



# **Introduction**

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As required by Texas Family Code, Subchapter B-1, Chapter 264, section 264.172 (f), 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, the Office of Community-Based Care Transition (OCBCT) “shall report to the legislature at least once each calendar quarter regarding the implementation of community-based care in the state.” Status reports shall be provided on September 30<sup>th</sup>, December 31<sup>st</sup>, March 31<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year to the Texas Legislature.

# **Background**

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Community-Based Care (CBC) changes the way DFPS procures, contracts, and pays for foster care services. Under a performance-based grant agreement, a single contractor provides services to children and families within a designated community (also known as “catchment area”). In Stage I, this Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) is responsible for ensuring the full continuum of paid foster care placements and other services for children in the state’s legal conservatorship. SSCCs also support adoption recruitment, matching and home studies. In Stage II, the SSCC expands services to include unverified relative or “kinship” placements, services to parents, and the SSCC has sole responsibility for the legal case management function. In Stage III, the SSCC continues the provision of all Stage I and II services and is awarded with financial incentives and disincentives for permanency outcomes and additional performance measures for child safety and well-being. For information and data on the performance of SSCC contractors, see the DFPS Rider 15 report.

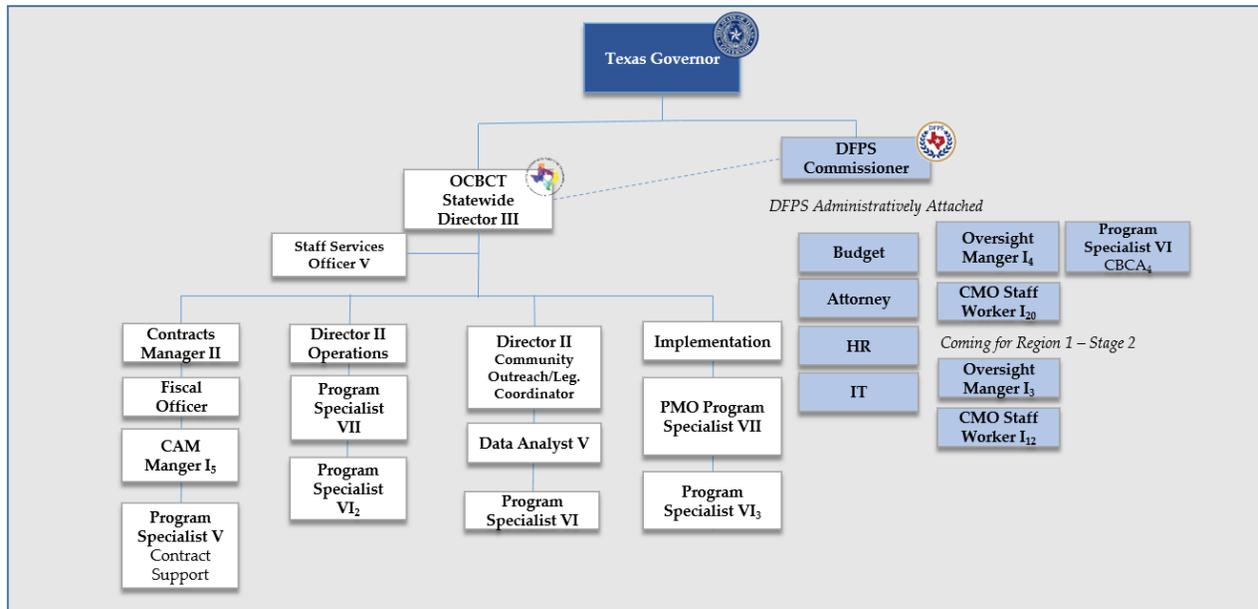
# **New Office of Community-Based Care Transition and Statewide CBC Director**

The 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, as part of Texas Family Code, Subchapter B-1, Chapter 264, section 264.172, formally established the Office of Community-Based Care Transition (OCBCT). The OCBCT is a state agency independent of, but administratively attached to, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). On June 29, 2021, Governor Greg Abbott appointed Theresa “Trisha” Thomas as the Statewide Director of OCBCT. Ms. Thomas reports directly to the Governor.

OCBCT and DFPS, along with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), will work together to implement of Community-Based Care (CBC). Currently, Ms. Thomas is working with DFPS to define the structure of and needed resources for the new OCBCT. Currently, the updated structure of the office is as follows: Contract Manager which is filled, Director II (Operations) which is vacant/position posted, Director II (Outreach/Government Relations) which is filled, and Director II (Implementation), which is vacant/position posted. The Staff Services Officer position has been filled, and this position directly reports to the Statewide CBC Director.



Within the Contracts division of OCBCT, there is a Contracts Manager and Fiscal Officer position that has been filled, there are 5 Contract Administration Manager positions that are filled, and one vacant Program Specialist position. Within the Operations division of OCBCT, there are three Program Specialist positions that are filled, and one Director position that is vacant. Within the Outreach/Government Relations division of OCBCT, one Director position that is filled, and one Data Analyst and one Program Specialist position that are vacant. Within the Implementation division of OCBCT, there are three filled Program Specialist Positions, one vacant Director position, and one vacant PMO Program Specialist position.



## Implementation Updates on CBC Communities

### Update for Region 3B

The 3B catchment area is comprised of Tarrant, Erath, Hood, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, and Somervell counties in DFPS Region 3W. OCBCT/DFPS executed an SSCC contract with ACH Child and Family Services (ACH) on January 1, 2014. ACH formed Our Community Our Kids (OCOK) to serve as the SSCC. After a six-month start-up period, readiness was certified and OCOK began accepting placement referrals on September 1, 2014.

On September 1, 2018, DFPS renewed its contract with OCOK to continue services under Stage I (foster care and services for children) CBC and added requirements for Stage II CBC (transition of kinship and legal case management services. Start-up for Stage II was announced in October 2019 and a formal implementation plan was enacted to accomplish transition activities related to communications, human resources (staff and case transitions), technology, purchased client services, policy, training and performance / quality assurance. OCBCT/DFPS formally certified readiness on February 27, 2020.

On March 1, 2020, OCOK assumed responsibility for all substitute care services to



children and families in the 3B catchment area. As of December 18, 2021, 1,818 children and their families were receiving services through the OCOK continuum of care in Stage II. Moving into fiscal year 2022, DFPS and OCBCT will assess OCOK's movement into Stage III.

## **Update for Region 2**

The Region 2 catchment area is comprised of 30 counties in northwest Texas around Abilene and Wichita Falls. OCBCT/DFPS executed an SSCC contract with Texas Family Initiative (TFI) in May 2018. TFI formed a partnership with New Horizons Ranch and Center Inc. and created 2INgage to serve as the SSCC. After a six-month start-up period, OCBCT/DFPS certified readiness and 2INgage began accepting placement referrals on December 1, 2018.

OCBCT/DFPS and 2INgage formally announced start-up for Stage II in December 2019 and developed a formal implementation plan to accomplish transition activities related to communications, human resources (staff and case transitions), technology, purchased client services, policy, training and performance, and quality assurance. OCBCT/DFPS formally certified readiness on May 27, 2020.

On June 1, 2020, 2INgage assumed responsibility for all substitute care services to children and families in the Region 2 catchment area. As of December 18, 2021, 1,508 children and their families were receiving services through the 2INgage continuum of care in Stage II. Moving into fiscal year 2022, DFPS and OCBCT will assess 2INgage's movement into Stage III.

## **Update for Region 1**

The Region 1 catchment area is comprised of 41 counties in the Texas Panhandle around Lubbock and Amarillo. OCBCT/DFPS awarded a contract to St. Francis Ministries and July 1, 2019. St. Francis Ministries formed St. Francis Community Services (St. Francis) to serve as the SSCC. After a six-month start-up period, OCBCT/DFPS certified readiness and St. Francis began accepting placement referrals for children on January 6, 2020.

The OCBCT and St. Francis formally announced start-up for Stage II on September 1, 2021 and began implementing a six-month transition plan. This plan will accomplish transition activities related to communications, human resources (staff and case transitions), technology, purchased client services, policy, training and performance, and quality assurance. Implementation of Stage II in Region 1 is anticipated in March 2022 following confirmation of readiness. As of December 18, 2021, approximately 915 children and youth were receiving services through the St. Francis continuum of care.

## **Update for Region 8B**

The Region 8B catchment area is comprised of all counties in DFPS Region 8 excluding Bexar County. OCBCT/DFPS released a new Request for Application (RFA) for 8B on September 1, 2020, which closed on December 1, 2020. OCBCT/DFPS awarded a contract on March 29, 2021 to Saint Jude's Ranch for Children (SJRC) Texas. SJRC Texas formed Belong to serve as the SSCC. Implementation of Stage I began on October 27, 2021 following



confirmation of readiness. As of December 18, 2021, approximately 582 children and youth were receiving services through Belong’s continuum of care.

## **Update for Region 8A**

The Region 8A catchment area includes all of Bexar County. OCBCT/DFPS awarded a contract to The Children’s Shelter in San Antonio in August 2018. The Children’s Shelter formed Family Tapestry to serve as the SSCC. After a six-month start-up period, OCBCT/DFPS certified readiness and Family Tapestry began accepting placement referrals on February 1, 2019.

On April 29, 2021, Family Tapestry gave formal notice to terminate its SSCC contract. DFPS, along with the partnership and cooperation of Family Tapestry, implemented a 60-day contingency plan to allow for the transition of services, subcontracts, and human resources to DFPS. Family Tapestry was fully engaged in the transition, and OCBCT/DFPS provided the resources necessary to make the transition successful. The contingency plan was planned and implemented during the months of May and June 2021.

As of July 1, 2021, all subcontracts for foster care placement and services were successfully transitioned back to DFPS with no disruption in services to children and youth or payments to providers as a result of the transition.

## **Update on CBC Expansion**

As appropriated by the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, OCBCT and DFPS, in partnership with HHSC, are preparing to release new RFAs to expand CBC to additional communities across the state in DFPS Regions 3 East, 9, 4 and 5 (see Appendix A for current catchment areas). Currently the state is broken up into DFPS region numbers; The OCBCT in partnership with DFPS will be working on choosing names specific to those areas to be more descriptive of each region/catchment area. The anticipated timeframe to release the new RFAs is early 2022. The OCBCT plans to include local stakeholders in the evaluation of proposals received from the RFA. Future CBC communities, processes, or stages may be requested and potentially modified based on the proposals received through unsolicited bids provided for in Senate Bill 1896.

Over the FY2022-2023 biennium, OCBCT and DFPS will use additional funding from the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature to expand CBC Stage II in the Regions 1 and 8B communities, as well as re-solicit the SSCC contract for 3W. Initiation of the solicitation with HHSC will occur within one year prior to anticipated award date to develop and implement communication plans, identify resource transfers of staff, determine fiscal allocations and begin regional planning.

# **Implementation Updates on New Senate and House Bills (87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session)**

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## **Senate Bill 1896**

The 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1896, which is an omnibus bill that impacts many



divisions within DFPS, including the OCBCT in many ways. This bill established the new OCBCT and appointed a Statewide CBC Director.

Senate Bill 1896 requires multiple updates to existing SSCC contracts, including by not limited to:

- prohibiting SSCC's from allowing a child without a placement to stay overnight in a DFPS or SSCC office,
- allowing SSCC staff to supervise children who require temporary, emergency care,
- requiring each SSCC to contract for reserve beds for children needing temporary, emergency care,
- allowing SSCC's to apply to DFPS for a waiver from any statutory and regulatory requirement to increase innovation and flexibility for achieving contractual performance outcomes, and
- allowing SSCC's to implement its own procedures to execute DFPS' statutory duties the SSCC assumes and is not required to follow DFPS' procedures to execute the assumed department duties.

Current SSCC contracts are being updated to comply with each new statute.

Given the direction of Senate Bill 1896 regarding evaluation of Family Based Safety Services (FBSS), OCBCT is working with DFPS and the SSCCs to complete the Senate Bill 910 study and awarding House Bill 3041 FBSS grants. See more information regarding FBSS on House Bill 3041 and Senate Bill 910 sections below.

### **Data Access and Standards Governance Council**

Senate Bill 1896 updates the definition and requirements of the existing Data Access and Standards Governance Council, which was established by the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature in 2018. To conform to Senate Bill 1896, the Council established a quarterly meeting schedule, beginning in August and conducted its second quarterly meeting on November 16, 2021. Quarterly Council meetings will continue and sub-workgroups from the Council have been meeting monthly in between quarterly Council meetings.

### **Mentor Feasibility Study**

Senate Bill 1896 requires OCBCT, DFPS, and each SSCC, in collaboration with local governmental entities and faith and community-based organizations, to examine the feasibility of designing a volunteer mentor program for children in congregate care settings. In July 2021, DFPS formed a workgroup with representatives from each SSCC, relevant DFPS stakeholders, OCBCT, and community providers of mentoring programs in the state. The workgroup meets monthly to develop the mentor feasibility study, which is due to the Legislature by December 31, 2022.

### **Capacity Building**

Senate Bill 1896 requires that HHSC, in collaboration with DFPS, OCBCT, and each SSCC, develop a plan to increase the placement capacity in each catchment area of the state with the goal of eliminating the need to place a child outside of the child's community. The



four current SSCC's submitted a draft Joint Capacity Building Plan and have begun working on the plan. The OCBCT and DFPS have begun dispersing the capacity building funds allocated by the Texas Legislature to the SSCCs and their providers.

## **House Bill 3041**

House Bill 3041 requires DFPS to implement a pilot program in at least two DFPS regions (one urban and one rural) designed to provide time-limited family-focused preservation services, which include but are not limited to Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) services, to families of foster care candidates. House Bill 3041 requires obtaining a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction to compel the family of a candidate to obtain family preservation services and complete the family preservation services plan. This bill calls for at least one of the DFPS regions that the pilot program is to be implemented be in a region where CBC has already been executed.

The OCBCT is collaborating with CPS, Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI), Finance, and other divisions of DFPS to develop this pilot program that meets the needs of our families, children, and youth.

## **Senate Bill 910**

Senate Bill 910 requires DFPS to develop a comprehensive list of options to implement family preservation services in existing CBC catchment areas and requires a report to the Governor's office and Legislative leadership by October 1, 2022.

In September 2021, an interagency administrative contract (IAC) between DFPS and Texas A&M University was executed. The IAC is to provide a comprehensive study of options to help inform the quality implementation of family preservation services into the existing catchment areas as a part of CBC, with specific focus on operations, implementation, financial modeling, contract provisions, statutory changes, and service delivery issues.

## **Conclusion**

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The new OCBCT, along with DFPS and stakeholder partners, continue to work diligently to implement CBC in the four current communities (3B, 2, 1, and 8B), expand CBC to at least four additional communities this biennium, and to lay the foundation for a successful rollout statewide. View the latest [CBC Implementation Plan](#) for additional details. An updated implementation plan is due to the Texas Legislature no later than the last day of each state fiscal biennium and will include new requirements passed during the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature.

The OCBCT continues to evaluate the staged approach to best implement CBC statewide. OCBCT/DFPS contracted with Texas Tech University to conduct a process evaluation of each stage of CBC. The process evaluation is a tool OCBCT/DFPS uses to assess implementation of CBC in each catchment area, identify the key successes and barriers, and course correct as needed. The CBC process evaluation was completed in November 2020 and can be found on the [CBC website](#). On-going process evaluations through Texas Tech



University will continue.

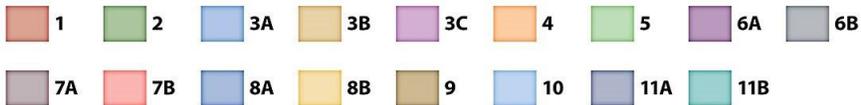
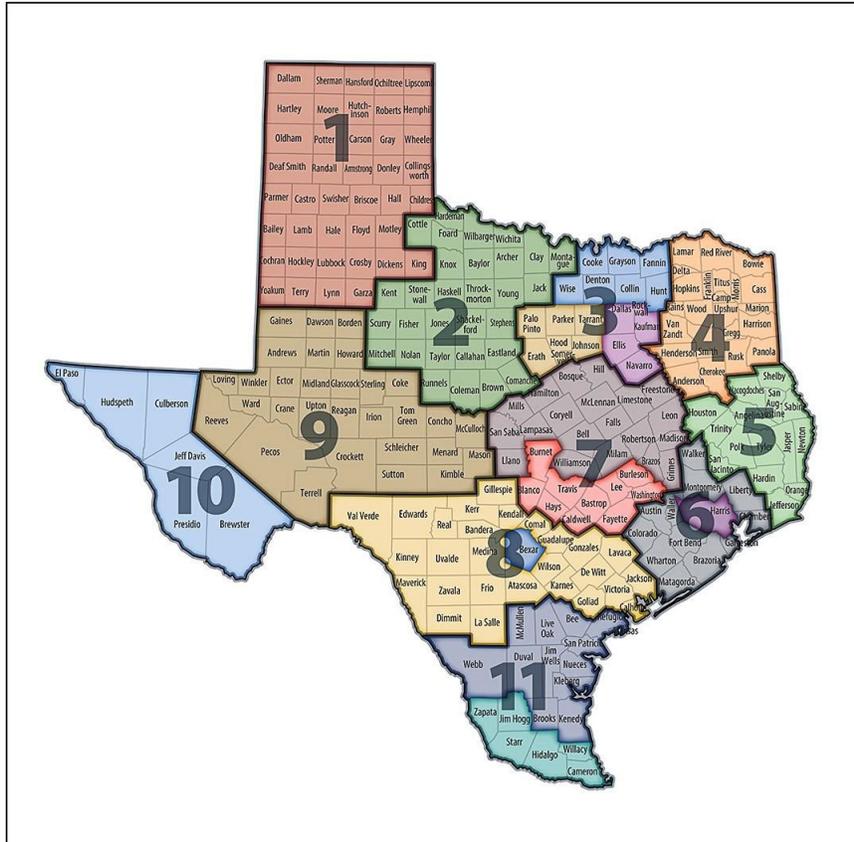
The OCBCT and DFPS continue to work with the Center for Child Welfare Data, affiliated with Chapin Hall of the University of Chicago, to support the outcome evaluation. Chapin Hall provides independent data analysis of each SSCC's performance on placements within 50 miles and paid foster care days, the basis for the fiscal model, and incentive payments in Stage III. Moving into FY2022, Chapin Hall will begin to evaluate child outcomes in Region 3B and 2. DFPS further consults with Chapin Hall on continuous quality improvement processes for oversight of CBC in Stage II.

OCBCT staff continue to attend conferences (like the National CBC Symposium and the Texas Alliance conference) and meet with Judges, CASAs, experts, community representatives, providers, and other stakeholders. OCBCT and DFPS are focused on supporting and partnering with the SSCCs to ensure CBC is successfully implemented statewide by FY2029. The OCBCT is committed to transparency and will continue to meet statutory requirements for sharing implementation plans, implementation updates, and performance data.



# Appendix A: Current Community-Based Care Communities

## Community Based Care Catchment Areas



<sup>1</sup> All data on children served by SSCCs is from DFPS Data Warehouse Report SA\_82 run date September 1, 2021. The report approximates the number of children served by SSCCs based on legal county and living arrangement and is subject to change.

